



Department  
for Education

# **Free school meals supplementary grant**

**Guidance for local authorities, maintained  
schools, academies and free schools**

**February 2021**

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# Summary

## About this guidance

This guidance is from the Department for Education.

The free school meal (FSM) supplementary grant was first introduced in 2018, when FSM eligibility was expected to increase due to transitional protections put in place in response to the roll-out of Universal Credit. The FSM supplementary grant was introduced to provide schools with additional funding to help them meet the costs of providing more pupils with free meals, before the lagged funding system caught up.

The grant was originally set up for 2 years, 2018 to 2019 and 2019 to 2020. However, as a result of the economic impact of coronavirus (COVID-19), FSM eligibility has continued to increase. The government has therefore announced that the grant will be extended for one additional year to 2020 to 2021. As a result, schools will receive funding for increases in FSM eligible pupils between October 2019 and October 2020, at a per pupil rate of £450.

This guidance sets out details of the FSM supplementary grant that will be paid in 2020 to 2021. We have also published the [conditions of grant and the grant allocations](#).

## Expiry or review date

This guidance applies to the 2020 to 2021 financial year, after which the grant will cease to operate.

## Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for:

- local authorities
- school leaders, school staff and governing bodies in all maintained schools, academies and academies

## Calculation of allocations in 2020 to 2021

The allocations will be determined by the difference between the number of pupils eligible for FSM in a school as recorded in the October census as follows:

Financial Year	What we will measure	What schools will receive
2020 to 2021	School-level FSM eligibility increase from October 2019 to October 2020 census	Measured increase in FSM eligibility x £450

For example, if the number of pupils taking up free school meals in a school increases by 11 between the October 2019 and October 2020 census dates they will receive a total of £4,950 for the financial year 2020 to 2021. This payment would be allocated in early 2021.

## New and growing schools

The only exception to the above is for schools that are adding year groups. In order to apply the policy fairly, we will estimate increases in the number of pupils taking up free schools meals as follows:

Allocations will be calculated by multiplying the difference in the average number of pupils taking up free schools meals in each year group by the number of year groups.

Census Year	Year Group			Total	Average per year group
	Y7 (no. of pupils taking up FSM)	Y8 (no. of pupils taking up FSM)	Y9 (no. of pupils taking up FSM)		
October 2019	110	90	-	200	100
October 2020	125	120	115	360	120
Difference					20
Number of pupils we would allocate additional funding for = average difference multiplied by number of year groups					60
Amount of funding allocated = number of pupils x £450					£27,000

## **Local authority maintained schools, academies and free schools**

This grant will not affect a schools allocation through the pupil premium, national funding formula, or any other source of existing funding.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will publish allocations for maintained schools, academies and free schools in February 2021.

### Payments

- February 2021 - ESFA pay local authorities for their maintained schools
- March 2021 - ESFA pay academies and free schools

## Further information

### Other relevant departmental advice and statutory guidance

- [Eligibility Checking Service guidance](#)
- [Universal infant free school meals \(UIFSM\): 2020 to 2021](#)
- [The national funding formula for schools and high needs: Policy document](#)



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