

**EDUCATION BUREAU
CIRCULAR MEMORANDUM NO. 76/2017**

From: Secretary for Education

To: Supervisors and Heads of Secondary
Schools

Ref.: EDB(CD/C&S)/SC/1/0/1(7)

(excluding English Schools

Date: 31 May 2017

Foundation schools and international
schools)

**Ongoing Renewal of the School Curriculum:
the Secondary Education Curriculum Guide**

(Note: Please circulate this circular memorandum among all teachers.)

Summary

This circular memorandum informs schools of the uploading and implementation of the *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide* (SECG) (2017) prepared by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC). All teachers of secondary schools should read the SECG.

Details

The Secondary Education Curriculum Guide (SECG)

2. Since 2014, the CDC has advised the Government on the **ongoing renewal of the school curriculum**. The ongoing renewal takes into account schools' accomplishments achieved since the 2001 Learning to Learn curriculum reform which focused on fostering students' learning to learn capabilities for **lifelong learning** and **whole-person development**, as well as the lessons learned from implementing the New Academic Structure and the senior secondary curriculum since 2009. Stakeholders' views are also carefully considered. These have been collected through multiple channels on the continual support for a student-centred curriculum, which is broad and balanced with diversification and specialisations for academic, professional and vocational development according to students' needs. The SECG is now finalised after fine-tuning in light of the valuable feedback received from the three briefing sessions for curriculum leaders of secondary schools in January 2017 and the ongoing deliberations in the CDC Ad Hoc Committee on the SECG.

3. The SECG supersedes the *Basic Education Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 - Secondary 3)* and the *Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide (Secondary 4 - 6)* issued by the CDC in 2002 and 2009 respectively with an objective to providing schools with the visions of ongoing curriculum renewal of their six-year secondary curriculum. The SECG comprises the key elements related to the learning expectations of secondary school graduates, the curriculum planning–pedagogy–assessment cycle, the smooth transition between key stages and an enabling environment for sustaining the promotion of **lifelong learning** and **whole-person development** among students as stated in the Education Commission (EC)'s education blueprint for the 21st century – *Learning for Life, Learning through Life: Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong (EC,2000)*.

4. In order to facilitate schools' early planning and to synchronise with the commencement of school leaders' workshops on whole-school curriculum planning for school leaders and middle managers, the **SECG** can now be accessed at the Education Bureau (EDB) website (www.edb.gov.hk/renewal), to be followed by the printed copies for schools' reference at a later date in 2017.

Key References to Support Whole-school Curriculum Planning

5. Secondary schools should follow the SECG, in particular the following extracts, when planning for their whole-school curriculum based on the school curriculum recommended by the CDC:

- ✧ The updated seven learning goals of secondary education (**Annex 1**)
- ✧ The school curriculum framework (**Annex 2**)
- ✧ The junior secondary curriculum and suggested time allocation (**Annex 3**)
- ✧ The senior secondary curriculum and suggested time allocation (**Annex 4**)
- ✧ The major renewed emphases (MRE) at the junior secondary level and beyond (**Annex 5**)
- ✧ MRE: Strengthening values education (including moral and civic education, Basic Law education) (**Annex 6**)
- ✧ MRE: Reinforcing the learning of Chinese history and Chinese culture (**Annex 7**)

6. Schools should, taking into consideration their own contexts and stages of development, plan the whole-school curriculum, with due consideration of the EDB's key references as stipulated in paragraph 5. To better address the changing needs of society as reflected in the updated seven learning goals, the MRE which are mostly of cross-curricular nature are brought on board. There is a need for more coherent and holistic planning in the whole-school curriculum with strategic integration of MRE. It is thus highly recommended that schools incorporate MRE alongside the school priorities in the school development plans for the next three to six years.

7. For coherent whole-school planning and systematic implementation, the SECG should be read in conjunction with the updated Key Learning Area Curriculum Guides (KLACGs) to be disseminated through briefing sessions, relevant curriculum documents including *Report on the Fourth Strategy on Information Technology in Education* (EDB, 2015), *Report on Promotion of STEM Education* (EDB, 2016) as well as the latest Curriculum and Assessment Guides of the senior secondary subjects jointly prepared by the CDC and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA).

Support Measures to Schools

8. **School leaders' workshops** on strengthening curriculum leadership and whole-school curriculum planning will be organised for schools commencing in the 2017/18 school year to support secondary schools to formulate their whole-school curriculum plans and to map out their future directions of curriculum development in the process of ongoing renewal of the school curriculum. Details of the workshops will be available in the forthcoming EDB circular memorandum. In the 2017/18 school year, the EDB will strengthen the school-based support in whole-school curriculum planning,

including featuring a distinctive focus in the new support service, i.e. the Learning Communities to promote professional exchange. (*Refer to EDBCM No.55/2017.*)

9. In addition, a range of professional development programmes (PDPs) and sharing networks will be organised to strengthen the professional capacity of curriculum leaders/middle managers, teachers, teacher-librarians and other relevant school personnel in order to implement the SECG at the whole-school level as well as specifically at the KLA/subject level. Briefing sessions on each of the updated KLACGs will also be conducted between April and June 2017 (*Refer to EDBCM No. 43/2017.*)

10. Apart from an array of PDPs on various themes in the EDB Training Calendar System, schools can also access information on relevant services as well as learning and teaching resources from the EDB, e.g. **School-based Support Services** (www.edb.gov.hk/sbss), **IT in Education Centre of Excellence** (www.edb.gov.hk/coe), **Quality Education Fund (QEF) Cyber Resource Centre** (<http://qcrc.qef.org.hk>), **Central Resources Centre** (<https://crc.edb.gov.hk>), and **EDB One-stop Portal for Learning and Teaching Resources** (www.hkedcity.net/edbosp). Besides, effective learning and teaching of languages, using e-learning (IT) for effective learning, and values education, which are relevant to the MRE, have been selected as priority themes of the **QEF** (<http://qef.org.hk>) for the 2017/18 school year. Schools are encouraged to apply for the QEF to enrich their students' learning experiences. In the 2016/17 school year, a one-off grant at the amount of HK\$200,000 has been disbursed to secondary schools for the promotion of STEM education (*Refer to EDBCM No. 68/2017.*)

11. The implementation of the SECG in schools will continuously be reviewed through collecting feedback from multiple channels of communication with stakeholders. These include meetings of the CDC committees, discussion with the academia and professional organisations, school visits, focus group interviews, etc. In parallel, the effectiveness of school self-evaluation in enhancing schools' continuous development, including whole-school curriculum planning in line with the SECG, will be validated and supported under the School Development and Accountability Framework. In a similar vein, the primary education curriculum, KLA/subject curricula at the primary and secondary levels, and subject curricula at the senior secondary level will also be updated as and when appropriate.

Enquiries

12. Information related to the ongoing renewal of the school curriculum and **frequently asked questions (FAQs)** are available at www.edb.gov.hk/renewal. For further enquiries, please contact Mr Pablo HON on 2892 6327 or Ms Janice TAI on 2892 6433 of the Council and Secondary Section, Curriculum Development Institute.

Sheridan LEE
for Secretary for Education

c.c. Heads of Sections – for information

The Updated Seven Learning Goals of Secondary Education

The **seven learning goals** should continue to converge on promoting the **whole-person development** and **lifelong learning** capabilities of students, and updates are made with better clarity to take into account the changes in society and the experience gained in the curriculum reform at the school and KLA levels.



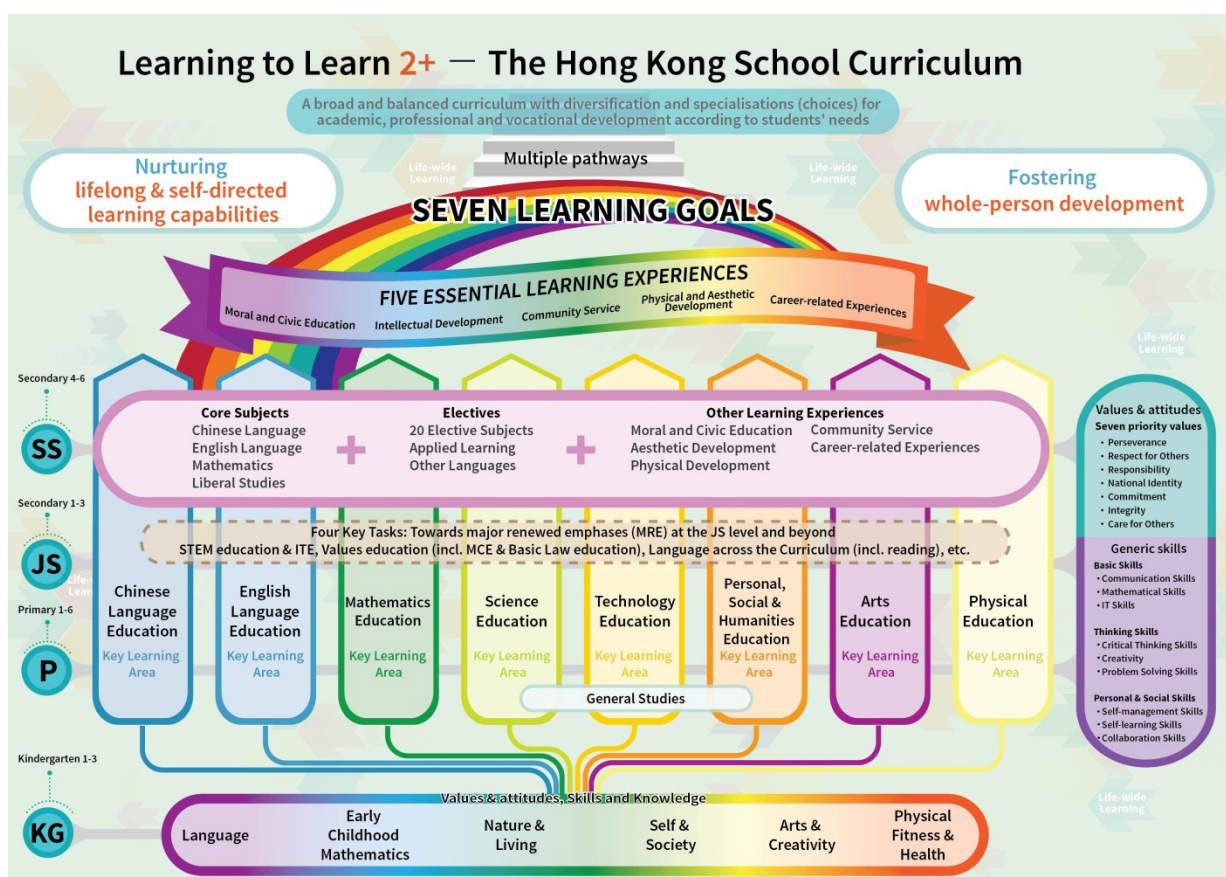
The Updated Seven Learning Goals of Secondary Education

To enable students to

- become an informed and responsible citizen with a sense of national and global identity, appreciation of positive values and attitudes as well as Chinese culture, and respect for pluralism in society;
- acquire and construct a broad and solid knowledge base, and to understand contemporary issues that may impact on students' daily lives at personal, community, national and global levels;
- become proficient in biliterate and trilingual communication for better study and life;
- develop and apply generic skills in an integrative manner, and to become an independent and self-directed learner for future study and work;
- use information and information technology ethically, flexibly and effectively;
- understand one's own interests, aptitudes and abilities, and to develop and reflect upon personal goals with aspirations for further studies and future career; and
- lead a healthy lifestyle with active participation in physical and aesthetic activities, and to appreciate sports and the arts.

The School Curriculum Framework

The broad and balanced 15-year school curriculum framework recommended by the CDC with strong interface helps students build up a solid knowledge foundation for progressing through various stages of learning. It is open and flexible in its design to suit different school contexts to foster students' whole-person development and to nurture their lifelong and self-directed learning capabilities. Knowledge (broadly organised around eight Key Learning Areas), generic skills, and values and attitudes permeate through various levels of learning, ensuring the vertical continuity and lateral coherence of the curriculum.



The Junior Secondary Curriculum and Suggested Time Allocation

The junior secondary (JS) curriculum extends learning from primary education in terms of breadth and depth. It is a broad and balanced curriculum building on the knowledge, generic skills, values, attitudes and learning experiences students have acquired, and is organised by eight Key Learning Areas (KLAs). Schools should adopt the suggested allocation of lesson time (i.e. % of total lesson time/number of hours of lesson time over 3 years) for each KLA, and use the time flexibly and integratively to suit the specific needs of their students and their school contexts.

Table 1: School Days and Lesson Hours over 3 Years

Junior Secondary	
Length of a School Year	190 days or 1 013 hours ^{Note 1} Lesson time ^{Note 2} (school days or lesson hours per year): 172 days or 918 hours
Lesson Hours over 3 Years	2 754 hours (918 hours x 3 years) ^{Note 3}

^{Note 1} 190 is the minimum number of school days for a school year. The number of lesson hours is calculated based on an average of eight 40-minute lessons a day in schools.

^{Note 2} Examination time not included

^{Note 3} There may be variation in lesson hours among schools as individual schools may devote time to non-teaching activities such as school picnics, student orientations, post-examination activities. Lesson hours of a school day and the duration of lessons may also vary among schools or even between weekdays within the same school.

Table 2: Components of the JS Curriculum and Allocation of Time over Three Years^{Note 1}

Component of the JS Curriculum		% of Time Allocation	No. of Hours
Key Learning Area	Chinese Language Education	17-21%	468-578
	English Language Education	17-21%	468-578
	Mathematics Education	12-15%	331-413
	Science Education	10-15%	276-413
	Personal, Social and Humanities Education ^{Note 2}	15-20%	413-551
	Technology Education ^{Note3}	8-15%	220-413
	Arts Education	8-10%	220-276
	Physical Education	5-8%	138-220
Sub-total of the lower range of lesson hours over 3 years		92%	2 534
Across Key Learning Areas	Flexibility is provided for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values education (including Moral and Civic Education, Basic Law education) and guidance to complement values education across KLAs • Other cross-curricular activities 	8%	About 220 hours over 3 years
Total lesson hours over 3 years		100%	2 754

Note 1 As there is an increasing need for schools to organise cross-curricular learning and teaching activities (e.g. STEM education, Language across the Curriculum, Values Education) while closely integrating these with life-wide learning activities for students' consolidated learning, application and whole-person development, the allocation of time for respective KLA/subjects can be more flexibly and integratively handled with due regard for individual school contexts and needs.

Note 2 All secondary schools should allocate about 138 lesson hours, or about two lessons per week, to the study of Chinese history under the PSHE KLA at the JS level, i.e. about 5% of the total lesson time for the JS level.

Note 3 All secondary schools should allocate about 25 lesson hours to the teaching of programming concepts including coding within the Information & Communication Technology knowledge context under the TE KLA at the JS level.

The Senior Secondary Curriculum and Suggested Time Allocation

All students studying the senior secondary (SS) curriculum in local schools should study the four core subjects, and two or three elective subjects (up to a maximum of four). In addition, all students are entitled to Other Learning Experiences (OLE) for enhancing their whole-person development.

Table 1: Lesson Hours over Three Years

Senior Secondary	
Total no. of lesson hours over 3 years	2 400 (± 200) hours ^{Note 1} Length of a school year: 190 days

^{Note 1} Examination time and study leave not included. Based on the 2015 annual school survey, more than 80% of our local schools are able to offer the recommended 2 400 (± 200) hours (or above) for the 3-year total lesson time.

Table 2: Components of the SS Curriculum and Allocation of Time over Three Years

Component of the SS Student Programme	% of Time Allocation	No. of Hours
Four Core Subjects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese Language • English Language • Mathematics • Liberal Studies 	45-55%	1 125 – 1 375
Two or Three Elective Subjects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjects from KLAs • Applied Learning • Other Languages 	20-30%	500 – 750
Other Learning Experiences (OLE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values Education (including Moral and Civic Education and Basic Law education) • Community Service • Career-related Experiences • Physical Development • Aesthetic Development 	10-15%	250 – 375

Remarks:

The Medium-term Review of the New Academic Structure was completed in June 2015. Among other recommendations on the curriculum and systemic level as well as the public assessment, it is recommended that –

- the total lesson time for the three-year SS curriculum be adjusted from 2 700 to **2 400 \pm 200 hours**, giving schools flexibility while ensuring international recognition; and

- the total lesson time for OLE be adjusted from 15-35% to **10-15%**, giving schools greater flexibility in curriculum planning.

The Major Renewed Emphases at the Junior Secondary Level and Beyond

Major renewed emphases (MRE) are brought on board to better respond to the changing needs of society as reflected in the updated seven learning goals. With reference to their own contexts and stages of development on various curriculum areas, schools should plan the whole-school curriculum with due consideration of the SECG to strategically integrate the following MRE for coherent and systematic implementation in their school development plans alongside the school priorities for the next three to six years:

- strengthening **values education** (including moral and civic education and Basic Law education)
- reinforcing the learning of **Chinese history and Chinese culture**
- extending “Reading to Learn” to “**Language across the Curriculum**”
- promoting **STEM education** and **ITE**
- fostering an **entrepreneurial spirit**
- diversifying **life-wide learning** experiences (including those for Vocational and Professional Education and Training)
- stepping up **gifted education**
- enhancing the **teaching of Chinese as a second language**.

To assist schools in implementing the MRE at the whole-school, cross-curricular, KLA and subject levels, related professional development programmes will be arranged.

MRE: Strengthening Values Education (including moral and civic education and Basic Law education)

Moral and Civic Education

Values education, variously delivered in the form of moral and civic education, Basic Law education, life education, religious education, values across different KLAs/subjects, etc., need to be given utmost prominence. Since 2008, the EDB has clearly stipulated the learning elements of values education through, for instance, specifying the learning expectations for respective key stages in order to articulate a systematic curriculum framework. The framework could be accessed at www.edb.gov.hk/tc/revised-MCE-framework2008 (Chinese version only). Specifically, **perseverance, respect for others, responsibility, national identity, commitment, integrity and care for others** have been identified as the priority values and attitudes. These values and attitudes are infused into the learning and teaching of all KLAs as well.

Basic Law Education

Enabling students to understand the Basic Law and its application in everyday life reinforces the cultivation of values including **the rule of law, justice, national identity, democracy, freedom, human rights, equality and rationality**. Basic Law education has been introduced since 2002 through different curricula such as primary General Studies (P1-6); junior secondary Personal, Social and Humanities Education (PSHE) subjects/curricula, in particular Life and Society (S1-3) and Chinese history curriculum (compulsory); and the senior secondary interdisciplinary subject of Liberal Studies (S4-6) (core subject) and relevant elective subjects. Due attention should be given to ensuring sufficient time be dedicated to Basic Law education in whole-school curriculum planning, and where appropriate, incorporated to strengthen values education in the school development plan to facilitate coherent and strategic planning, implementation and self-evaluation of its effectiveness.

At the junior secondary level (S1-3)

- **Basic Law education** is an integral part of various relevant subjects¹ in the PSHE KLA and also as part of values education in the moral and civic education

¹ The lesson hours related to Basic Law education are derived from the study of Chinese history curriculum (compulsory) (about 24 hours based on the proposed revised curriculum under consultation), Life and Society (S1-3) (about 15 hours), History (about 10 hours based on the proposed revised curriculum under consultation) and Geography (about 2 hours). Basic Law-related elements are taught as an integral part of the respective subject curriculum rather than as add-on content.

curriculum framework.

- Essential learning elements of Basic Law education in the PSHE KLA:
 - ✓ **Chinese history curriculum** has compulsory content with a coverage of about 24 hours to enable JS students to acquire fundamental knowledge necessary for further study about the Basic Law at the SS level, in particular Hong Kong’s development as part of China and the background of “one country, two systems”.
 - ✓ In schools where **Life and Society** (S1-3) is taught, the learning and teaching of Basic Law-related modules will take up about 15 hours.
 - ✓ For schools that do not offer Life and Society (S1-3) in JS, or in cases where Basic Law-related modules are not taught in Life and Society (S1-3), a 15-hour independent “**Constitution and the Basic Law**” module* will be developed for schools’ adoption in mid-2017, to be complemented with ready-to-use learning and teaching resources. These schools are required to teach this module as part of values education, as a standalone module in the timetable, and/or as part of the school-based integrated curriculum in the PSHE KLA (e.g. Integrated Humanities) according to their school contexts. (**Please refer to Appendix 4 in Booklet 2 of the SECG for the topics covered in the “Constitution and the Basic Law” module*)

At the senior secondary level (S4-6)

- Students will continue to learn about the Basic Law, particularly in the core subject of **Liberal Studies** as well as in relevant elective subjects, such as **Chinese History, History, Economics and Geography**.

Planning and evaluation

- A systematic and strategic plan for implementing Basic Law education involves:
 - (1) implementing the most recent curriculum guides prepared by the CDC with regard to the contents and time allocated to the KLAs/subjects/topics related to Basic Law education;
 - (2) promoting Basic Law education-related learning in **cross-curricular studies/activities, theme-based forums, exhibitions, competitions, summer camps and non-local visits/exchange programmes conducted on the Mainland** with articulation to the whole-school curriculum, to complement classroom learning and teaching;
 - (3) making use of up-to-date and appropriate learning and teaching resources prepared for Basic Law education suited to the curricula;

- (4) participating in professional development programmes related to core contents, knowledge updating and enrichment, pedagogies and assessment that are dedicated respectively for school heads, middle managers and teachers to keep abreast of the development of society and the needs of students; and
- (5) self-evaluating the implementation of Basic Law education in schools with a view to making sustainable improvements.
- A planning and self-evaluation tool has been developed in Appendix 5 of Booklet 2 of the SECG for the reference of schools to develop a more holistic view about the situation of Basic Law education in schools and reflect on areas requiring further improvement. Schools may use this tool flexibly and incorporate self-evaluation findings so derived in their school development plans/annual school plans/reports. Examples on planning, implementing and evaluating Basic Law Education are also provided at the EDB website (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/renewal>) for schools' reference.

MRE: Reinforcing the Learning of Chinese History and Chinese Culture

The study of Chinese history and Chinese culture provides the foundation knowledge and root values, based on which students understand our country and progress towards developing a sense of national identity. The teaching of Chinese history and Chinese culture should be reinforced and strengthened in JS education through the following Chinese history education and Chinese culture across the curriculum arrangements.

Chinese History Education

- As recommended by the CDC, schools should teach Chinese history at the junior secondary level.
- Schools should devote **a quarter** (25%) of the total curriculum time allocated to the PSHE KLA to the learning and teaching of Chinese history regardless of the mode of curriculum organisation that a school adopts in organising the JS PSHE KLA curriculum.
- In schools where **Chinese History** is taught as **an independent subject**, a mode adopted by an overwhelming majority of schools at the JS and SS levels, they should continue to teach Chinese History as an independent subject.
- In schools that currently adopt either the **one-history mode** (i.e. the study of Chinese history and world history through one single subject) or an **integrated curriculum mode** with due regard for their particular contexts and developments, they **should place Chinese history as the main anchor of study** and provide systematic independent Chinese history modules similar to the teaching of Chinese History as an independent subject.

Chinese Culture across the Curriculum

- In parallel, the learning elements of Chinese culture are inherent in the Chinese history curriculum on the one hand, and are covered in all KLAs on the other, e.g. the Chinese Language Education KLA (“Chinese Culture” being one of the strands), Chinese music and arts in the Arts Education KLA.