

Guidelines on Free-Use Scheme

The Free Use Scheme has been implemented in both urban areas and the New Territories starting from 1 September 2000. Please observe the following guidelines in processing free use applications –

1. Objectives

- (a) To promote utilization of facilities during non-peak hours; and
- (b) To promote sports among students and elderly.

2. Facilities under Free Use Scheme

- (a) Main arena and activity rooms (including dance rooms, games rooms and P.A. system) of Sports Centres;
- (b) Squash courts (excluding table-tennis tables provided inside squash courts);
- (c) Hockey pitch at King's Park Hockey Ground and Happy Valley Recreation Ground (Pitch No.11);
- (d) Outdoor bowling greens; and
- (e) Obstacle golf course at Shek O Beach.

3. Period of Use

- (a) During non-peak period from 1 September to 30 June of the following year; and
- (b) During non-peak hours between opening to 5:00pm on weekdays (Monday to Friday except public holidays and normal maintenance day).

4. User Groups

- (a) Schools;
- (b) Subvented Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), including their subsidiary bodies/organizations;
- (c) National Sports Associations (NSAs); and
- (d) District Sports Associations (DSAs).

5. Procedures

- (a) Application in standard form at **Annex** for the whole school term by schools or other user groups from September to June of the following year could be submitted on or before 1 June each year. The applications by schools will have higher priority over the three other user groups and therefore applications by other user groups will be processed after completion of allocation of all the school bookings.
- (b) Applications received after 1 June should also be accepted and entertained if sessions are available. Such applications should be dealt with on first-come-first-served basis after those received on 1 June have been processed. Schools will have higher priority over the three other user groups if they are received on the same date, unless there are competing applications from the latter groups which are willing to pay.
- (c) There is no order of priority in the processing of applications for the latter three user groups.
- (d) Meetings with user groups should be held to reconcile clashes with a view to meeting the demand of all applications. Balloting will be used to allocate applications if clashes in booking cannot be resolved through negotiation. Balloting for the first batch of applications received on or before 1 June, if required, shall normally be arranged in June/July.
- (e) Free use bookings (including applications received after 1 June) should be confirmed in one go to facilitate the user groups to have sufficient time to plan their activities. It should only apply to sessions within the free use period / hours. Sessions beyond the free use period / hours but included in the same application should be dealt with separately according to the prevailing booking procedure.

6. Quota

As a general rule, the available courts/rinks at a venue can be booked for free use provided that this does not exceed half the total available non-peak hours in a day.

7. Cancellation of Booking

- (a) Typhoon signal No. 8.
- (b) School bookings will be cancelled in case of suspension of school activities under adverse weather conditions:
 - (i) Closure of schools announced by Education and Manpower Bureau;
 - (ii) Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal issued;
 - (iii) Typhoon Signal No. 3 or above hoisted;
 - (iv) Air Pollution Index or the predicated Air Pollution Index in the district where the outdoor facilities located is 200 or above;
 - (v) Serious flooding in the district where the school or the Leisure and Cultural Services Department venue located; and
 - (vi) Thunderstorm.

- (c) Facility management decision to close the venue on safety or operational grounds.
- (d) Hirers should give a minimum of 40 days in advance notice in writing to cancel the bookings.
- (e) Reallocation will only be made upon request of the hirers and will be confined to free use period only.
- (f) In case of frequent cancellations of free use bookings at short notice by user groups, the problem should be referred formally to the attention of Education and Manpower Bureau, the school principals or the senior management of the user groups to prevent recurrence.

8. Use of Facilities

Apart from their designated uses, these facilities should also be allowed for other sporting or non-sporting uses, such as telegames and shuttlecock, etc., on condition that such other uses will not cause damage to the facilities.

Leisure and Cultural Services Department
Leisure Services Section 1
(Revised in December 2006)