

Appointments to Board of Financial Services Development Council announced

The Government announced today (January 15) appointments to the Board of Directors of the Financial Services Development Council (FSDC) for a term of two years with effect from January 17, 2024.

The Chief Executive has appointed three new members, Mr Ronald Chan Wai-yan, Mr Ben Chan Wei-beng and Ms Jennifer Tan Yuen-chun to the FSDC Board of Directors.

Announcing the appointments, a spokesman for the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (FSTB) said, "The FSDC plays an important role in conducting policy research, promoting market development, and nurturing talent to foster Hong Kong's financial services industry. The new appointees are all seasoned practitioners in the industry with extensive experience and knowledge in international finance and investment. We expect that they will assist the FSDC in broadening and deepening its connection with global stakeholders, further reinforcing Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre."

The FSTB spokesman also expressed gratitude to the outgoing members, Mr Henry Fan Hung-ling, Mr Glenn Fok, Dr Hu Zhanghong and Mr Jimmy Lai Chi-ming for their contributions to the FSDC during their tenure.

The FSDC was established in 2013 by the Government as a high-level, cross-sectoral advisory body to engage the industry in formulating proposals to promote the further development of Hong Kong's financial services industry and to map out strategic directions for development. The FSDC was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in September 2018 to allow it to better discharge its functions with more flexibility.

The membership list of the FSDC Board of Directors with effect from January 17, 2024, is as follows:

Chairman

—
Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen, SC

Vice-Chairmen

—
Ms Ding Chen
Mr Daniel R Fung, SC
Mr Andrew Walter Bougourd Ross Weir

Members

—
Ms Diana Cesar

Ms Lena Chan
Mr Ronald Chan Wai-yan*
Mr Ben Chan Wei-beng*
Dr Adrian Cheng Chi-kong
Mr Damien Allen Green
Mr Jeremy Dinshaw Lam
Mr Brian Li Man-bun
Dr Lin Yong
Ms Amy Lo Choi-wan
Ms Jennifer Tan Yuen-chun*

Dr Au King-lun (in the capacity as Executive Director of the FSDC)

Ex-officio member

Mr Christopher Hui (in the capacity as Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury)

* New appointees

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, January 15, 2024 is 104.3 (same as last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, January 13, 2024 was 104.3 (same as last Friday's index).

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not

prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on January 12 to noon today (January 15), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 267 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category, in the past three days (including last Saturday and Sunday). No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

(www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website

(www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website

(www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 25 264 samples of food imported from Japan (including 16 848 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 7 168 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Parents reminded to choose primary schools under Central Allocation process for their children

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (January 15) reminded parents that children who have joined the Primary One Admission (POA) System for 2024 but

have not yet secured a discretionary place can take part in the Central Allocation process for a Primary One (P1) place in a government or aided primary school. Parents concerned should make their choice of schools within the period from January 22 to January 28.

Digitalisation of POA

In line with the Smart Government strategy, the EDB has fully implemented digitalisation of the POA. Parents who have registered as POA e-Platform (ePOA) users and have bound their account to "iAM Smart+" may submit the Choice of Schools Form for Central Allocation from January 22 to January 28 through the ePOA. The EDB encourages parents to register with "iAM Smart+" (www.iamsmart.gov.hk/en/reg.html) as early as possible for more convenient and faster P1 school place allocation services. Please refer to the related videos and Parent's Guide on the EDB homepage (www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/primary-secondary/spa-systems/primary-1-admission/poa_eplatform/index.html) for details of the procedures for activating and logging in an ePOA account and for making school choices for the Central Allocation of POA via the e-Platform.

Making school choices at Central Allocation Centres

The EDB will send letters to parents on January 17 inviting them to make their choice of schools. To cater for the needs of different parents, parents can still submit the Choice of Schools Form in paper form by visiting the designated Central Allocation Centre at the suggested time slot (i.e. 9.30am to 12.30pm or 1.30pm to 4.30pm on January 27 (Saturday) or 9.30am to 12.30pm on January 28 (Sunday)) stated in the letter.

Parents who are ePOA users may choose to submit the Central Allocation Application via the ePOA or in paper form but should not submit duplicate applications. Parents who have not yet received the letter by January 22 should call the School Places Allocation Section of the EDB (Hotline: 2832 7700) as soon as possible.

Only one parent of an applicant child is required to complete the school choice-making procedures. Parents are advised not to take their children to the Central Allocation Centre where possible. Parents who cannot make school choices within the suggested time slot can go to the designated Central Allocation Centre from 1.30pm to 4.30pm on January 28. The Choice of Schools Form will be sent together with the letter to parents who submitted the Application Form in paper form at the Discretionary Places stage for filling in advance.

In the event of adverse weather or other special conditions on any day during the period of making school choices, please pay heed to radio or television announcements on the relevant special arrangements.

Unable to submit application within specified choice-making period

For individual parents who are unable to use the ePOA or go to the Central Allocation Centre to make school choices, they can authorise in writing a representative to bring the completed Choice of Schools Form and their signed Letter of Authorisation to proceed with the related procedures.

To apply for POA 2024 after January 28, parents need to complete necessary procedures with the School Places Allocation Section, which will separately arrange P1 places for the applicant children in June.

Change of residential address

An EDB spokesman reminded parents that, if they have recently moved their residence or have such plans in the near future, they are required to inform the School Places Allocation Section as soon as possible so that they can make school choices in the POA School Net where their new home is located. Parents should fill in the actual residential address of their child. If they provide a false address for securing a P1 place, the POA application of their child will be rendered void and the P1 place allocated will be withdrawn.

The EDB has put in place a monitoring mechanism to verify the residential addresses of applicant children as given by the parents. Random checks have also been stepped up. The public may call the School Places Allocation Section to report suspected cases of using a false address for POA application. The EDB will take action against false address cases.

Mechanism of Central Allocation

Central Allocation is composed of two parts. Part A, which takes up 10 per cent of the P1 places earmarked for Central Allocation, is for unrestricted school choices. Parents can choose up to three government or aided primary schools in any school net. Part B takes up the remaining 90 per cent of the P1 places earmarked for Central Allocation. Parents of applicant children residing in the school net concerned are to select schools from the "Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation (Primary One Admission 2024)" of their school net, while parents of applicant children who intend to commute daily to schools in Hong Kong are to select schools from the "2024 Choice of Schools List for Central Allocation (For Applicant Children who intend to commute daily to schools in Hong Kong)". Parents should fill in the Choice of Schools Form in the order of their preference.

The mechanism of the Central Allocation is based on parents' choices in general. The computer-programmed allocation will first process the school choices in Part A and then the school choices in Part B. For oversubscribed schools, the order of priority in allocating places will be determined by random numbers generated by the computer for individual applicants to ensure fairness.

For information about the procedures for Central Allocation, please call the EDB's 24-hour automatic telephone enquiry service at 2891 0088.

Release of Central Allocation results

For parents who have already activated their ePOA account via "iAM Smart" or "iAM Smart+", they will receive their Central Allocation results through the ePOA from 10am on June 5. Parents who wish to receive the allocation results via SMS on June 5 may choose such an option in the Choice of Schools Form. In addition, the allocation results will be sent to parents by post from June 5 to 6.

FSO alerts public to deceptive content purported to be interviews with FS

The Financial Secretary's Office (FSO) today (January 15) appealed to members of the public for heightened vigilance against online deceptive advertisements purported to be interviews with the Financial Secretary (FS). The FSO strongly clarified that the so-called interviews and remarks are all fictitious.

The FSO recently noted a number of deceptive advertisements and webpages, which carry the FS's name and news photos, on social media and online news portals. Such advertisements lure users to click on them and be taken to suspicious transaction platforms. A spokesman for the FSO urged the public not to visit any suspicious websites via such advertisements or provide personal information to unknown websites with a view to forestalling losses.

The FSO has reported the incident to the Police for follow-up investigation.