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Covid-19 Updates

This document will contain all Covid-19 related issues together for ease of reference and will be updated regularly

Article Audience – Academy Schools

Academies Accounting Arrangements

The ESFA has just released a [bulletin](#) to the AAD 2019/20. The purpose of the bulletin is to provide guidance to trustees, accounting officers and external auditors on matters arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, which may impact on the 2019/20 accounts. The bulletin has the same status as the AAD, and therefore compliance with both documents is a condition of your funding agreement.

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16-19 Tuition Fund

16-19 Tuition fund for academic year 2020-21: This £96m one-off funding for the academic year is ring-fenced and to provide support to small group tuition for 16-19 students in English, maths and other courses where learning was disrupted due to the pandemic. Please use this [link](#) for full details of who is eligible for the funding and how it will work over the academic year.

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Covid 19 catch-up premium

Following yesterday's press release and highlights on how this premium will be allocated, the DfE have issued further [guidance](#) summarised below:-

- The universal catch-up premium funding will be available for all of the following:
 - Primary, secondary and all through LA maintained schools, academies and free schools
 - LA maintained special schools
 - Special academies and free schools
 - Special schools not maintained by the LA
 - Pupil referral units
 - Alternative provision academies and free schools
 - LA maintained hospital schools and academies
 - Independent special schools
 - Funding will also be provided to LAs for pupils with EHCPs who are educated in independent special schools, based on the number of such pupils in their area.
- Allocations will be calculated on a per pupil basis, providing each **mainstream schools** with a total of **£80 per pupil in years R to 11**.
- **Special, AP and hospital schools will be funding £240 per place** for the 2020 to 2021 academic year
 - The DfE have applied additional weighting to specialist settings, to recognise the significantly higher per pupil costs
- Payments will be provided in 3 tranches, with an initial part-payment in autumn 2020 – based on latest available data on pupils in mainstream schools and high needs place numbers in special, AP and special schools not maintained by a LA.
- There will be a second grant payment in early 2021, based on updated pupil and place data. For mainstream schools, the 4 – 15 pupil headcount from October 2020 census will be used.
- For special, AP and hospital schools, the data used will be:
 - 2019-20 academic year place numbers from the published LA 2019-20 financial year budget returns for LA maintained schools
 - The published high needs place numbers for the 2020-21 academic year for academies and special schools not maintained by the LA
- The second grant payment will take account of the initial part payment made in autumn 2020, so that schools receive a total of £46.67 per pupil or £140 per place across the first 2 payment rounds
- A further £33.33 per pupil or £100 per place will be paid during summer term 2021.
- Although calculated on a per pupil/place basis, schools should use the sum available as a single total from which to prioritise support for pupils according to their need.
- As the catch-up premium is to mitigate the effects of the unique disruption caused by the pandemic, the grant will only be available for the 2020-21 academic year.
- Funding should be used for specific activities to support their pupils to catch up for lost teaching in previous months, in line with guidance on curriculum expectations for the next academic year. Schools have the flexibility to spend their funding in the best way for their cohort and circumstances.

Covid 19 catch-up premium – Continued/...

- The Education Endowment Foundation has published a [support guide for schools](#), which contains evidence-based approaches and which schools are encouraged to use to help them direct the additional funding in the most effective way. The EEF will be publishing a quick guide to implementation for 2020-21 in August 2020.
- As this is government funding, school leaders must account for how this funding is being used to achieve the goal of getting back on track and teaching a normal curriculum as quickly as possible. Governors and trustees as part of their role should scrutinise schools' approaches to catch-up from September – including plans for and use of the catch-up funding.
- Ofsted will conduct a programme of non-graded visits to some schools during autumn and discuss how schools are bringing pupils back into full-time education, which may include the plans schools have to spend this funding. This will continue when they resume routine inspections (timing currently under review) and they will make judgements about the quality of education being provided, as well as how leaders are using their funding (which includes catch-up).

Teachers Pay

In a [press release](#) this morning, the education secretary has accepted all recommendations to award teachers the largest pay increase in a generation. This includes all the recommendations from the STRB as follows, which are equivalent to a 3.1% increase in the overall pay bill:-

- Raise the starting salary for new teachers by 5.5%
- Increase the upper and lower boundaries of the pay ranges for all other teachers by 2.75%

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DFE latest: Every pupil in England to see another rise in funding in 2021

The DFE have just issued this [press release](#) with some information on the Covid catch-up fund as well as other news regarding funding from 2021. A summary of the release is as follows:-

- **Covid catch-up:** allocations from the £650m, one part of the overall £1b Covid catch-up package, will be based on the number of pupils and paid once a term over the 2020/21 academic year. A 1,000 place secondary will receive £80,000 and a 200 place primary will receive £16,000 to take the impact of lost teaching time on pupils as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.
 - Headteachers can decide how best to use their schools' premium allocation to tackle the impact of lost teaching time on their pupils, but are encouraged to spend it on evidence-drive approaches, including small group or one-to-one tuition, support over the summer or additional support for great teaching
 - Disadvantaged pupils in schools and colleges will also benefit from the second part of the catch-up fund; a £350m tutoring fund
 - From the second half of 2020/21 autumn term, the National Tutoring Programme will provide support to disadvantaged pupils aged 5-16 in two ways: schools will be able to access heavily subsidised tuition from organisations on a list of approved partners, while some of the most disadvantaged schools will be supported to employ in-house academic mentors to provide intensive support to pupils.
- From 2021, MPPF will be £5,150 per pupil in secondaries; £4,000 per pupil in primaries
- Extra funding for small and remote schools
- Additional protection built into the funding formula means every pupil, regardless of amount of funding currently received, will attract a year-on-year increase of at least 2%
- Most LAs will see increases of over 3% in funding allocated per pupil
- Funding to cover increases to teacher pay and pensions worth £2b will also be included from 2021, rather than paid separately – reassuring schools that the funding will continue to be provided in their core budgets.

Once further guidance is issued on the Covid catch-up funding, this will be emailed to you.

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School funding: exceptional costs associated with coronavirus – FSM provision during the summer holidays

The [guidance](#) has been amended to include additional information for costs relating to the summer holidays, which are not covered by the national voucher scheme

Holiday clubs, after-school clubs and other out-of-school provision

The following updated [guidance](#) regarding the above clubs was issued following the statement by the Prime Minister on 23 June.

Keeping Children Safe in Education – Proposed 2020 revisions

This consultation has now been permanently withdrawn.

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PE & Sports Premium 2020-21 and carry forward underspends for 2019-20

Following the press release at the weekend regarding the continuation of this £320m grant for the academic year 2020-21, the DFE has now updated [guidance](#) to reflect that this may also be used to support online delivery. They have confirmed that the 31 July 2020 deadline for online reporting still holds, although this is being kept under review. Individual schools allocations for 2020-21 will be confirmed in due course.

However, in recognition of the Covid-19 outbreak, the DFE has taken steps to relax the ring-fencing arrangements for the PE and sport premium in the 2019 to 2020 academic year to **allow any unspent grant to be carried forward into the next academic year** (2020 to 2021). Where schools are carrying forward under-spends, their published online report should set out the amount being carried forward and give brief reasons for this under-spend.

Any under-spends carried forward will need to be spent in full by 31 March 2021 and schools should factor this into spending plans for their 2020 to 2021 PE and sport premium allocation. The [2019 to 2020 conditions of grant document](#) has been updated to reflect this exceptional amendment to the ring-fencing of the grant.

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Claim form - Exceptional costs associated with coronavirus

The DFE have now issued the [claim form](#) for schools to make their claim for exceptional costs associated with coronavirus. The deadline for this form is **21 July 2020** and they clearly state there is no opportunity to request an extension to the claims window, or any resubmission after that date. However, further claims will be possible through a subsequent claim window in the autumn – and details regarding this process will be published later in the year.

Schools are able to claim now for actual incurred costs. Please note, do not include estimated costs beyond the date of your claim as these will be covered during the subsequent claim window in the autumn. This will be for further costs incurred during the period **up to the end of the summer term in July**.

Detailed guidance regarding exceptional additional costs relating to COVID-19 including the claim process were published on 24th June 2020 – **deadline for claims is 21st July 2020**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/claiming-exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19/exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19--2>

There are 3 agreed cost categories against which you can make a claim:

- increased premises related costs
- support for free school meal (FSM) children who are not attending school, other than through the national voucher scheme
- additional cleaning, over and above existing cleaning arrangements, where you have a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The guidance has further details on each category and on your eligibility to claim if you are planning on being able to add to your financial reserves at the end of your financial year.

The guidance is clear that you are not able to claim for:

- costs associated with opening schools to more pupils from 1 June
- additional staff costs
- loss of self-generated income

There is a facility within the claim form to claim for 'other exceptional costs' which will be further assessed by the DfE.

The claim form is accessed through your [DFE Sign-In account](#). All claims will be paid directly to academy schools and through the local authority for maintained schools as this is funding, not income.

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FSM guidance in the light of Covid-19 – vouchers for summer break

The DFE has now issued updated [guidance](#), particularly about how to access the vouchers for FSM eligible children to cover the summer break. This followed the announcement on 16 June that all children eligible for FSM in term time would benefit from the "[Covid summer food fund](#)".

Please note that this fund can also be used to support Y11 and Y13 pupils who were confirmed as eligible and claiming benefits-related free school meals during the summer term.

There is a deadline for orders to be placed **at least one week before your school term ends**.

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Laptop scheme

The access to technology scheme was introduced in mid-April and revised guidance issued on 29 June:-

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-technology-for-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=542b6bf4-9e77-4ec1-9668-80a714cc3b37&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

The scheme allows for schools with disadvantaged children and young people who do not currently have access to technology from other sources to apply for:

- digital devices (laptops and tablets)
- internet access

Local authorities are responsible for ordering and distributing laptops and tablets to:

- care leavers and children with a social worker
- year 10 pupils who do not have a social worker and are in maintained schools, including voluntary aided schools

Local authorities should work with schools to assess which pupils require a laptop or tablet. Academy trusts are responsible for ordering and distributing laptops and tablets to year 10 pupils who:

- do not have a social worker
- do not have access to a laptop or tablet through another source

Local authorities and academy trusts will own the laptops and tablets they receive, and loan them to families, children and young people, or gift them to schools or care leavers.

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Update on paused or cancelled data collections

The DFE has now updated its guidance regarding [data collections](#) which were either cancelled or paused. Please review this link to see which data collections will now continue.

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Academies budget forecast return 3 year (BFR3Y)

The BFR3Y will go live on 8 July 2020. Given the significant challenges currently facing the academy sector, they have made a number of changes to this data collection to minimise the burden on trusts. The main changes, for this year only, are:

- They have extended the deadline for completing the BFR3Y by two months. All trusts will therefore need to submit their data by 29 Sept 2020.
- They are not collecting summary forecasts for the academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23 in the BFR3Y.
- Please note that academy trusts must still compile these longer-term forecasts for their own internal financial planning as required in the Academies Financial Handbook (section 2.11):
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-financial-handbook>

As usual, trusts are required to complete forecasts for academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21, this being the main part of the form. They will also collect summary data for 2018/19 revenue income and expenditure totals as part of this collection (limited to 8 input fields in the online form).