

Covid19 financial implications and guidance

Below is a summary of the most recent guidance, we are expecting further guidance to be published in June. Schools will be keeping a log of additional costs and pressures related to Covid possibly on a spreadsheet (the coding should be on the correct account codes relating to spend categories on FMS). Although schools will be keeping a tally of additional costs there may be other savings that may help balance these costs. Schools should note the guidance and consider if they are eligible to claim. The DfE are expecting most schools will be able to manage costs and will not need to claim.

Schools block

The Department for Education (DfE) have published guidance for schools on funding during this time. Schools will continue to receive their core funding allocation, as determined by the Local Authority for maintained schools for the 2020 to 2021 financial year (April 2020 to March 2021). Academies and non-maintained special schools will continue to receive their core funding allocations through the general annual grant (GAG) until August 2021. This will happen regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure and will ensure schools can continue to pay staff and meet other regular financial commitments during this time.

High Needs Block

Local authorities will also continue to receive their high needs budget and should continue to pay top-up and other high needs funding to schools. This is to ensure that the employment and payment of staff supporting schools with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can continue.

Where schools pay top-up or other funding for pupils attending alternative provision (AP), or pay for other SEND or AP services, these payments are expected to continue so that teachers and support staff can be paid in accordance with their existing employment contracts.

If placements and services for the summer term have not yet been agreed, schools should fund on the basis of previous patterns of placements and commissioning.

Early years Block

From the week commencing 1st June 2020 the Government have advised providers can welcome back more children into early years settings. However, settings will be limited to number of spaces that can be provided safely, this will be based on the layout of your provision and your available staff. At the beginning of the summer term for April 20 and May 20 portal providers were able to claim for children who had registered but had not yet attended. As of the 1st June any new children will have to physically attend to be eligible to be included on the Portal for payment. Please keep accurate record of attendees, we will ask for attendance records from a small sample of providers as part of our usual audit process.

We will continue to pay all settings for children on the portal as at end of May 2020. Whilst children on your portal claim, who do not attend can still be claimed for, any children who are new starters from 1st June 2020 (and physically attend) you should

use the funding of the vacant place for the new child until the child who is currently not attending returns.

Budget Sustainability

During this time, the DfE is expecting schools to continue to manage their budgets in the most effective way possible, and to redirect their existing resources to best support all their pupils, particularly vulnerable children and children of critical workers, in the current circumstances.

The DfE recognise that in some instances where schools have remained open, they may already have or will, over the coming weeks, face additional costs as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. In some instances, schools may not be able to cover these from their existing resources.

The DfE have recognised the following areas where schools are likely to face additional costs:

- increased premises related costs (including utilities and resources needed to keep the school open, such as hygiene services) associated with keeping schools open during the Easter and/or summer half term holidays, for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, over and above the costs that schools would have faced in other circumstances
- support for free school meals (FSM) for eligible children who are not attending school, where those costs are not covered by the FSM national voucher scheme - this covers:
 - costs to schools arising before the introduction of the national voucher scheme
 - costs where schools are providing free meals to children for whom the national voucher scheme is inappropriate (for example, because there are no participating supermarkets locally or schools are providing meals directly)
- additional cleaning – required due to confirmed or suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) cases, in line with COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings, over and above the cost of existing cleaning arrangements

If a school faces other, extraordinary costs to deliver appropriate support to their pupils through this period that are not covered by the list above and cannot be met by existing budgets, they should contact DfE. CoronavirusHelpline@education.gov.uk

The funding will be available to schools that are unable to meet such additional costs from their existing resources, or which they could only meet by drawing down on reserves and undermining their long-term financial sustainability. The DfE are not expecting schools to make a claim against this funding if they are anticipating that they will be able to add to their reserves in the 2020 to 2021 financial year.

There are cash limits on the level of funding a school can claim

Levels of funding based on pupil numbers

Size	£
250 pupils or fewer	25,000
251 to 500 pupils	30,000
501 to 1000 pupil	50,000
Over 1000 pupils £75,000	75,000
Special schools and alternative provision – regardless of size	50,000

There may be some exceptional instances where individual schools will face additional costs that are higher than these limits. In these circumstances, schools will be able to make a case for increasing the limit when they submit a claim for additional funding.

Government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-schools/school-funding-exceptional-costs-associated-with-coronavirus-covid-19-for-the-period-march-to-july-2020>

Some schools are experiencing reduced income for extended services and lettings. The LA are coordinating a furlough claim on behalf of some schools for staff funded by fee/lettings income.

The DfE plan to publish further guidance in June with more details of the financial support offered through this process.

Support from the LA to schools

The LA and Ealing Learning Partnership continue to support schools through this difficult time. Information and guidance can be found here:

<https://www.egfl.org.uk/coronavirus>

If a school is at risk of falling into deficit please contact Schools Accountancy SchoolsAccountancyServices@ealing.gov.uk . For further advice and support Tamara Quinn tquinn@ealing.gov.uk