

To: All local authorities, service children education providers and school's MI suppliers

Autumn School Census 2020 – Readiness Bulletin Number 2

Purpose

The purpose of this note is to provide school census contacts with important information in readiness for the 2020 autumn school census. All school census contacts should have already received an early warning readiness email (issued 7 September 2020) and the advice offered here should be read in conjunction with that bulletin.

Data collection timetable and key dates

The census date for the 2020 autumn school census is Thursday 1 October, the local authority ask that you make your submission on COLLECT by Friday 2 October to allow sufficient time to resolve queries and errors. The deadline for the Local Authority and Academies for approved submissions is Wednesday 28 October. The database will be closed to amendments from schools and local authorities on Wednesday 25 November.

We strongly encourage schools and local authorities to submit their census returns to the department as soon as possible so that we can provide additional support where needed. Schools or local authorities should contact us straight away if they anticipate any issues in making a complete census return.

Unusual circumstances – COVID-19

Schools must provide pupil level data for pupils who are recorded on the school admission register as at census day, irrespective of whether they attend school on that day. Therefore, pupils who are absent from school on census day, whether the absence is COVID-19 related or for other reasons, should be counted in schools' census returns in the usual way.

Current funding allocation through the national funding formula (NFF) and the pupil premium is calculated based on the number of pupils on roll and is not affected by pupil non-attendance on census day. However, the universal infant school (UIFSM) funding stream is dependent on whether a pupil attends school on census day.

UIFSM uses the variable 'school lunch taken', which is collected in relation to pupils in years R, 1 and 2 (or aged 4-6 in year group X) and indicates whether a pupil has taken a school lunch on census day. Where COVID-19 related absences occur and 'school lunches taken' are affected, a day and time when the situation is regarded as normal is to be substituted. Schools can use the next normal day, an earlier day in census week or another day that reflects the normal situation. Where other days or times are used, schools must record these for audit purposes.

However, there are some scenarios which do not qualify as an unusual circumstance and therefore pupils must be recorded as NOT having taken a school lunch:

- If the school kitchen is closed and the school have not offered any alternative provision;
- Pupils who have changed their preference to bring a packed lunch
- Pupils are absent for other reasons not connected to COVID-19.

Recording children receiving free school meals as part of the temporary NRPF extension

In April we temporarily extended free school meal eligibility to also include some children of groups who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) conditions.

These groups are:

- children of Zambrano carers
- children of families with no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- children of families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who are also subject to a no recourse to public funds restriction
- children of a subset of failed asylum seekers supported under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

With exception to those who are supported under Section 4, families in these groups are also subject to a maximum household income threshold of £31,500 per year for London, and £28,200 for areas outside of London.

Schools should not be marking children receiving meals as part of this temporary change as being in receipt of free school meals on the October school census, however they should keep a separate record of the children in these categories that they are providing meals for, including the immigration group that they fall under. Schools are not required to keep any personal information or any evidence of status that has been provided by families.

School census 2020 to 2021 guide

A guide for the 2020-21 academic year is now available [here](#). We would ask that you also look at the section which covers changes since the previous census [here](#) in particular the changes to attendance and exclusions.

COLLECT user guides

To assist schools and local authorities with using the COLLECT system to make a successful school census return, we have published COLLECT user guides on the school census website. These can be found at [here](#)

Funding update and COLLECT funding reports

This is a reminder that the data collected via the 2020 autumn school census will be used in the calculation of the schools block of the dedicated schools grant and also the universal infant free school meals funding therefore it is vitally important that the census data for your schools' are submitted promptly and accurately. Post 16 data collected via the autumn school census will be used by the education and skills funding agency (ESFA) to calculate post 16 funding allocations for schools with sixth forms.

Reports showing information which will feed into the calculations for the dedicated schools grant, the universal infant free school meal and post 16 will be available via the reports section in COLLECT. It is essential that these reports are checked and verified in conjunction with LA Finance Officers in advance of the autumn school census database closing to amendments from schools and local authorities on 25 November. Amendments to the database will not be possible after this date and, consequently, this will be your only opportunity to contest your funding pupil numbers.

To assist with using and interpreting the dedicated schools grant funding reports, funding report user guides are available [here](#).

16-19 funding reports

The ESFA school census autumn 2020: 16 to 19 reports will be available throughout the live collection, via the 'launch reports' button in COLLECT.

The report suite comprises six reports: three reporting on student data for the current year and three on student data for the previous year, both of which are used in 16 to 19 funding allocations. They contain information on how your funding may be affected next year.

- ESFA 16-19 maths and English GCSE status by student (current academic year data)
 - ESFA 16-19 maths and English GCSE status by student (previous academic year data)
 - ESFA funded students summary report (current academic year data)
 - ESFA funded students summary report (previous academic year data)
 - ESFA student detail report (current academic year data)
 - ESFA student detail report (previous academic year data)
- We have developed the reports to help schools and academies quality assure their post-16 data and make more accurate census returns. Post-16 funding allocations are based on census data from individual schools and academies, so returning accurate data is a key factor in ensuring the allocation is right.

Information on the reports is available on [GOV.UK](#)

It gives information about the reports' contents and sets out some of the common data issues.

The complementary school census post-16 interactive tool is available [here](#) The tool is designed to help schools and academies understand how school census data is used to calculate post-16 funding, and how common errors impact on the level of funding. We encourage schools and academies to use the tool so that they can avoid errors in recording:

- GCSE maths and English prior attainment
- valid, up-to-date qualification numbers (QNs)
- transfers and withdrawals
- core aim
- planned hours

There are examples of all these errors and their solutions in the tool.

COLLECT duplicate reports

There are 2 different duplicate reports which are available for schools and local authorities to run in COLLECT and a separate guidance document is available [here](#) for each report. These reports are:

- (i) duplicate report – Same UPN
- (ii) duplicate report – Same Person Different UPN

Known issues

The following checks are triggering incorrectly in the baseline XSLT sent to software suppliers. These issues have been resolved and an updated XSLT has been issued to suppliers, we acknowledge that at this late stage not all suppliers will be able to implement these changes. However, the checks will disappear when the return is loaded into COLLECT, only genuine cases will remain.

Error number 1601q

Validation compares pupil's against the school type
For all phases where age cannot be <2 the age should be calculated as follows:

- Autumn – aged 2 as at 31 August
 - Spring – aged 2 as at 31 December
 - Summer – age 2 as at 31 March
- All other ages will use 31 August

Error message

Please check: Pupil's age is out of age for school type

Issue

This query is using the wrong year for reference

Error number 1638

Where <EnglishGCSEHighestPriorAttainment> is present and the grade is equal to 'A*'- 'C' / '9'- '4'
<EnglishGCSEPriorAttainmentYearGroup> must be equal to '1' or '2'

Error message

Where learner has achieved grade 'A*'- 'C' / '9'- '4' in English the prior attainment stage must be equal to '1' or '2'

Issue

This error has been deemed redundant and therefore the validation check has been deleted.

Term-on-term validation

A user guide for the term on term queries which are applied as part of the school census will shortly be available [here](#). This user guide sets out what term-on-term validation checks are carried out, how they are derived and what the thresholds are.

Notepad entries

Where validation queries are raised in COLLECT, an explanation will be required for these queries in the return level notes field within COLLECT. Please note that the department will require sufficient detail in these explanations to allow the queries to be accepted and returns authorised.

A guide is available [here](#) providing examples of what would be regarded as an acceptable notepad entry for queries on each termly census. Within this workbook there are separate tables for school level queries, pupil level queries and term on term queries. Please note that the examples within this document are only provided for illustrative purposes and should not be used as a simple 'copy and paste' into COLLECT – a relevant explanation for an individual school's circumstances should be provided.

Further support

A data collection forum is available for all data collection contacts to access. The purpose of the forum is to provide a facility to allow customers to exchange ideas and good practice relating to specific data collections and related EDD systems. To gain access to the forum please complete a service request form [here](#)

As always, if you have any queries about any of the points covered in this note, COLLECT or school census in general, please use the service request form [here](#)

Please use the feedback form [here](#) if you have any comments about the data collection content on the web site, the service offered by the data collection helpdesk, the COLLECT system or any other aspect of our data collection service.

Thank you for your support and cooperation

Kind regards

Education Data Division Helpdesk