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Coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meals additional costs: guidance

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1. Introduction

These instructions are for:

- primary, secondary and all through maintained schools, academies and free schools
- 16 to 19 academies and sixth form colleges
- maintained special schools, and special academies and free schools
- non-maintained special schools
- pupil referral units
- alternative provision schools that are free schools
- maintained and academy hospital schools
- further education colleges
- sixth form colleges
- special sixth institutions

Claims can be made at local authority, single and multi-academy trust as well as at individual schoolhouse level. However, any further education (FE) institution, which is part of an academy trust will have to make their own individual claim, as there are specific FE related criteria and questions.

These instructions are to help you claim eligible costs related to free school meals and free meal additional costs through the coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meals additional costs claim form.

Schools should only claim to support provided to pupils eligible for free school meals where they were at home during term time, during the period 4 January 2021 up to the start of the Easter holidays (as applicable).

You can claim additional costs incurred for free school meals and free meals provided during the period 1 January 2021 to March 2021 and supermarkets (as applicable) up to the maximum calculated by the form.

2. Eligibility to claim

2.1 Conditions for accessing this funding

This fund provides support to institutions meeting the free school meals and free meal additional costs incurred by providing free school meals to eligible students at home during coronavirus (COVID-19) attendance restrictions in the period 4 January 2021 up to the start of the Easter holidays (as applicable), as explained in:

- providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- free meals in further education funded institutions: guide for the 2020 to 2021 academic year

Claims should not include the half term or Easter holidays as support is covered through the coronavirus (COVID-19) winter grant scheme.

Free school meals vendors made through the Edenred national voucher scheme cannot be claimed as those costs have already been met centrally by the Department for Education.

3. When to claim

The deadline for submitting your claim is 23:59 on 4 May 2021.

Claims can be amended up until 23:59 on 4 May 2021. It will not be possible to grant any extensions to the deadline.

4. Accessing the claim form

Access the coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meals additional costs claim form to begin your claim.

4.1 Before you start

If you are a school, local authority, single academy trust or a multi-academy trust

Before you start the claims process, please ensure that you:

- read the accompanying published guidance (this document)
- have a DfE Sign-in account
- are an eligible institution
- have your claim figures and additional costs of:
  - weekly lunch packs provided for pupils eligible for benefits related free school meals who were at home in term time during the period 4 January 2021 until the start of the Easter holidays
  - locally arranged vouchers for local shops or supermarkets provided to pupils eligible for benefits related free school meals pupils at home in term time during the period 4 January 2021 to March 2021

If you are a further education (FE) institution

Before you start the claims process, please ensure that you:

- read the accompanying published guidance (this document)
- have a DfE Sign-in account
- are an eligible institution
- have your claim figures and additional costs of:
  - the total of the 100% special sum bursary funding and free meals in FE funding carried forward to 2020 to 2021 academic year
  - the total of the 2020 to 2021 academic year bursary funding and free meals in FE funding
  - how much you have miscastly committed for the remainder of 2020 to 2021 academic year (bursary funding and free meals in FE)
  - free meal students you said there were supported at home in term time during the period 4 January 2021 until the start of the Easter holidays

4.2 DfE Sign-in

Log into your DfE Sign-in account:

1. Access coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meals additional costs claim form
2. Log in to DfE Sign-in using your account information (username and password).
3. Choose the organisation for where you are completing the form.
4. The next page will display the details we hold about the organisation you selected from your DfE Sign-in. If you are a school, local authority, single academy trust or multi-academy trust, ensure that the name and email address of the person who logged into DfE Sign-in.
5. If the details are correct, click 'continue' to move to the next page.
6. If you believe they to be incorrect then please complete the DfE enquiry form and we will investigate.
7. Read the terms of use instructed in the following section.
8. To access the form for another organisation, sign out and follow steps 1 to 4 again.

Your account must be connected to the organisation you are completing the claim form for.

You do not need to add any services in DfE Sign-in. It's used only for authentication.

If you do not have a DfE Sign-in account

You'll need to create one:

1. Access DfE Sign-in
2. Select the 'create account' button.
3. Enter your name and email address (it's best to use your work email address or one that you will be easily able to access in future).
4. We'll send you an email to verify your email address. Copy the code in the email and paste it into the box on the verification page.
5. Create a password (a minimum of 12 characters or more (see recommended guidance for more familiar ideas).
6. Sign-in using your new credentials, and request access to the organisation for which you would like to complete a claim.

Once your request to access an organisation has been approved, you can follow the steps outlined in 'Log into your DfE Sign-in account' to complete the form.

You might have noticed the term 'approver' when creating your account. An approver is someone who has the permissions to approve requests to access the DfE Sign-in and the services within the system. It's usually a senior person, such as an administrator or manager.

For security reasons you'll need the approval of one of your organisation's approvers before you can access the form.

4.3 If you need further assistance

If you're having problems using the DfE Sign-in service, use the DfE Sign-in help service. You'll be able to request further assistance if required. When raising a support request, please select 'other'.

If you believe you are eligible to claim but have problems accessing the form, please contact us.

5. Completing the form

There is no save facility on the form so please have all the information and evidence ready before starting a claim. Your session form is open for an extended period, you may lose any information entered to that point and will need to sign-in again.

You'll be presented with a number of pages to work through which will ask you to complete information related to the additional costs. for free school meal and free meal additional costs claim form. Some questions will be mandatory, meaning that you will not be able to proceed until you have completed the form. Clicking 'continue' on each page will take you through the form.

6. If you are applying as a single school, academy or single-academy trust

6.1 Your details

This page will display the details we hold about the organisation you selected when you logged into DfE Sign-in. The name of the organisation, the URN, the institution's establishment name, URN, and the postal address of the establishment as well as the name and email address of the person who logged into DfE Sign-in.

6.2 Entering weekly provision

The next page asks you to input the numbers of free school meal lunch packs and free meal additional costs provided to eligible students at home during the period January up the start of the Easter holidays (as applicable).

Claims should not include the half term or Easter holidays as support is covered through the coronavirus (COVID-19) winter grant scheme.

Free school meal orders made through the Edenred national voucher scheme cannot be claimed as those costs have already been met centrally by the Department for Education.

Checks will be made against this scheme to ensure that organisations are requesting the right amount of support for their eligible pupils.

You should only claim for one of these approaches per free school meal pupil for any given week.

You do not have to claim for every week or additional claim type.

Select each next to each week you want to claim for and enter the number of lunch packs and local shop and supermarket vouchers (as applicable) which will be totalled at the bottom of the page.

6.3 Your claim amounts

You can claim:

- up to £3.50 per pupil eligible for benefits related free school meals, per week, where lunch packs have been provided during the period 4 January 2021 until the start of the Easter holidays
- up to £15 per pupil eligible for free school meals pupil, per week, where vouchers for local shops or supermarkets have been provided during the period 4 January 2021 to 5 March 2021

The form will calculate the total maximum amount for the period that you can claim for each free school meal additional cost type and shown under each claim question.

Here's an example:

Lunch packs

Total number of free school meals pupils provided with lunch packs x £3.50

Example: 100 x £3.50 = £350.00

Local shop or supermarket vouchers

Total number of free school meals pupils provided with local vouchers x £15

Example: 45 x £15 = £675.00

For each free school meals additional cost type, you're asked to confirm how much you wish to claim for the whole period for the individual school or academy.

The amount you can claim cannot total more than the maximum calculated by the form. Schools will need to keep a record of the number of free school meals pupils' records that you have received, and that will be made available to the Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency on request.

Any funding provided may be recovered in part or in full if any conditions are not met.

6.4 Submission summary

You'll then be asked to check all your answers before submitting your claim and will see your claim values confirmed for the individual school, academy or single-academy trust.

Please check that you have not incorrectly claimed for support during February half term or the Easter holidays.

Please check your answers before submitting your claim form. If you'd like to change any answers, use the 'change' links provided.

6.5 Declarations

Finally, we ask you to read and accept a number of declarations to confirm that:

- you have the authority to submit a claim for the institution and understand that as a recipient of grant funding the institution is responsible for protecting public money
- the institution will retain records to substantiate this claim and make them available to the Department for Education (DfE) and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on request and understand that any funding provided may be recovered in part or in full if any conditions are not met
- the information provided in this claim is true and accurate, relate only to the coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meals additional costs incurred in 2021 until the start of the Easter holidays (as applicable) in accordance with the guidance published by the DfE and ESFA, and do not set out duplicate any financial support provided from other sources to cover the same costs

You will not be able to submit your claim without agreeing to each of these declarations by ticking and then you click the 'accept and send' button.

You'll see a message confirming that your claim has been submitted for the individual school or academy.

6.6 Confirmation

The final page confirms your claim has been submitted successfully for the individual school or academy and will give you a unique reference number against your claim. You'll also receive an email which includes your claim reference number and a copy of your claim form.

We'll then review your claim and may contact you if additional information is required.

6.7 Resubmitting your claim form

If you've incorrectly submitted your claim, you'll be able to amend and resubmit the claim until 23:59 on 4 May 2021 after the claim window will close.

To do this, you'll need to access the coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meals additional costs claim form and select the relevant information.

Please be aware that local authorities and multi-academy trusts can submit and amend claims for individual schools.

7. If you are applying as a local authority or multi-academy trust

7.1 Your details

This page will display the details we hold about the organisation you selected when you logged into DfE Sign-in. For local authorities, the details on this page will show the name of the organisation, the LA code, and the postal address of the LA as well as the person logged into DfE Sign-in. The same will apply to multi-academy trusts, where the details will show the name of the trust and the UID number.

7.2 Your schools

You'll be presented with a drop-down list of all the establishments in your organisation, including their names and URNs. Select an establishment to continue.

Any further education institution which are part of an academy trust will have to make their own individual claims.

7.3 Entering weekly provision

The next page asks you to input the numbers of free school meals lunch packs and free meal additional costs provided to eligible students at home during the period up the start of the Easter holidays (as applicable) for the school you previously selected.

Claims should not include the half term or Easter holidays as support was provided through the coronavirus (COVID-19) winter grant scheme.

Free school meal orders made through the Edenred national voucher scheme cannot be claimed as those costs have already been met centrally by DfE.

Checks will be made against this scheme to ensure that organisations are requesting the right amount of support for their eligible pupils.

You should only claim for one of these approaches per free school meals pupil for any given week.

You do not have to claim for every week or additional cost type.

Select each next to each week you want to claim for and enter the number of lunch packs and local shop and supermarket vouchers (as applicable) which will be totalled at the bottom of the page.

7.4 Your claim amounts

You can claim:

- up to £3.50 per pupil eligible for benefits related free school meals, per week, where lunch packs have been provided during the period 4 January 2021 until the start of the Easter holidays
- up to £15 per pupil eligible for free school meals pupil, per week, where vouchers for local shops or supermarkets have been provided during the period 4 January 2021 to 5 March 2021

The form will calculate the total maximum amount for the period that you can claim for each free school meals additional cost type and shown under each claim question.

Here's an example:

Lunch packs

Total number of free school meals pupils provided with lunch packs x £3.50

Example: 100 x £3.50 = £350.00

Local shop or supermarket vouchers

Total number of free school meals pupils provided with vouchers x £15.00

Example: 45 x £15.00 = £675.00

For each free school meals additional cost type you are then asked to confirm how much you wish to claim for the whole period.

The amount you can claim cannot total more than the maximum calculated by the form. Schools and academies will need to keep a record of the number of free school meals pupils' records that you have received, and that will be made available to the Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency on request.

Any funding provided may be recovered in part or in full if any conditions are not met.

7.5 Submission summary

You'll then be asked to check all your answers before submitting your claim and will see your claim values confirmed.

Please check that you have not incorrectly claimed for support during February half term or the Easter holidays.

Please check your answers before submitting your claim form. If you'd like to change any answers, use the 'change' links provided.

7.6 Declarations

Finally, we ask you to read and accept a number of declarations to confirm that:

- you have the authority to submit a claim for the institution and understand that as a recipient of grant funding the institution is responsible for protecting public money
- the institution will retain records to substantiate this claim and make them available to the Department for Education (DfE) and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on request and understand that any funding provided may be recovered in part or in full if any conditions are not met
- the information provided in this claim is true and accurate, relate only to the coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meals additional costs incurred in 2021 until the start of the Easter holidays (as applicable) in accordance with the guidance published by the DfE and ESFA, and do not set out duplicate any financial support provided from other sources to cover the same costs

You will see a message confirming that your claim has been submitted.

7.7 Confirmation

The final page confirms your claim has been submitted successfully and will give you a unique reference number against your claim. You'll also receive an email which includes your claim reference number and a copy of your claim form.

We'll then review your claim and may contact you if additional information is required.

7.8 Submitting claim for another school or academy

If you wish to submit a claim for another school or academy, please click on the 'link submit a claim for another school' which will take you back to institution page and your previous claim.

Your claim will be an additional page called 'submitted claims' has appeared which will list all the establishments (school name and URNs) you previously claimed for and already made a claim for, with confirmation of monetary claim amounts per selected school.

Click 'continue' and you'll be taken back to the 'your schools' screen where you can either select:

- a different school to make a new claim, following the steps outlined in the 'your schools' section of this guidance
- a school that you have already made a claim for, or has made an amendment, which will then take you back through the form and allow you to amend any data previously provided.

7.9 Resubmitting a claim form

If you've incorrectly submitted your claim, you'll be able to amend and resubmit any school or academy claim until 23:59 on 4 May 2021 after the claim window will close.

To do this, you'll need to access the coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meals additional costs claim form.

Please be aware that individual schools can also submit and amend claims.

8. If you are applying as a single further

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Cookies that are not necessary for the website to work are set when you visit this website. You can choose not to accept these cookies. Reject all cookies
View cookies
Sign up for updates
Sign up for updates to receive emails when we publish new information on this page.
Sign up
Feedback
Report a problem with this page
Is this page useful?
Yes
No

education institution

8.1 Your details

This page will display the details we hold about the organisation you selected when you logged into DfE Sign-in.

For further education establishments, this will show the establishment name, URN, and the postal address of the establishment. It will also show the name and email address of the person who logged into DfE Sign-in.

Multi-academy trusts cannot submit or amend claims on behalf of any further education institutions in their trust.

8.2 Entering weekly provision

The next page asks you to input the number of students supported with free meals next to each week listed for the period 4 January to the start of the Easter holidays (as applicable), which will then be totalled at the bottom of the page.

> You do not have to claim for every week but must claim for at least one.

8.3 Your claim amounts

You can apply to ESFA for retrospective additional funding of:

- up to £3.50 per eligible student per week who is provided with lunch parcels for the latest period of attendance restrictions of 4 January to 5 March 2021
- up to £3.50 for eligible free meal students who are self-isolating

You can continue to claim for additional funding in-line with the criteria set out in the free meals in further education funded institutions: guide for the 2020 to 2021 academic year, up until the Easter break (no later than 2 April 2021).

The form will calculate the total maximum amount for the period that you can claim.

Here's an example:

Lunch parcels
Total number of free meal students provided with lunch parcels x £3.50

Example: 68 x £3.50 = £238.00

You are then asked to confirm how much you wish to request for the whole period.

The amount you can claim cannot total more than the maximum identified and you must be able to substantiate this through records that you have retained, and that will be made available to the Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency on request.

Any funding provided may be recovered in part or in full if any conditions are not met.

8.4 Bursary funding

You're then asked several questions about your bursary funding and asked to provide more detail about the rationale for your request for additional funding and to support your case.

Please note that the responses you give may be subject to future ESFA audit.

8.5 Submission summary

You'll then be asked to check all your answers before submitting your claim and will see your claim value confirmed.

Please check your answers before submitting your claim form. If you'd like to change any answers, use the 'change' links provided.

8.6 Declarations

Finally, we ask you to read and accept a number of declarations to confirm that:

- you have the authority to submit a claim for the institution and understand that as a recipient of grant funding the institution is responsible for protecting public money
- the institution will retain records to substantiate this claim and make them available to the Department for Education (DfE) and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on request and understand that any funding provided may be recovered in part or in full if any conditions are not met
- the details entered in this claim are correct and accurate, relate only to the coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meal additional costs from 4 January 2021 to the start of the Easter holidays (as applicable) in accordance with the guidance published by the DfE and ESFA, and do not or will not duplicate any financial support provided from other sources to cover the same costs
- this institution has fully utilised existing 16 to 19 Bursary Fund and free meals in further education (where applicable) funding, including any funds carried forward from previous academic years

> You will not be able to submit your claim without agreeing to each of these declarations by ticking and then you click the 'accept and send' button.

You will see a message confirming that your claim has been submitted.

8.7 Confirmation

The final page confirms your claim has been submitted successfully and will give you a unique reference number against your submission. You'll also receive an email which includes your claim reference number and a copy of your claim form.

We'll then review your claim and may contact you if additional information is required.

8.8 Resubmitting your claim form

If you've incorrectly submitted your costs, you'll be able to amend and resubmit the claim until 23:59 on 4 May 2021 when this claim window will close.

To do this, you'll need to access the coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meals additional costs claim form and amend the relevant information.

9. Enquiries

If you've read this guidance and have any questions about the coronavirus (COVID-19) free school meal or free meal additional costs or how to complete the online form, please use our ESFA enquiry form.

When completing the enquiry form, select 'other' as your query type.

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