

Recommendation Guidelines on  
Allocating Mobile Data SIMs Cards by Schools

**Forewords and Background**

The Government is running the Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Change (“SIA”) via the Student Finance Office, providing full-grant of annual \$1,500 to close to 80,000 households. The Hong Kong Council of Social Services has secured a concessionary internet service plan of an annual tariff at \$1,536 through its WebOrganic.

“Sub-divided units”(“SDUs”) usually share one telephone junction box, making them difficult to apply for landline broadband connections. Some buildings, especially older ones that are not covered by any optical fibre network, are sharing a limited amount of data bandwidth for all users within the buildings due to technical limitations. And in other cases, optical fibres have not yet covered remote areas (such as some village houses). The SIA run by the Government may not meet the needs of those living in these places for e-learning at home. According to 2016 By-census, there were over 46,000 pupils living in SDUs, and half of them were in Kowloon.

**Eligibility**

“Bandwidth Support for E-learning at Home Scheme” provides two-month mobile SIM cards with data plans to eligible students so as to enable them to access hundreds of hours of real-time classroom learning per month, and support their continued education even during the school suspension due to COVID-19. Pupils enrolled into local primary and secondary schools who are currently receiving either of the social security schemes below are eligible to be nominated by their schools:-

- Comprehensive Social Security Allowance
- School Textbook Assistance Scheme (Full / Half Grant)
- Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (Full / Half Grant)

**Baseline Quota and Additional Quota**

To meet imminent needs of pupils for e-learning at home, schools will receive “baseline quota” SIM cards after simple verification upon application. The “baseline quota” allocation to schools is pre-determined by factors of the district: according to the 2016 By-census, since Kowloon has more SDUs, schools located in Kowloon districts will be assigned with more “baseline quota”. In view of the educational needs, secondary schools will receive more “baseline quota”.

Noting the actual demands vary between schools in the same district, schools may apply for “additional quota” on top of “baseline quota”. The Scheme will assess the application for “additional quota” based on socio-economic background of pupils of the schools, the number of SDUs in the district, the number of quota available and other applicable considerations. For “additional quota”, the Scheme aims to despatch the assigned ones in phases starting from 16 March 2020.

### Allocation Priority

Pupils allocated with mobile SIM cards must be eligible.

If there are more eligible pupils than the number of mobile SIM cards, since the following pupils face greater challenges in e-learning at home, they should have accorded higher priorities to receive these SIMs cards, and the final decision rests with participating schools.

- sub-divided units / apartments which do not allow broadband connections;
- buildings with connections of limited bandwidth (such as old buildings); and
- remote areas with slower internet connections.

### Workflow and Management

Schools are responsible for:-

- making application to the organiser according to the needs of e-learning at home of their pupils;
- confirming the receipt of mobile SIM cards from the organiser and store them safely (i.e. secure them in a safe place like other valuables and conduct a daily stocktake as inventory control);
- allocating these mobile SIMs cards to pupils facing greater challenges in e-learning at home;
- notifying these pupils to pick up mobile SIM cards as soon as practicable (recommended to invite pupils or their parents to come back to school to pick up);
- signing the acknowledgement form to declare using the mobile SIM cards for e-learning at home. Please refer to **Annex 1** for the sample;
- assigning such mobile SIM cards to the next in the priorities, if some pupils give up their entitlement; and
- submitting a confirmation report (see **Annex 2** for sample) to the organiser within one month after distributing all mobile SIM cards.