

# 20,000 pupils denied first choice for study

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More than 20,000 disappointed primary six pupils were unable to enter the schools of their choice through the Secondary School Places Allocation.

Out of the 78,869 primary six students this year, about 50 per cent were given their first choice and about 70 per cent were able to be allocated within their first three choices.

Some 20,000 disappointed students were allocated to other districts because of too few places in their own areas.

Tai Po District Board social services committee chairman Leung Wo-ping said their district was short of places for 500 Form One pupils.

"About 300 of them were allocated to Sha Tin, but I don't know where the other 200 will go," Mr Leung said.

The Education Department said yesterday that they had not received any complaints concerning the allocations.

Lily Lai, senior education officer, said they had tried their best to allocate students to schools in the districts they had applied for.

"Only a minority fails to be allocated to the districts they live in, or to nearby areas. Those may be the ones who have actually made a cross-district application," Mrs Lai said.

Some parents were still dissatisfied: "Of course I'd like my daughter to go to a more ideal school if possible," said Lam Au Wai-chun, a mother of three.

"Restricting us to apply to schools within one district limits our choice of a good school," she said.

Her daughter had been allocated to their first choice school in Tai Po.

She had still been sending out applications since last week, trying to get her daughter enrolled in a better school in Kowloon or Hong Kong side. She had been knocking at schools' doors all day yesterday and would continue.