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The Editor  
The Financial Times

Dear Editor,

The article titled “Hong Kong to impose ‘national security’ schools curriculum” of February 4, 2021 has shown a profound misunderstanding of the objectives of the guidelines recently promulgated by the Education Bureau of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

Safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests is an indisputable duty of a responsible national in all countries and places around the world. The HKSAR is no exception. As an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong enjoys a high degree of autonomy under the “One Country, Two Systems” principle as enshrined in the Basic Law. People in the HKSAR also share our duty in protecting the security of our country. Our students deserve the right to study and learn in a safe and peaceful campus environment, as well as receive quality education and become responsible citizens who uphold national security and the rule of law, which is the cornerstone of continued prosperity, safety and stability of Hong Kong.

Admittedly, national security is a relatively new concept to many, including school personnel in Hong Kong. Upon request of the school sector, the guidelines are correspondingly designed to assist schools (secondary, primary and kindergarten) to carry out their educational duties under the law by providing them with handy reference materials concerning school administration and management. Our prime concern is the well-being of students and, as the Education Bureau, we have to ensure that individual school management maintain a safe, peaceful and orderly school environment for students' effective learning and healthy development. The guidelines provide an overall framework and suggest certain good practices, and schools may devise their own school-based strategies and plans on that basis.

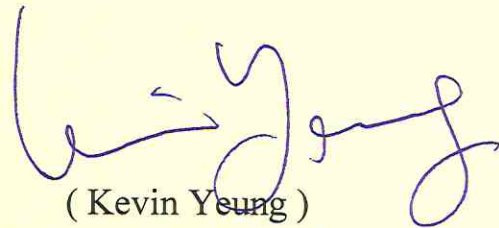
As an international city, Hong Kong always treasures the diversity of international schools and respects their unique management systems, curricula and arrangements for learning and teaching. Hence, while in our guidelines more detailed measures are provided for local schools, international schools are advised on the key principles, allowing them ample room for devising strategies and measures in light of their school-based circumstances. As everyone, regardless of nationality and ethnicity, must respect and comply with the law, we also look to international schools to help their students understand the National Security Law in Hong Kong and the concept of national security generally.

In Hong Kong, fostering students' sense of national identity has long been a key learning goal shared among our local schools. Learning elements related to national identity and national security have long been incorporated into different subjects. Based on the prevailing approach in promoting the Constitution and Basic Law education, we recommend national security education to be implemented through an integrated approach to enhance students' sense of national identity, affection for Chinese people and culture, as well as their awareness of and sense of responsibility for safeguarding national security through relevant subjects and life-wide learning activities. The purpose of our curriculum framework is to help teachers educate primary and secondary students to understand different aspects of national security. The statement that our curriculum "will force teachers to warn primary students as young as six years old against subversion" is completely groundless.



Implementation of national education, including national security education, is the legitimate duty of education authorities all over the world. Different countries have different approaches to implement national security education and develop their students' sense of national identity, including knowledge of their own history, culture, respective constitution, geography, etc. We deeply regret that there exist double standards, biased quotes and groundless comments due to the lack of understanding of and respect for Hong Kong's implementation plan.

Yours sincerely,



( Kevin Yeung )

Secretary for Education