

Schools Funding Forum 17th September 2020 ITEM 7

Subject Heading:

DfE financial support for schools relating to COVID-19

Report Author:

David Allen – Strategic Finance Manager

Eligibility to vote:

All school and academy members

SUMMARY

This item summarises the funding arrangements announced by the DfE in support of schools relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schools Funding Forum notes the additional funding provided by the DfE.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Exceptional Costs

In May, the DfE advised that schools could claim for a limited range of additional costs incurred in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. These were:

- **increased premises related costs** 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 for eligible children who are not attending school**, where those costs are not covered by the 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) - schools can only claim through this fund for free school meals provided over Easter and summer half term holidays where it was required because local supermarkets were not yet part of the national scheme
- **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

The LA has received notification of additional funding to be allocated to 15 LA maintained schools which have had their claims agreed under the above headings as follows:

	Total Payment
School A	£15,458
School B	£7,550
School C	£5,858
School D	£21,349
School E	£5,150
School F	£7,343
School G	£12,337
School H	£5,323
School I	£2,146
School J	£11,776
School K	£900
School L	£3,728
School M	£8,395
School N	£8,215
School O	£3,111

The claim form also had an “other” heading and any costs entered there are still under consideration by the DfE.

2. Coronavirus catch up premium and the national tutoring programme

In July the DfE announced £1 billion of additional funding to be allocated through a catch up premium. This includes a one-off universal £650 million catch-up premium for the 2020 to 2021 academic year to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time.

Alongside the universal catch-up premium, is a £350 million National Tutoring Programme to provide additional, targeted support for those children and young people who need the most help.

The £650 million catch-up premium funding will be available for all state-funded mainstream and special schools, and alternative provision.

Schools' allocations will be calculated on a per pupil basis, providing each mainstream school with a total of £80 for each pupil in reception through to year 11.

Special, AP and hospital schools will be provided with £240 for each place for the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

This means a typical primary school of 200 pupils will receive £16,000 while a typical secondary school of 1,000 pupils will receive £80,000.

Payments are to be provided in 3 tranches. An initial part payment in autumn 2020, based on the latest available data on pupils in mainstream schools and high needs place numbers in special, AP, hospital schools and special schools not maintained by a local authority.

A second grant payment will then be made in early 2021, based on updated pupil and place data. For mainstream schools, the 4 to 15 pupil headcount from the October 2020 census will be used. Place numbers will be used for special schools and AP.

The second grant payment will also take account of the initial part payment made in autumn 2020 so that schools will 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 the summer term 2021.

Though funding has been calculated on a per pupil or per place basis, schools should use the sum available to them as a single total from which to prioritise support for pupils according to their need.

As the catch-up premium has been designed to mitigate the effects of the unique disruption caused by coronavirus (COVID-19), the grant will only be available for the 2020 to 2021 academic year. It will not be added to schools' baselines in calculating future years' funding allocations.

Use of funds

Schools should use this funding for specific activities to support their pupils to catch up for lost teaching over the previous months, in line with the 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.

Accountability and monitoring

As with all government funding, school leaders must be able to account for how this money is being used to achieve our central goal of schools getting back on track and teaching a normal curriculum as quickly as possible.

Given their role in ensuring schools spend funding appropriately and in holding schools to account for educational performance, governors and trustees should scrutinise schools' approaches to catch-up from September, including their plans for and use of catch-up funding. This should include consideration of whether schools are spending this funding in line with their catch-up priorities, and ensuring appropriate transparency for parents.

The guidance on full opening sets out that Ofsted will conduct a programme of non-graded visits to some schools during the autumn. During these visits, inspectors will discuss how the school is bringing pupils back into full-time education – this may include plans schools have to spend their catch-up funding.

Ofsted plans to resume routine inspections in January 2021, with the exact timing being kept under review. When routine inspections restart, Ofsted will make judgements about the quality of education being provided, and that will include how leaders are using their funding (including catch-up funding) to ensure the curriculum has a positive impact on all pupils.

3. Local Authority Support

At the last meeting of the Schools Funding Forum some additional financial support was agreed for primary schools. The LA is considering a refund to schools for elements of traded services purchased that have not been provided during the period of school closure and has issued a reduced charge for free school meals to those schools that have their meals service provided by Havering Catering services. The letter explaining the charge to schools is attached.