

## LCQ9: National security education

Following is a question by the Hon Cheung Kwok-kwan and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (March 17):

Question:

The Education Bureau (EDB) issued circulars to schools across the territory on the 4th of last month to provide guidelines on school administration and education in respect of safeguarding national security. In addition, the EDB has compiled the Curriculum Framework of National Security Education in Hong Kong (the Framework) to assist schools in implementing national security education. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the EDB has added a three-hour "Supplement: National Security" on top of the existing 15-hour standalone module on "Constitution and the Basic Law" at the junior secondary level in order to support schools to implement national security education, whether the EDB will review, in a timely manner, the effectiveness of such arrangement and the need to increase relevant lesson time;

(2) whether it will, by drawing reference from the practice of disbursing to schools the Moral and National Education Support Grant, disburse to schools a "national security education support grant", so that schools can have more resources to implement national security education;

(3) as the Framework provides that the learning elements at the junior primary level include letting students know the names of the four offences regulated by the National Security Law for Hong Kong, how the EDB assists junior primary students in comprehending the complicated concepts involved in the offences concerned, and assesses their learning effectiveness;

(4) of the measures in place to ensure that teachers receive adequate training on the knowledge needed for teaching the National Security Law for Hong Kong; and

(5) whether it has plans to arrange for Mainland teachers to come, after the epidemic has subsided, to Hong Kong to share their experience of teaching knowledge about national security?

Reply:

President,

Upon the enactment of the National Security Law (NSL), the Education Bureau (EDB) issued EDB Circular No. 3/2021 "National Security: Maintaining a Safe Learning Environment Nurturing Good Citizens" and No. 2/2021 "National

Security Education in School Curriculum – Implementation Mode and Learning and Teaching Resources" on February 4, 2021 to provide guidelines on school administration and education in relation to safeguarding national security, as well as details about the mode of implementation and learning and teaching resources for national security education in the school curriculum, with a view to facilitating schools to put in place measures to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment in schools and promote national security education.

It is the responsibility of schools to implement national security education through the school curriculum. National security education is inseparable from national education. The EDB has been adopting a "multi-pronged and co-ordinated" approach and supporting schools (via individual subjects, cross-curricular moral and civic education topics and life-wide learning activities, etc.) in promoting national education within and beyond the school curriculum through updating the curriculum, developing learning and teaching resources, providing training for teachers, as well as organising student activities, Mainland exchanges and the Sister School Scheme. The purposes are to enable students to gain an all-round understanding of our country, develop a sense of belonging towards the country, and have a correct understanding of the constitutional order established by the Constitution and the Basic Law as well as important concepts such as the roles and responsibilities as nationals. This will help nurture students into good citizens who have a sense of national identity, show respect for the rule of law and abide by the law, hence safeguarding national security.

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Cheung Kwok-kwan is as follows:

(1) and (3) The number of lesson hours is not the main point in implementing national security education in schools. Instead, schools should adopt a whole-school approach in promoting national security education within and beyond the classroom. At the primary and secondary school level, the fundamentals of national security education are to develop in students a sense of belonging to the country, an affection for the Chinese people, a sense of national identity, as well as an awareness of and a sense of responsibility for safeguarding national security. It should enable students to become good citizens who have a sense of national identity, show respect for the rule of law and abide by the law. National security education is not confined to learning the provisions of the NSL. It should cover its legislative background and rationale, and enable students to understand different aspects of national security such as ecological security, economic security and cybersecurity. Providing opportunities for students to understand the history and culture of the country, the Constitution and the Basic Law (including national security) in a progressive manner from a young age are the responsibilities of school education. These learning elements are relevant to students of all ages, but their depth and breadth could be adjusted to align with the cognitive development of students at different stages.

The EDB has added "Supplement: National Security" to the updated standalone module on "Constitution and the Basic Law" at the junior secondary level to enable junior secondary students to understand the concept of national security through learning more about the close relationship between the Central Authorities and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Apart from this Supplement, related topics, teaching foci and learning elements on national security are already covered in the existing primary and secondary school curricula. By making reference to the Curriculum Framework of National Security Education in Hong Kong (the Framework) and the national security education curriculum frameworks for various subjects, schools can enhance co-ordination and planning at a whole-school curriculum level so that concepts related to national security education can be connected naturally and integrated organically through subject teaching and various activities.

For lower primary students (usually aged 6 to 9), schools may outline topics related to national education, such as the national flag, national anthem, law enforcement agencies, law-abiding concepts and names of crimes under the NSL, by making reference to the Framework provided by the EDB, so as to strengthen students' knowledge of the rule of law and develop their sense of national identity in a progressive manner. We would like to stress that our teachers are professionals who should know how to simplify or translate relatively complex concepts by means of simple and interesting pedagogies appropriate to the age groups of the students. Teachers may deliver national security education through fun and interesting activities, daily life examples relevant to primary students, and most importantly, their role modelling. To cater for the learning needs of younger students, the EDB has recently produced an audio picture book entitled "[Let's Learn about National Security](http://emm.edcity.hk/media/1_tjh0ht5c)" ([emm.edcity.hk/media/1\\_tjh0ht5c](http://emm.edcity.hk/media/1_tjh0ht5c)) for primary students to learn about the basic concepts of national security through an animated story, without delving into details of the NSL. More interesting resources for young students will be produced by the EDB in the future to support the implementation of national security education by schools.

The EDB has been providing schools with various grants, including the Operating Expenses Block Grant or the Expanded Operating Expenses Block Grant, as well as the Life-wide Learning Grant at \$900 million per year for flexible use by public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme schools to organise diversified learning activities on national education and national security education since the 2019/20 school year. If necessary, schools may apply to the Quality Education Fund for additional resources. Furthermore, schools and parent-teacher associations can also apply for the Home-School Co-operation Grant to organise activities for promoting home-school cooperation and parent education.

The EDB will understand the implementation of national security education inside and outside classroom in schools and the learning effectiveness of students via different channels such as inspections and school visits, during which we will identify good practices for recommendations and sharing, and offer advice to schools as appropriate in order to enhance the related work and the effectiveness in planning and delivering national security education by schools.

(4) and (5) Starting from the 2020/21 school year, the EDB has set out more specific training requirements for newly-joined teachers, serving teachers and teachers aspiring for promotion. The core training, which includes contents about Constitution, Basic Law and national security education, aims at enhancing teachers' understanding of "One Country, Two Systems", national security and national development. Apart from these, the core training for newly-joined teachers and teachers aspiring for promotion also includes Mainland study tours, which provide teachers with first-hand experience to learn about the development of education on the Mainland and the achievements of the country, and enable them to inspire students to think of the opportunities for Hong Kong brought about by the national development and the contributions Hong Kong can make. Relevant training programmes have been rolled out in phases since November 2020. Meanwhile, the EDB is actively liaising and working with expert organisations to enhance teachers' training on Constitution, Basic Law and national security education through diversified modes such as talks and seminars. In this regard, we have arranged a series of training courses for teachers under the theme of "Respecting the Law, Reinforcing the Rule of Law" in November 2020 and March 2021. On the other hand, the EDB is strengthening its liaison with teacher education institutions for incorporating contents of Constitution, Basic Law and national security education in the pre-service teacher training programmes.

In alignment with the curriculum, the EDB has also provided relevant professional development programmes for teachers, including knowledge enrichment, curriculum planning, learning and teaching strategies, etc. For example, activities such as National Security Education Knowledge Enrichment Seminar Series, online courses and school leaders' workshops have been organised for primary and secondary school teachers. Teachers' networks and learning circles are also established for sharing experience. If possible, we will consider inviting Mainland experts and academics to explain the Constitution or national security to our teachers.

In the future, the EDB will continue to strengthen support measures for schools and maintain communication and collaboration with various stakeholders and experts in a joint effort to promote national security education.