

[Home](#) ▾ [Education, training and skills](#) ▾ [School and academy funding](#)
 ▾ [Breakfast club early adopters grant: 2025 to 2026 academic year](#)



[Department](#)
[for Education](#)

Guidance

Breakfast clubs early adopters: conditions of grant for the 2025 to 2026 academic year, ending March 2026

Published 9 July 2025

Applies to England

Contents

- [1. Introduction](#)
- [2. Eligibility](#)
- [3. Payments](#)
- [4. Permitted use of funding](#)
- [5. Assurance](#)
- [6. Further information](#)
- [7. Variation](#)
- [8. Recovery of funding](#)
- [9. Overpayments](#)
- [10. Enquiries](#)

1. Introduction

1.1 Legislation

The breakfast clubs early adopters grant will be paid by the Secretary of State for Education as a grant under section 14 of the Education Act 2002. In accordance with section 16 of that Act, the Secretary of State attaches the following terms to the grant payable.

1.2 Purpose

The breakfast clubs early adopters grant is for the purpose of funding primary schools to offer breakfast clubs, which will contribute to 2 aims of the government's opportunity mission:

1. tackling child poverty – the scheme aims to increase household incomes, by reducing the amount families spend on groceries and before school childcare and contributing to an increase in parents' ability to work more hours
2. achieving and thriving – by ensuring children start the day on time and are fed, the programme aims to set children up to listen and concentrate throughout the school day, improving their ability to achieve, and reducing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils

Recipients of this grant must ensure that the minimum requirements, as set out in the guidance [Breakfast clubs early adopter guidance for schools and trusts in England](#) are met. Receipt of the fixed grant payment (see [Payments](#) section) will be taken as acceptance the recipient agrees to the grant conditions.

The funding formula calculations in [Breakfast clubs early adopters: methodology for September 2025 to March 2026](#) should be read in conjunction with the terms along with the overarching policy pages.

1.3 Period

These conditions of grant cover the 2025 to 2026 academic year, ending at March 2026.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Types of settings

The following settings (other than where established in a hospital) are eligible to receive funding, provided they meet the [criteria as set out at 2.2](#):

- local authorities – this includes local authority (LA) maintained:
 - mainstream schools
 - special schools
 - pupil referral units

This does not include pre-school, secondary or sixth form provisions in these settings.

- academies – this includes:
 - mainstream academies

- alternative provision (AP) and special academies
- non-maintained special schools (NMSS)

This does/not include pre-school, secondary or sixth form provision in these settings.

2.2 Criteria

Settings are only eligible for this funding where they have signed up for, and been accepted onto, the breakfast clubs early adopters programme. Only primary-aged pupils, defined as those in reception to year 6 within these settings, are eligible for the funding.

3. Payments

3.1 Calculation

An allocation for this grant has been calculated using a [standardised methodology](#) and we will publish the breakdown at setting level shortly before each payment.

A fixed payment will be made at the end of November 2025 for local authorities and beginning of December 2025 for academies. This fixed, upfront payment, which covers autumn and spring Term, will be paid alongside the arrears payment for summer term 2025.

A second payment in arrears will be made at the end of February 2026 for local authorities and beginning of March 2026 for academies. This second payment will be determined by actual pupil uptake and data will be collected from schools between October 2025 and November 2025. Arrears payments for the spring term will be paid within the next grant period.

Schools will be required to provide data through a digital form that will be sent out from the Department for Education (DfE). This data will include daily uptake numbers across a defined period of time, as well as other data to provide assurance that minimum requirements have been met. Details of what data we require will be released at a later date.

3.2 Payment timetable

	LAs and their maintained schools	Academies	NMSS
Payment 1	November 2025	December 2025	November 2025
Payment 2	February 2026	March 2026	February 2026

3.3 School closures, openings and academy conversions

If a setting closes during the financial year, the local authority (for maintained schools) or DfE (for academies) should allocate the grant for the proportion of the financial year the setting is open.

This grant is allocated on a school level basis. DfE will not seek to claw back any grant funding from a local authority if a school converts to academy status after the payment is made. The grant allocation is intended for the school and it will be assumed the local authority passed on the entire grant funding to the school immediately upon receipt from DfE. In addition, any unspent grant funding should remain with the school after it converts.

In respect to calculating a school's final accounts, any pro-rated amount up to the point of conversion is included in the balance calculation for the school. The remaining amount which relates for the period after the school has converted, should be accounted for by the academy.

Where a school has converted to an academy by 1 November 2025, the academy will receive its academic year 2025 to 2026 grant directly from DfE.

Local authorities should pay academic year 2025 to 2026 grant to schools due to convert to academy status as follows:

Date of conversion to academy	Proportion of 2025-2026 grant passed on by local authority
On or by 1 November 2025	Funds paid direct to academy
After 1 November 2025 and on or by 1 February 2026	Any unspent start up funding

3.4 Additional LA duty

Local authorities will be required to certify that they have passed on the correct amount of funding to schools. DfE will issue a certification form in spring 2026. Local authorities must pass funding on to their maintained schools including special and AP, in a timely manner in line with their scheme for financing schools.

4. Permitted use of funding

The per pupil funding allocation made in arrears must only be spent on the breakfast foods, drinks, and associated staffing and delivery costs and must not be spent on any costs associated with other provision outside of the breakfast club, for example, lunch provision or other childcare provision offered by the school. The per pupil funding allocation must only be used for pupils on roll at the school.

The purpose of the initial payment is to cover costs incurred in the set up and running of breakfast clubs and could be used on staff, admin, training, equipment or system costs.

Schools may pass on funding to providers in order to deliver their breakfast clubs, but it is the school's responsibility to ensure the DfE funding conditions are still met (such as data collection) and that there are appropriate guards in place against profiteering. Schools must also ensure that any providers for childcare are Ofsted registered. Schools must comply with any relevant procurement regulations, in line with their standard practices on buying and procurement.

Wraparound childcare funding **cannot** be claimed for the same thing during the same time as breakfast club funding. For example, you cannot claim both for a session of 30 minutes before the start of the school day. Wraparound childcare funding **can** be claimed for a separate session, such as a place within a session before the 30 minutes free and universal session begins, or a place in a parallel paid-for provision running at the same time. Wraparound funding, unlike breakfast club funding, can be used to fund places in advance of need, to make sure there are sufficient places for when parents do need it. Where claims for breakfast club funding duplicates wraparound funding, breakfast clubs funding requests will be rejected.

Where schools have wraparound childcare which starts prior to the 30 minutes before the school day covered by breakfast club funding, they must communicate clearly with parents what is paid for and what is free. Parents must not be charged

for the government-funded 30 minute offer, nor required to attend paid for provision in order to access the 30 minute offer.

Schools cannot claim funding for more than one breakfast per pupil. If a school already receives breakfast funding from LAs or charities, the school must be able to demonstrate that funding has not been received twice for the same expenditure.

4.1 Other conditions

Schools must ensure the offer is inclusive for all pupils and make adjustments as necessary, considering any related legislation and guidance. Schools will need to work with local authorities to ensure LAs meet their statutory duty to transport children to special, AP and maintained schools, in a timely manner.

Where issues such as LA organised transport or other exceptional circumstances may impact the schools' ability to meet minimum expectations, schools are expected to contact us through the customer help portal to discuss on a case by case basis.

If breakfast club provision is off-site, schools are responsible for ensuring children are back on-site for the start of lessons.

Schools taking part in the early adopters scheme will be required to engage with the DfE and any associated evaluation or management information (MI) activities/collections and attend their allocated peer to peer support network meetings on a regular basis.

Schools who are currently on the existing departmentally -funded breakfast programme – The National School Breakfast Programme (NSBP) – and who are taking part in the early adopters scheme, will need to transition off the NSBP to take part, ensuring this funding stream ceases from April 2025. NSBP schools may continue to access support and order food from the delivery partner Family Action, charged at 100% of costs.

The government is legislating to introduce a duty on all state-funded schools with primary aged pupils, to provide the breakfast provision that early adopters schools will be implementing.

The early adopter scheme is intended to test delivery and generate learning for national rollout, with early adopter schools beginning their delivery ahead of the legal duty commencing on all schools.

Given this, DfE does not expect schools to exit the early adopters scheme and will work with early adopter schools to overcome challenges encountered.

Should a school wish to exit the early adopters scheme, they are required to notify the department by emailing breakfastclubs.earlyadopter@education.gov.uk,

and engage with DfE on potential solutions.

In the event that a school still wishes to exit the scheme, the school would be required to give parents and carers a notice period of one term before ending or significantly altering the breakfast club provision.

5. Assurance

5.1 Carry forward

Funds must not be carried forward to fund breakfast clubs in the 2026 to 2027 academic year. All funds must be used to reimburse costs incurred by end of July 2026, and any funding not required for the purposes outlined in these terms and conditions by this date, should be returned to DfE.

5.2 Records required

Local authorities and settings are required to maintain and keep clear records of income and expenditure in relation to this grant, including evidence of the use of funds. This will also include per pupil daily attendance numbers for certain periods.

Schools must record daily take up (attendance) of their breakfast club during a one-week period each term for payment purposes. This data will be collected through a digital form and recipients will be required to complete this form on time or payment will be delayed. Records must be kept for 7 years and DfE may ask for these for audit and assurance purposes.

6. Further information

Books, other documents and records relating to the recipient's accounts shall be open to inspection by the Secretary of State and by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The Comptroller and Auditor General may, under section 6 of the National Audit Act 1983, carry out examinations into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which the recipient has used its resources.

Local authorities and settings shall provide information as may be required by the

Secretary of State to determine whether they have complied with these conditions.

7. Variation

The basis for allocation of grant may be varied by the Secretary of State from that set out above, if so requested by the local authority, school or college.

8. Recovery of funding

If a local authority or setting fails to comply with the terms and conditions set out in this document, the Secretary of State may recover some or all of the money that has been allocated. This will be notified in writing to the local authority, school or college.

Recoveries will be made by invoice or by offsetting the amount against subsequent payments due from DfE.

The recipient must notify DfE immediately through the [customer help portal](#) if it becomes aware of any instance of error, suspected fraud or financial irregularity in the use of the funds.

9. Overpayments

If a setting or local authority identifies that it has been overpaid, it must contact DfE to arrange repayment of the excess. Where DfE identifies an overpayment, it may seek to recover the excess. The local authority or setting will be notified of this in writing.

10. Enquiries

For queries relating to these terms and conditions, use the [customer help portal](#).

Help us improve GOV.UK

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. [Please fill in this survey \(opens in a new tab\)](#).



Services and information

[Benefits](#)

[Births, death, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

Government activity

[Departments](#)

[News](#)

[Guidance and regulation](#)

[Research and statistics](#)

[Policy papers and consultations](#)

[Transparency](#)

[How government works](#)

[Get involved](#)

[Help](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Accessibility statement](#) [Contact](#) [Terms and conditions](#)

[Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#) [Government Digital Service](#)

