



Subject Heading:

The Financial Impact for schools of Covid 19

Report Author:

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Eligibility to vote:

All school and academy members

SUMMARY

This item summarises the current funding arrangements announced by the DfE for additional costs incurred relating to the Covid 19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schools Funding Forum notes the current funding arrangements and considers possible future courses of action.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Exceptional Costs

In May 2020, 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

Where schools faced ‘other’ extraordinary costs, in delivering appropriate support to pupils over the period of partial closure, that were not covered by this list and cannot be met by existing budgets, they could register the details of these through the claims process.

The DfE stated that that they would not approve claims for the following costs:

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

Schools were not eligible to make a claim if they expected to add to their existing surpluses in their current financial year (September 2019 to August 2020 for academies and April 2020 to March 2021 for maintained schools).

Limits for school claims

Mainstream schools

250 pupils or fewer	£25,000
251 to 500 pupils	£30,000
501 to 1000 pupils	£50,000
Over 1000 pupils	£75,000

Special schools and alternative provision

All schools	£50,000
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The LA have been notified that 38 LA maintained schools have received a total of £300,705.

When issuing guidance for the July claim, the DfE stated that further claims would be possible in a subsequent claim window in the autumn.

At the beginning of November the DfE reported that they were making the final assessments of claims received for ‘other’ costs. These were being categorised prior to them making a decision on which costs would be funded. On 27th November 2020 schools that had made a claim for ‘other’ costs received an email from the EFSA containing the following:

'In regards to your exceptional costs claim from March to July 2020, we have assessed all claims for costs outside of the three eligible categories and have determined there are no new categories of extraordinary costs that we are able to reimburse.

We recognise that this represents a disappointing outcome for you and apologise that it has taken us longer than we would have hoped to notify you.

We received a significant number of claims and it took longer than anticipated to assess them all.'

There would be a second opportunity to claim, as stated in May. This would be for costs incurred between March and July, in the three categories previously defined, that had not already been claimed. Additionally schools could claim for free meal support for the summer holidays for costs outside of the COVID Summer Food Fund.

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 consists of a universal £650 million catch-up premium for the 2020 to 2021 academic year and a £350 million National Tutoring Programme to provide targeted support for those who need the most help.

Primary and secondary schools will receive a total of £80 per pupil (Year R to Year 6) for the academic year 2020/21. There will be three allocations.

Term	Allocation
Autumn 2020	£20 per pupil using October 2019 Census numbers.
Spring 2021	£46.67 per pupil using October Census 2020 numbers <u>less</u> the allocation received for the autumn term
Summer 2021	£33.33 per pupil using October Census 2020 numbers. (Note for LA maintained schools this allocation will be in the 2021/22 financial year.)

Special, AP and hospital schools will receive £240 for each place using 2020/21 academic year place numbers. There will be three allocations.

Term	Allocation
Autumn 2020	£60 per place
Spring 2021	£80 per place
Summer 2021	£100 per place. (Note for LA maintained schools this allocation will be in the 2021/22 financial year.)

The Autumn 2020 allocations have now been paid to schools and academies.

3. Coronavirus (Covid-19) workforce fund for schools

On 15th December 2020 the DfE announced details of funding to support schools with the costs of staff absences from 1 November 2020 to 31 December 2020. Financial support would be put in place to help schools facing the greatest staffing and funding pressures. Schools can backdate claims to 1 November 2020 where they met the eligibility criteria.

Schools eligible for this funding

Funding is available for all state-funded mainstream and special schools, and alternative provision (AP) that provide education to all pupils who are required to be in compulsory education.

Costs covered by the fund

In the document 'Guidance for full opening: schools' the DfE outlined steps schools should be take in the first instance to manage staff absence using existing staff and resources. Where staff absences are no longer manageable using existing staff and resources schools can claim for funding to help meet additional staffing costs where they meet the eligibility criteria.

Teacher absences

To cover teacher absences schools can claim for the following expenditure:

- employing, either through agencies or directly contracting, supply teachers, or supply support staff where that role is to cover teacher absences
- increasing hours of part-time teaching staff or part-time education support staff where that role is to cover teacher absences
- making necessary amendments to support staff terms and conditions to enable them to take on additional responsibilities

Support staff absences

To cover support staff absences, schools can claim for the following expenditure:

- employing supply education and non-education support staff either through agencies or directly contracting
- increasing hours of part-time education and non-education support staff

Schools should seek the best rates they can. Where costs are particularly high relative to the absent rates reported, the DfE may review these claims.

What staff are included

Schools can only claim for covering the absences of permanent staff, who are on their payroll, or those employed on a long-term contract. They cannot claim for temporary staff.

- For 'educational support staff' this may include teaching assistants or specialist support staff where they are necessary in remaining open to all pupils or fulfilling a legal duty.

- For 'non-education support staff' this may include, cleaning, catering or caretaking staff where these are necessary in remaining open to all pupils or fulfilling a legal duty.
- In special schools or AP settings this may also include therapists and other support staff in health-related roles.

Conditions for accessing the fund

The criteria set out for this fund are designed to target those schools experiencing high absence rates and significant funding pressures

Prerequisite criteria:

- schools were open to all pupils (except where pupils are not physically in school, complying with clinical or public health advice) on the days in question
- schools have tried alternative options, for example using existing staff and resources (including at trust level)
- absences claimed are necessary spend to remain open to all pupils
- costs are not already covered by an existing insurance policy (for example, a supply teacher or staff absence insurance policy)

Financial reserves criteria

Schools will be eligible for this additional funding if their reserves at the end of the funding year are down to a level of no more than 4% of their annual income. Trusts will be eligible to claim for any of their academies once their level of reserves is down to 4% of total trust income. Funding can be clawed back where this criterion is not met at the year end.

Workforce absence rate criteria

Mainstream schools

	Schools must be experiencing
Teachers	A total teacher and leader absence rate at or above 20% on a given day OR A teacher and leader absence rate of 10% or above for 15 or more consecutive school days
Support staff	Can be claimed on an exceptional only basis. The role must be necessary in remaining open to all pupils or meeting legal duties. This includes support required by an EHCP

Special schools and alternative provision schools

	Schools must be experiencing
	A total teacher and leader absence rate at or above 15% on a given day OR A teacher and leader absence rate of 10% or above for 15 or more consecutive school days
Support staff	A total support staff absence rate at or above 15% on a given day OR

	A support staff absence rate of 10% or above for 15 or more consecutive school days Once these thresholds are reached, claims can be made for roles which claimants deem to be necessary in maintaining critical provision for pupils
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Schools and academy trusts will be able to make claims in Spring 2021. Where schools are unable to meet up-front payments due to cash flow problems they should contact the LA or EFSA in the usual way.

The government will continue to review the pressures schools are facing as they move into the spring term and consider what further action might be needed.

4. Coronavirus – Mass asymptomatic testing

Schools and colleges will receive funding to support them with testing costs incurred. A total of £78m has been made available and will be paid retrospectively.

The amount of funding available to a school or college will depend on its size as this will impact the number of additional staff required to conduct testing. The DfE are providing a ready reckoner which will provide illustrative workforce requirements and associated funding.

Some examples based on average sized settings:

- A mainstream secondary in inner London, with 1000 pupils and staff will need 13 people working on mass testing and will receive approximately £20,000
- A mainstream secondary outside London, with 2000 pupils and staff will need 24 people working on mass testing and will receive approximately £28,000
- A special secondary school outside London, with 100 pupils and staff will need 7 people working on mass testing and will receive approximately £9,000