

## Press Releases

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LCQ3: Sex education services

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Following is a question by the Hon Lee Cheuk-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Dr York Chow, in the Legislative Council today (February 25):

Question:

At present, the two major units providing outreaching sex education in schools are the Adolescent Health Programme under the Department of Health, and the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (HKFPA). However, I have learnt that, due to resource constraints, they cannot provide such services in languages other than Chinese, and non-Chinese speaking students are therefore unable to benefit from the services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether:

(a) it has assessed if the above situation constitutes a breach of the provisions in the Race Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 602); and

(b) it has any plan to provide outreaching sex education for non-Chinese speaking students (including allocating additional resources to HKFPA for organising sex education seminars in English and producing more sex education resource materials in English); if so, of the details of the plan; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Sex education is an important subject in moral and civic education. Currently, the primary and secondary school curricula have already included sex education and relevant topics. Besides, the Department of Health (DH) and the Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (HKFPA) also provide sex education services, such as outreaching sex education workshops and seminars.

My reply to the two parts of the question is as follows-

(a) & (b) At present, the Adolescent Health Programme under the DH provides "Sex Education Workshops" (the Workshops) for Form One to Form Seven secondary school students, teaching them the correct values and knowledge about sex. The Workshops are designed mainly in Chinese and are usually conducted in Cantonese. Nevertheless, the DH will organise Workshops for schools which admit non-Chinese speaking students upon demand, supplemented by teaching materials with English translation and simultaneous interpretation. We consider that the existing arrangements can adequately meet the needs of different schools and students in Hong Kong, and constitute no breach to the Race Discrimination Ordinance. Besides, the DH also plans to translate the entire series of Workshops into English, which will be launched in the 2009-10 academic year.

The DH has contacted individual schools with religious background or ethnic minority students before with regard to the provision of outreaching sex education services. However, some considered it more appropriate for the schools themselves to provide sex education for their students. The DH will continue to monitor the demand of schools for outreaching sex education services.

According to the HKFPA, its outreaching school sex education programmes are mainly conducted in Cantonese, but programmes in

English will be provided for non-Chinese speaking students upon requests from individual schools. In addition, the HKFPA's sex education website and teaching materials are bilingual. At present, the outreaching school sex education services of HKFPA are not subvented by the Government. HKFPA will consider providing the appropriate sex education services having regard to the needs of the community.

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