

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

Summer School Census 2021 – Readiness Bulletin Number 1

Purpose

The purpose of this note is to provide school census contacts with important information in readiness for the 2021 summer school census. This will be the first in a series of bulletins and therefore provides some basic information about the summer school census including arrangements around COLLECT familiarisation.

Why is the school census important?

The school census is the department's primary source of administrative data about pupils attending schools in England. The data collected is vital in supporting a number of the department's strategic objectives and is widely used for the purpose of improving, and promoting, the education or well-being of children in England. For example, the data collected helps us to make sure we are allocating funds where they are needed and that no groups of children are missing out on the education they deserve.

Early years funding

On 18 March we announced that we are temporarily varying our approach to funding local authorities (LAs) for the early years entitlements this financial year to give LAs and providers more certainty over their funding income, and LAs will be funded on a termly attendance count basis in 2021 to 2022.

For maintained settings, we intend to use the termly data from the 2021 summer term (and the 2021 autumn term) school

census to determine the early years block funding allocation for three and four year olds in school nurseries, maintained nursery schools and academies.

As we don't normally use the summer (or autumn) term school census for early years funding allocation purposes, these censuses do not have the additional marker for 'reason for funding' for two year olds, or for children eligible for the early years pupil premium (EYPP), which is normally provided through the spring school census. Therefore, we cannot identify from the summer (or autumn) school census which children qualify for the national entitlements for the two year old entitlement or the EYPP. LAs have been advised to submit a termly data count in order to provide this information, which will also include a termly data count for children accessing the early years entitlements in non-maintained settings, such as private, voluntary and independent childcare providers.

As the summer term data will be used to determine the funding allocation for the early years entitlements, it is important to make sure your census information is accurately submitted and any additional data is provided to your early years contact at the local authority. The technical guidance for local authorities setting out the early years funding approach for 2021 to 2022 is available [here](#).

Data collection timetable and key dates

The census date for the 2021 summer school census is Thursday 20 May, the local authority ask that **maintained schools** make their return by **Friday 21 May**, in order to give us enough time to thoroughly check your data and answer errors and queries.

The final deadline for approved submissions from local authorities and **academies** is Wednesday 16 June, but as usual the local authority ask that academies submit well ahead of this time in order to give us as much time as possible to check data and resolve errors, queries and duplicates.

The database will be closed to amendments from schools and local authorities on Wednesday 7 July.

Summer census COLLECT familiarisation

A 'beta' release of the 2021 summer school census live COLLECT blade is now available for you to become familiar with. This will remain available until 4pm on Friday 14 May at which point the blade will be removed and cleared out in advance of the start of the live collection on Thursday 20 May.

The department would strongly recommend that, if possible, all schools take the chance to load a file output from their management information system (MIS) into COLLECT during the familiarisation process. This will allow schools to check that all the required data is being output correctly from their MIS into the summer census return and whether any validation errors or queries are generated against their data when loaded into COLLECT which need to be resolved before the collection goes live. This will be especially important for any schools completing the summer school census for the first time.

COLLECT familiarisation will take place on the same system as the live collection and, therefore, can be accessed by logging into COLLECT via [DfE sign-in](#) in the same manner as you would for the live collection.

In previous collections the use of the school census familiarisation blade has been extremely low, therefore if the number of users continue to be low again this collection, we will look to undertake a consultation about the future of this service.

School census data collection guidance

The school census manual for the 2020 to 2021 academic year is available on the [school census website](#).

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.

Year 11 and Year 13 leavers

Guidance on year 11 to 13 exam cohort attendance and provision for the 2021 summer term can be found in annex B in the Covid 19 operational guidance on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Summer census MS Access database

A MS Access database for the 2021 summer census will be made available to local authorities on request prior to the census going live on 20 May. If you require a copy of the Access database, please complete a [service request form](#)

2021 spring school census

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support with helping schools to successfully complete the recent spring census collection.

The **spring census will be removed from COLLECT at 3pm on 14 May 2021**. If you want to take a copy of your spring census data, please do so by this date as this will be the last opportunity to get an export of your data before the database is archived. Once the database has been archived, the department will not retain the functionality to perform COLLECT exports on your behalf.

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 Data Operations systems. To gain access to the forum please complete a [service request form](#).

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](#).

Please use the [feedback form](#) 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

Data Operations Service Desk