

# Primary School Education



Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE

Preparing your child for tomorrow



# Your child's best interest at heart

The primary school years are an important phase in your child's education, as they lay the foundation for his learning. It is also the time when he is most inquisitive – what he asks and how his questions are answered will be crucial to his development later on in life. During these formative years, we want to build his confidence and desire to learn, and expose him to different aspects of learning, in both academic and non-academic areas, so that your child will have a well-rounded primary education. We also want to give your child a broad exposure to a range of activities so that he can discover his talents and interests.

This brochure will help you understand primary school education as you and your child prepare for this journey. You will find information and advice on how to support your child in partnership with his school.

Entering primary school is the first key milestone in your child's education. As your child progresses from primary to secondary and then to post-secondary education, there will be several key decisions you will be making together. We will be providing you and your child with more information at relevant stages to help you make these important decisions.

## Primary School Education at a Glance

6 years of compulsory education

No school fees for Singapore Citizens except for monthly miscellaneous fees of \$5.50 as well as second-tier miscellaneous fees of an added \$5.50 (where applicable)

Subject-based Banding allows pupils to offer a mix of standard and foundation subjects, depending on their strengths

Pupils are encouraged to take part in co-curricular activities and community involvement programmes

At the end of 6 years, pupils sit for the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE)

## Key Milestones in Your Child's Education

Primary

Secondary

Pre-P1	P4	P6	Sec 2	Sec 4/5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choosing a Primary School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choosing Subject Bands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PSLE</li> <li>Choosing a Secondary School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choosing a Subject Combination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GCE 'O'/'N' Levels</li> <li>Choosing a Post-Secondary Institution</li> </ul>

# Contents

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- A young girl with dark hair, wearing a light blue school shirt and a blue tie, is smiling and holding a large yellow rectangular sign. The sign contains a table of contents. The background is a blurred classroom setting with a globe, a microscope, and a bookshelf.
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# Primary Education

## How do we prepare each child to thrive in a future driven by globalisation and technological advancements?

To navigate a fast-changing world that presents new opportunities and challenges, we need to nurture each child to become:

- a **confident person** who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself, is discerning in judgment, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively.
- a **self-directed learner** who questions, reflects, perseveres and takes responsibility for his own learning.
- an **active contributor** who is able to work effectively in teams, is innovative, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks and strives for excellence.
- a **concerned citizen** who is rooted to Singapore, has a strong sense of civic responsibility, is informed about Singapore and the world, and takes an active part in bettering the lives of others around him.





# A curriculum designed for a well-rounded learning experience

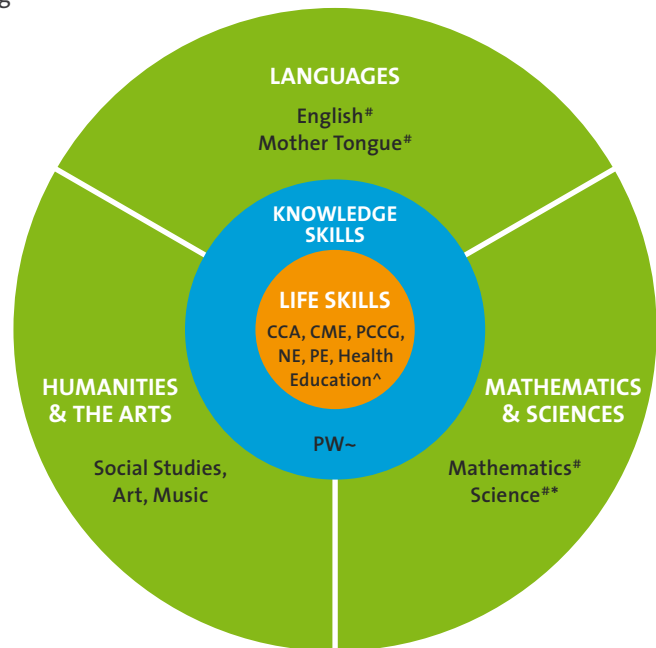
Primary school education is designed to give your child a strong foundation. This includes developing language and numeracy skills, building character and nurturing sound values and good habits. The primary school curriculum focuses on three main aspects of education – subject disciplines, character development and knowledge skills.

Subject disciplines comprise subject areas such as Languages, Humanities & the Arts and Mathematics & Sciences which ensure that your child has a good grounding in subjects across different areas of study. With Subject-based Banding, English, Mother Tongue, Mathematics and Science will be taught at the appropriate level at both Primary 5 and Primary 6 according to the ability of your child.

Knowledge skills focus on developing your child's thinking, process and communication skills. These are all essential skills for learning. Knowledge skills are taught through a variety of subjects and often through a project work approach. This enables pupils to use the full range of knowledge skills, work together and clearly demonstrate what they have learnt.

Character development is facilitated through daily teacher-pupil interactions as well as programmes in the non-academic curriculum. They focus on instilling sound values in your child, to take him through life as a responsible adult. Your child will have many opportunities to develop life skills through Co-Curricular Activities, Civics and Moral Education, Social Emotional Learning, National Education and Physical Education.

## Primary School Curriculum



### SUBJECTS TESTED IN PSLE

**Standard Subjects:**  
English, Mother Tongue, Mathematics, Science

**Optional:**  
Higher Mother Tongue

**Foundation Subjects:**  
Foundation English, Foundation Mother Tongue, Foundation Mathematics, Foundation Science

### LEGEND

CCA	Co-Curricular Activities
CME	Civics and Moral Education
PCCG	Pastoral Care & Career Guidance
NE	National Education
PE	Physical Education
PW	Project Work

# English, Mother Tongue, Mathematics and Science will be taught at the appropriate level according to the ability of the student.

\* Science is taught from Primary 3 onwards.

^ For Primary 1–4, Health Education is not a separate subject but relevant topics are included in the learning of English.

~ Project Work is conducted during curriculum time but is not an examination subject.



# Developing your child's language skills

## English and Mother Tongue Language

Your child will learn English as a first language in primary school. English is the lingua franca of international business, science and technology. The ability to write and speak English well therefore remains an essential skill to cultivate in our young.

Your child will learn his Mother Tongue Language (Chinese Language, Malay Language or Tamil Language) as a second language. Bilingualism, a cornerstone of our education system, has been a valuable asset to our pupils, enabling them to connect and tap into opportunities in the global environment.

With more Primary 1 pupils coming from households where English is the dominant home language, we will continue to refine the teaching of Mother Tongue Languages. Schools will use differentiated teaching approaches to cater to pupils from different home language backgrounds. They will promote functional use of the Mother Tongue Languages, with greater emphasis on listening and speaking skills.



### Key Features of the Revised Mother Tongue Language Curriculum

Chinese Language Curriculum (Modular)	Malay Language Curriculum	Tamil Language Curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More emphasis on speaking, listening and reading</li> <li>• Teaching tailored to meet the different learning needs of pupils</li> <li>• More engaging and appealing teaching materials that capture pupils' interest</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All pupils will take the Core Module.</li> <li>• Pupils with little or no exposure to the Chinese Language will take Bridging Modules.</li> <li>• Pupils with the interest and ability to go further will take the Enrichment Modules.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils will be taught according to their different levels of achievement at Primary 2, 4 and 6.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils will be given more opportunities to practise Spoken Tamil.</li> </ul>



# A learning environment that caters to your child's strengths and needs

## Learning Support Programmes

Schools have Learning Support Programmes to ensure that help is at hand for pupils who need it.

These programmes, which provide learning support for pupils who enter Primary 1 with either weak literacy or numeracy skills, ensure that pupils are able to keep up with core subjects like English and Mathematics.

Learning Support Programmes include daily lessons with smaller groups of pupils taught by specially trained teachers. These programmes use structured teaching approaches that meet the learning needs of these pupils.

## Programmes for intellectually gifted pupils

The Gifted Education Programme (GEP) caters to pupils who are intellectually gifted. GEP pupils will be placed in classes in selected primary schools, and receive an advanced curriculum that matches their abilities. They will be taught by specially trained teachers. Your child's school will invite him to sit for a screening test when he is in Primary 3 to determine his eligibility for the GEP.

For pupils with high abilities in specific subject disciplines, but who are not in the GEP, there are opportunities to enrich their learning through lessons during or outside of school hours.



## Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs)

CCAs are an integral part of a well-rounded education and play an important part in building character. They help nurture in pupils qualities such as resilience, tenacity, confidence and perseverance, which prepare them to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

There is a whole range of exciting CCAs for your child to choose from, ranging from uniformed groups to sports and the arts.

## Subject-based Banding

Subject-based Banding begins in Primary 5 and continues in Primary 6. Subject-based Banding means greater flexibility for your child by giving him the choice to take a mix of standard or foundation subjects, depending on his strengths. This will help him focus on the subjects he is strong in while building up the fundamentals in the subjects that he is very weak in.

With Subject-based Banding, your child will also be able to remain with his classmates during standard subject lessons, and enjoy the camaraderie and class spirit that he has established with them.

### How does Subject-based Banding work?

At P4

#### Pupil sits for school-based examinations

Based on pupil's results, school recommends a subject combination. Parents fill up option form indicating preferred combination.



At P5

#### Pupil takes subject combination chosen by parents

English, Mathematics, Science and Mother Tongue are available at standard and foundation levels. Mother Tongue is also available at the higher level.



End of P5

**Pupil who takes 1 or more foundation subject(s) and does very well in the subjects**

School may allow him to upgrade 1 or 2 subjects to standard level if school believes he can cope; or continue the same subject combination in P6

**Pupil who takes 4 standard subjects and has difficulty coping**

School may allow him to take 1 or more subjects at foundation level in P6

**All other pupils**

School will allow them to continue the same subject combination in P6



At P6

**Pupil takes subject combination decided by school**



End of P6

**Pupil sits for Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE)**





## Choosing the right school

As a parent, you have a vital role to play in choosing a school that matches the needs of your child. Below are some factors you may wish to consider when choosing a school for your child.

### Travel time and distance to school

Consider the distance from the school to your home. A shorter distance can offer the benefits of a shorter travelling time for your child, reduced transport costs and better opportunities for you to forge a strong relationship with the school of your choice. Stronger ties with the school means better co-operation in raising and educating your child.

To find out the distance between the school of choice and your home, you may wish to visit the Singapore Land Authority's OneMap SchoolQuery Service (<http://www.onemap.sg>) to obtain a list of schools within the 1km and 1-2km distance categories from your residential address.

### Mother Tongue Languages

Finding out what Mother Tongue Language options are offered by the school of choice is important. You should also note that:

- Chinese Language is offered in all schools;
- Malay Language is offered in all except Special Assistance Plan schools; and
- While Tamil Language is offered in most schools, you should nonetheless confirm this with the school of choice.

### Your child's interests

Consider your child's non-academic interests like sports, performing arts, music and technology; and find out if the school offers activities that match these interests.

#### • Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs)

Schools offer a variety of CCAs that could include sports, the arts, uniformed groups such as Brownies and Scouts, clubs and societies. Some schools offer new activities such as golf, ice-skating, roller-blading and bowling.

#### • School-based Programmes or School's Niche Areas

If your child has specific interests such as in sports or dance, you may want to look up schools which offer these as part of their niche areas. This booklet includes a comprehensive list of schools that offer these programmes for your reference. (Please see Primary One Registration insert in back cover pocket.)



## School's identity

Each school has its own special strengths. You may want to find out more about the school you have identified, and its strengths. This would include learning about

- The school's vision and mission;
- Culture of the school; and
- Parent Support Groups.

## Affiliated schools

Some primary schools (mostly those with religious/ clan associations) have close ties with certain secondary schools, in the form of affiliation. Your child can enjoy priority for admission to the secondary school affiliated to his primary school, provided he meets the school's admission criteria, and he indicates the affiliated secondary school as his first choice.

## Special Assistance Plan schools

Special Assistance Plan schools nurture in their pupils a deep understanding of the Chinese Language, culture and heritage, and enable them to be effectively bilingual in both English and Chinese.

## Special needs

Special provisions have been made to help children with mild learning difficulties on their learning journey. If your child has mild learning disabilities such as Dyslexia and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), schools have teachers trained in special needs and Allied Educators (Learning and Behavioural Support) to help them integrate into the school environment. There are also designated schools with full handicap facilities for pupils with physical disabilities. These schools are located in different parts of Singapore to provide convenience to parents. (Please see Primary One Registration insert in back cover pocket for a list of designated schools.)



***Need to know more?  
Please visit [www.moe.gov.sg](http://www.moe.gov.sg)***

Information on individual primary schools is available in the School Information Services section on the Ministry of Education (MOE) website. To find out more about the school of your choice, you may visit the school's website, attend the school's open house, or call the school.





# Financial assistance schemes and money matters

This section will address questions you may have about financing your child’s primary school education as well as provide information about school fees and the different financial assistance schemes and grants that are available. We have put in place initiatives to ensure that those who have financial difficulties will be catered for.

School and miscellaneous fees in our local schools have been kept affordable so that every child can enjoy the benefits of primary school education. Education Awards are also available to reward and motivate pupils who perform well in school.

## School Fees & Miscellaneous Fees

Monthly fees payable in Government and Government-aided primary schools			
	School Fees	Standard Miscellaneous Fees	Second-tier Miscellaneous Fees
• Singapore Citizen	\$0	\$5.50	The fees are decided by the school but are capped at a maximum of \$5.50. Your child may use his Edusave account to pay for these fees.
• Singapore PR	Year 2011 - \$22.00 Year 2012 - \$40.00	\$5.50	The fees are decided by the school but are capped at a maximum of \$5.50.

## Edusave Scheme

The Edusave Scheme maximises educational opportunities for all pupils by providing pupils and schools with funds to pay for enrichment programmes or to purchase additional resources. It also rewards those who perform well or who make good progress in their academic and non-academic work.

In 2011, your child will receive an annual contribution of \$200 and a one-off top-up of \$130 in his Edusave account if he is a Singaporean and studying full-time in a government or government-aided primary school.

Edusave Pupils Fund	Edusave Grants
<p>Your child may use the funds in his Edusave Account to pay for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrichment programmes organised by his school;</li> <li>• Second-tier miscellaneous fees in government or government-aided primary schools.</li> </ul>	<p>Your child's school will also receive annual grants to purchase teaching tools or organise enrichment activities that will benefit your child.</p>

Your child may qualify for Edusave Scholarships and Awards if he performs well in school and meets the following eligibility criteria:

Edusave Scholarships and Awards	Eligibility	Value (per year)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edusave Scholarship</li> </ul>	<p>Top 10% of pupils in P5 and P6 in government and government-aided schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$400 for top 5% pupils</li> <li>• \$350 for next 5% pupils</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edusave Merit Bursary</li> </ul>	<p>Top 25% of pupils in each level in every primary school with gross household income of less than \$4,000 per month.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$200 for P1 to P3</li> <li>• \$250 for P4 to P6</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edusave Good Progress Award</li> </ul>	<p>Maximum of 10% of pupils in each level in every school who have made significant improvement in their academic performance compared to the previous year. Pupils in Primary 1 are excluded from the scheme as there is no basis for comparison.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$100 for P2 to P3</li> <li>• \$150 for P4 to P6</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edusave Awards for Achievement, Good Leadership and Service (EAGLES)</li> </ul>	<p>Maximum of 5% of pupils in each level in every school, from Primary 4 upwards, who show leadership and excel in non-academic areas over a one year period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$150 for P4 to P6</li> </ul>



## Financial Assistance Schemes

Financial assistance schemes are available to ensure that no child is denied an education because of his financial situation.

The MOE Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) provides needy pupils with free textbooks, uniforms and waiver of school fees.

In addition, schools also provide discretionary assistance (e.g. transport allowance and meal coupons) using donated funds. Schools will assess pupils' specific needs and provide additional support where necessary. This school-based assistance can benefit those who do not meet the qualifying criteria for the MOE FAS, in addition to those on the MOE FAS.

Parents and pupils can approach the schools directly if they require financial assistance.

**MOE Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) for Government and Government-aided primary schools**

Eligibility	Standard Miscellaneous Fees	Textbook	School Attire	Examination Fees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family with 1 or 2 children, with gross household income not exceeding \$1,500 per month</li> <li>Family with 3 or more children, with gross household income not exceeding \$1,800 per month</li> </ul>	100% Waived	Free Textbooks	Free School Attire	75% subsidy of national exam fees (100% subsidy for pupils under Ministry of Community Development, Youth & Sports' Public Assistance Scheme)



## Opportunity Fund

Beyond the financial assistance schemes, schools have the Opportunity Fund to provide needy pupils with opportunities to improve their learning experience. Schools can use this Fund to subsidise the purchase of computers, co-pay for enrichment programmes, as well as subsidise overseas trips for pupils.





# Partnering the school to support your child

Preparing and supporting your child is important to ensure that he enjoys his learning experience in primary school. Here are some tips on how you can help your child in his early years of education.

## Help your child know his school environment

The earlier your child is familiarised with his new environment, the more positive he will feel about going to school.

- Visit or tour the school grounds with your child or show him pictures of the school.
- Talk to your child about the new routines he will be going through everyday, such as flag-raising and lowering, recess, assembly, school bus drop-off and pick-up points, timetable, and wearing the school uniform.
- Encourage your child to practise schooling skills such as asking for permission, buying food, organising his school bag and passing messages between school and parents. Help him to know the sources of help available in school (such as his Form Teacher or School Counsellor) and how he can seek assistance. You can even role-play with your child.
- Get him excited about new experiences, such as making new friends or learning new things.

## Value your child

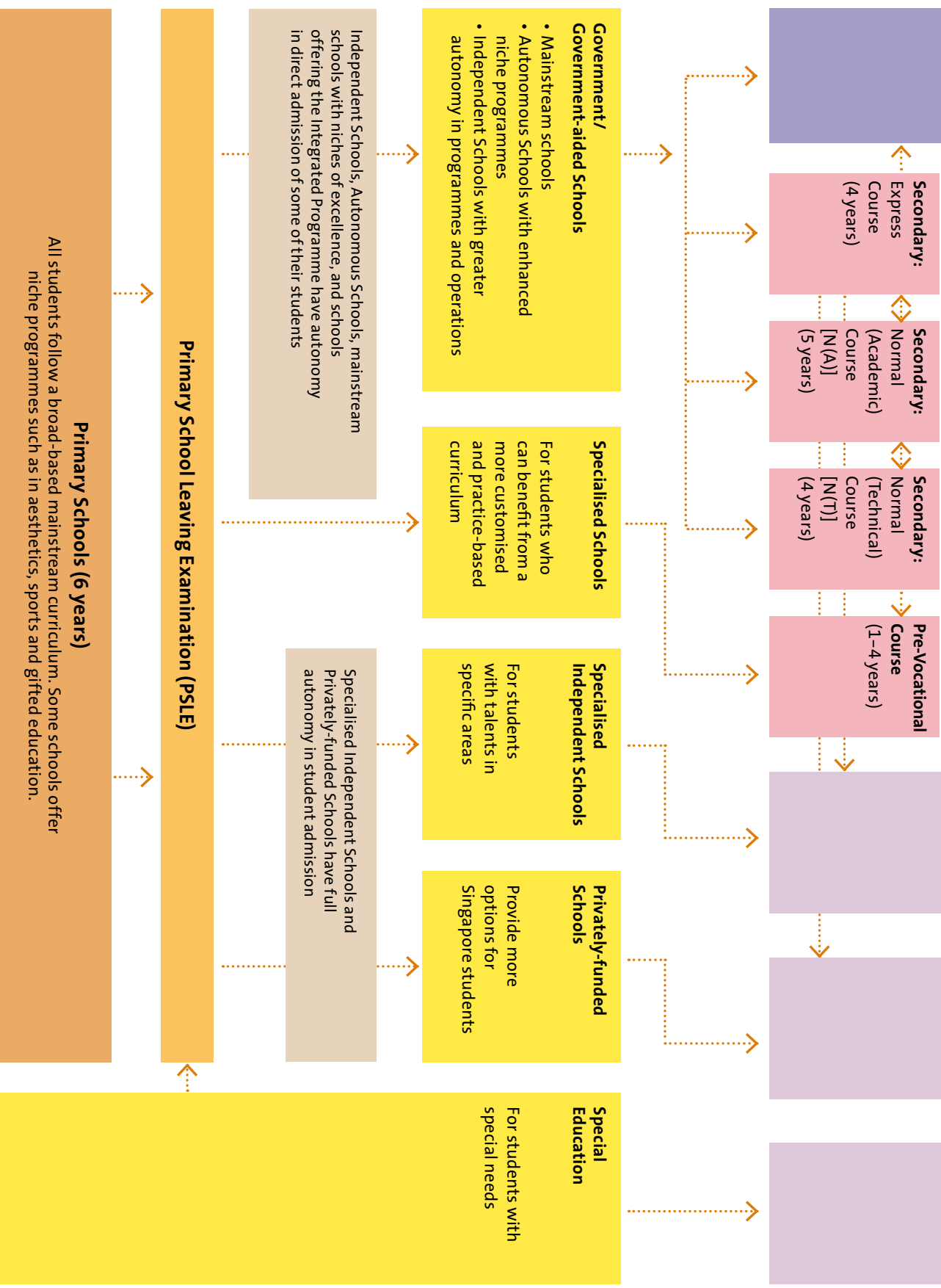
- Value your child for who he is, not just what he has achieved.
- Maintain a good relationship with your child. Respect his opinions and listen to what he has to say.
- Love your child regardless of his results.
- Appreciate your child's effort – focus on the process, not the marks.
- Avoid comparing your child's performance with that of others.
- Be generous with your praise.
- Make time to play with your child and enjoy his company.
- Encourage your child, especially when he is disheartened.

## Know and understand your child

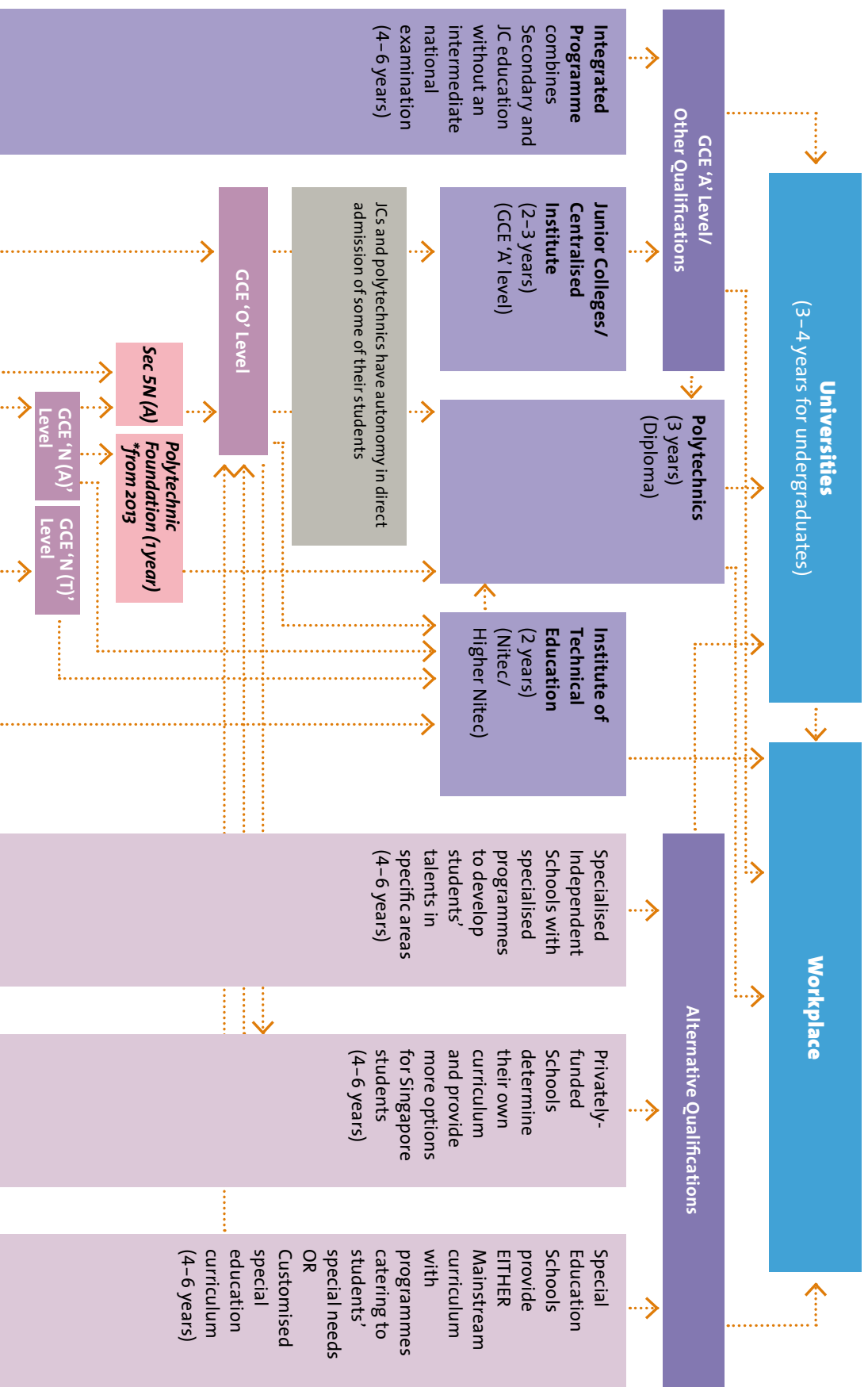
- Understand your child's strengths and weaknesses. Help your child develop his strengths further.
- Have realistic expectations and achievable goals for your child.
- Set step-by-step goals to enable your child to achieve them and experience success.
- Listen to your child's needs.

## Help and guide your child in his learning

- Help your child to develop a routine for school and homework.
- Create a conducive learning environment that suits your child's learning style/habits.
- Instil self-discipline by teaching your child to monitor his own behaviour.
- Be alert to his needs and fears. Seek help from school personnel such as Head of Department (Pupil Welfare), Pastoral Care Coordinator, Learning Support Coordinator, Teacher Counsellor or other professionals, if necessary.
- Discipline with empathy.



# The Singapore education journey





## Preparing for the future

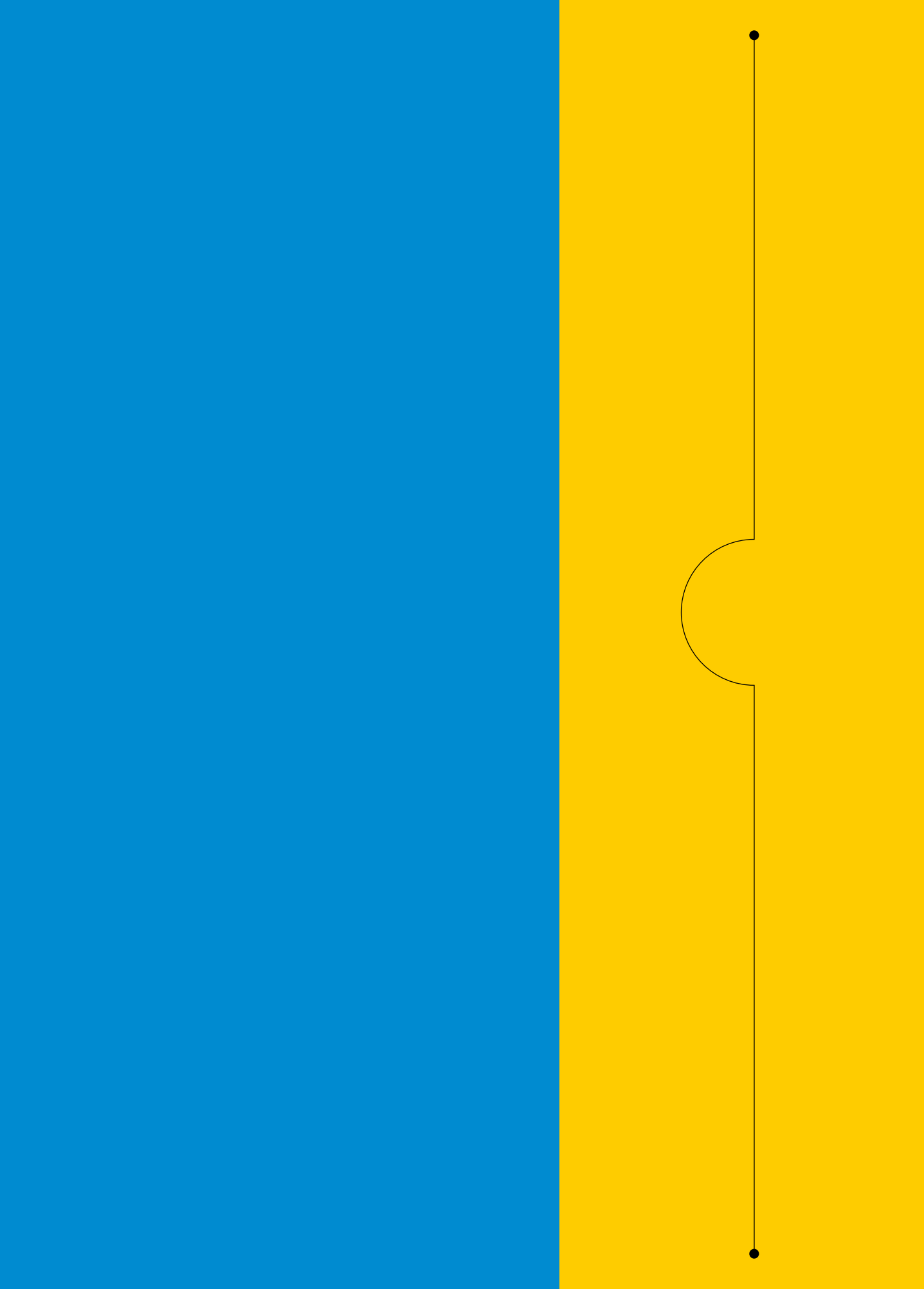
Your child's holistic development is the focus of our schools' efforts. We encourage you to find out more about the various school programmes and be in regular contact with your child's teachers. Your partnership with the school will help you to be constantly informed and involved in your child's progress. Together, we can help your child realise his full potential.

Visit MOE's website at [www.moe.gov.sg](http://www.moe.gov.sg) or call the MOE Customer Service Centre at 6872 2220 if you need further information on primary school education.

For the latest news on education and features on schools and teachers, please visit Schoolbag, MOE's online newsletter for parents, at [www.schoolbag.sg](http://www.schoolbag.sg).

MOE will be organising education seminars for parents on primary and secondary school education. For the latest updates and details, please refer to [www.moe.gov.sg](http://www.moe.gov.sg).







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The information contained in this  
booklet is correct as of March 2011