

17 February, 2021

Editor
Australian Financial Review
Email: edletters@afr.com.au

Dear Editor,

The article titled “Hong Kong six-year-olds to be taught about subversion in new campaign” published on 5 February 2021 contained misunderstandings of the objectives of the guidelines recently promulgated by the Education Bureau of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). Please allow me to provide the following background information.

Safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests is the constitutional duty of the HKSAR. This is also the common responsibility of all Hong Kong residents including school staff and students. National security education is a part of, and inseparable from, national education. The National Security Law is enacted for the purpose of preventing, suppressing and imposing punishment for acts and activities that endanger national security. In particular, preventive efforts should be accorded priority in order to minimise the need for suppression and punishment. As far as prevention and education are concerned, schools have a significant role to play.

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.

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 the 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.

For further information, please visit the press release:

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202102/04/P2021020400806.htm>

Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,

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