

SBB FAQs

Q1: My child missed the eligibility criteria for SBB (Sec) subjects but has a strong passion for the subject. May I appeal for my child to take the subject at a more demanding level?

- Students are eligible for Subject-Based Banding (Secondary) [SBB (Sec)] subjects at multiple points throughout their secondary school education. The first point they may be eligible is at the start of Sec 1 based on their individual subject scores at the PSLE.
- Subsequently, they have opportunities to be identified for SBB (Sec) subjects in the middle of Sec 1, start of Sec 2, and so on, based on their performance in school. The school will work with them to ensure that they take the subject at the appropriate level.

Q2: Will there be additional school-based support for a child who takes a subject at a more demanding level under SBB (Sec)?

Schools employ a variety of approaches to help students taking subjects at a more demanding level under Subject-Based Banding (Secondary) [SBB(Sec)] adjust both academically and emotionally. Support measures may include:

- Bridging and remedial lessons where necessary;
- Regular dialogue sessions with students to motivate them as well as to allow them to surface their learning concerns; and
- Monitoring of student well-being and academic progress, both for the subject(s) at the more demanding level as well as the remaining subjects.

Q3: When will students be offered to take subjects at a more demanding level? How will the schools inform parents of eligible students to take up subjects at a more demanding level?

Eligible students will be offered to take subjects at a more demanding level at four different junctures:

- a. Start of Secondary 1
- b. Mid-point of Secondary 1
- c. End of Secondary 1
- d. End of Secondary 2

Similar to current practice, upon meeting the eligibility criteria, schools will issue a letter of offer for the respective subjects to parents of eligible students. Parents can then decide whether to accept the offer for the child to take up subjects at a more demanding level.

Parents are encouraged to contact their child's school should they have any queries regarding the child's eligibility, and to also consult the school before deciding if they would accept the offer.

Q4: What if my child struggles with the higher-level subject?

- Students are encouraged to continue with the higher-level subjects until the end of Sec 2, as students do need time to adjust to the higher academic demands.
- Our school will monitor students' progress in the higher-level subjects as well as overall progress in all subjects, and will endeavour to provide the necessary support to students to help them cope.

Q5: Can I change a SBB subject I am doing to a lower level at any time if I cannot cope?

- It takes time to adjust to the demands of a higher-level subject, so students should allow themselves a full two years before deciding if they wish to continue offering the subject at a higher level in the upper secondary years. Interest in the subject is more important than the marks obtained, so students should not use marks as an indicator of their ability to cope with the subject.
- The school would involve the student's parents and teachers when such a request is made. The student and his/her parents can make the final decision to continue or drop the subject, as long as they are aware of the impact on the student's post-secondary progression.

Q6: How did MOE come up with the Subject-Based Banding (Secondary) eligibility criteria?

The Subject-Based Banding (Secondary) eligibility criteria aims to identify students who are stronger in specific subjects, and who are likely to benefit from taking these subjects at a more demanding level so that they can further build on their strengths.

- The AL 5 or better eligibility criterion for students to take a subject at the Express level is consistent with the course placement criteria under the new scoring system, and hence indicates that a student is likely to be able to cope with the subject at a more demanding level. A student who achieves a PSLE Score of 20 (i.e. an average of AL 5 for each subject) would qualify for the Express course, where the student would take all subjects at the Express level by default. Therefore, AL 5 is used as the qualifying AL to assess if students from other courses are ready to take the subject at the Express level.

Q7: Will there be additional school-based support for a child who takes a subject at a more demanding level under SBB (Sec)?

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Q8: What are the possible benefits of taking higher-level subjects?

- Some students (and parents) have shared that SBB allows the students to challenge themselves, and to have more options for Sec 3 subject combinations and post-secondary courses.
- A strong foundation in literacy, numeracy and reasoning, would ensure students are better prepared for various post-secondary progression pathways (e.g. to ITE and Polytechnic).

Q9: Will my child continue with the higher-level subjects all the way to Sec 4?

Your child may continue with the corresponding higher-level subject at upper secondary if he/she meets our school's criteria at the end of Sec 2.