



Department
for Education

School census 2026 to 2027

**Business and technical specification,
version 1.1**

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Contents

Version history	5
1. Introduction	6
(a) Coverage	6
(b) Where should early years provision be recorded?	7
(c) School categories	7
(d) Provision of technical files	8
1.1 Technical specification	9
1.2 Statutory requirement, data sharing and data subject rights	9
1.2.1 Statutory requirement	9
1.2.2 Data protection and data sharing	10
1.3 Structure of the school census	10
1.3.1 School and pupil census levels	10
1.3.2 Snapshot and continuous data	11
1.3.3 Collection timing	11
1.4 Changes from 2025 to 2026 school census specifications	12
1.4.1 New data items	12
1.4.2 Existing data Items	12
1.4.3 Discontinued items	13
2. XML message header	14
2.1 Overall message structure	15
2.2 Header structure	16
3. School level information	17
3.1 Overall description and scope	17
3.2 Outline data content	17
3.2.1 School characteristics module [ALL schools]	18
3.2.2 Primary admission appeals module [spring census only]	19
3.2.3 Infant admission appeals module [spring census only]	20
3.2.4 Secondary admission appeals module [spring census only]	21
3.2.5 Pupil reconciliation module	21
3.2.6 Class information module	21
3.2.7 Miscellaneous module	22

3.3	Coverage and timing	29
4.	Pupil level information	30
4.1	Overall description and scope	30
4.2	Categories of pupil for which data are required	30
4.3	Outline data content	30
4.3.1	Pupil identifiers module	31
4.3.2	Pupil characteristics module	31
4.3.3	Pupil status module	63
4.3.4	Alternative provision (AP) placement module	64
4.3.5	Special educational needs module [used for funding]	70
4.3.6	Managed moves [Not for: Nursery schools]	70
4.3.7	Termly suspension and permanent exclusion module	71
4.3.8	Home information module	75
4.3.9	Free Breakfast Club attendance module	76
4.3.10	Termly attendance module	78
4.3.11	Post-16 learning aims module [autumn census only] [For secondary, all-through and PRU / AP with a sixth form only] [used for funding]	81
4.4	Pupils no longer on roll	88
4.5	Coverage and timing	89
5.	Validation checks	90
6.	XML / XSLT features	91
7.	General notes	93
7.1	Data items with no values	93
7.2	Block entry	93
7.3	Selected time on census day [Not for: Nursery schools, special and PRU / AP]	93
7.4	Special characters	94
7.5	XML file generic naming conventions	94
Annex E:	Post-16 learning aims	97
a)	Additional guidance	97
b)	Examination timetable	97
c)	QAN data	97
i)	Updating the QAN table	98
ii)	Unitary awarding body (UAB) base data files	98

iii)	Base data file types	98
iv)	Option definition file	99
v)	Importing UAB base data files	99
vi)	School QAN list	100
vii)	Date defaults	100
viii)	Entry validations	101
ix)	Timescales	101
x)	Maintenance changes and inter field relationships	102
xi)	Additional functionality	103
xii)	Tiered system for presentation of QANs – Example	103
Annex H: Errata		104

Version history

The version history shows when the version was released. The change history is contained in the Errata at [Annex H](#) at the end of the document

Version	Author	Date
1.0	Nicola Berryman	February 2026
1.1	Nicola Berryman	July 2026

This specification must be read in conjunction with the Excel workbook giving the current version of the common basic data set ([CBDS](#))

1. Introduction

This document specifies the data to be returned to the department during the 2026 to 2027 academic year via the school census.

(a) Coverage

All:

- maintained nursery
- primary
- middle-deemed primary
- middle-deemed secondary
- secondary
- all-through
- special schools (including non-maintained special schools)
- pupil referral units / alternative provision (PRU / AP)
- academies (including free schools, university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools)
- city technology colleges (CTCs)

in England, are required to provide the information collected in this census to the department.

Pupil referral units / alternative provision is legally defined as schools and are included in all references to 'schools' within this document, as are all other types of school within the scope of the school census.

MoD schools, both primary and secondary, are encouraged to participate on a voluntary basis.

Academies (including free schools), CTCs and non-maintained special schools, submit their data direct to the department. Depending on local arrangements, local authority maintained schools will, either submit their data directly to the department, or local authorities will collate and return the data on their behalf.

Schools and academies with post-16 provision should also refer to the [published funding guidance](#). The information in this guidance is important. The guides set out the rules and funding arrangements for each academic year and are an integral part of funding agreements.

For the purpose of this document, where 'suspensions' are written, it refers to the definition of fixed-period exclusions as defined in s.51a of the Education Act 2002.

(b) Where should early years provision be recorded?

Schools with **funded** on-site early years provision make their return via **either** the school census **or** the early years census, **BUT NOT BOTH**. This paragraph confirms which census is used to return data on children receiving **funded** early education:

- registered pupils of the school (aged 9 months up to and including 4 year olds in nursery provision) are recorded via the **school census** (and **not** the early years census)
- children (aged 9 months up to and including 4 year olds in nursery provision) attending a separate Ofsted registered PVI (private voluntary independent) provider on a school site, are recorded via the **early years census** (and **not** the school census).
- Children who are receiving early years provision that is directly run by an academy, on academy premises, must be registered pupils of the academy and recorded on the school census, not the early years census.
- children attending provision provided by a school governing body under [Section 27 of the Education Act 2002](#) ['s27 (governor run)'] should be **either**:
 - recorded via the **school census** where they **are registered pupils** of the school; **or**
 - recorded via the **early years census** where they are **not** registered pupils of the school

Where a child's funded entitlement is split between more than one setting, such children may appear on the two different censuses. Where their free entitlement, extended or expanded entitlement hours are split between 2 different settings the number of free entitlement hours for each child across all provision is limited to:

- where 15 hours universal free entitlement and 15 hours extended entitlement (where appropriate) is claimed (for 3 and 4-year-olds), or
- 15 hours entitlement for early learning for 2-year-olds or,
- 30 hours where expanded entitlement (where appropriate) is claimed for 9 months up to and including 2-year-olds.

(c) School categories

Different data items are required from specific categories of schools participating in the school census. These categories of schools are defined by the common basic data set ([CBDS](#)) data item - school phase (N00280) as shown in the table below. The statutory age ranges for individual schools are recorded on [GIAS](#) (get information about schools) - which holds the department's definitive school registration record.

School phase	Code	Notes
Nursery school	'NS'	Includes those with maintained or direct grant status. Usually, pupils transfer into primary education at the age of 4, but nursery schools can have 'reception' age pupils
Primary	'PS'	-
Middle-deemed primary	'MP'	-
Middle-deemed secondary	'MS'	-
Secondary	'SS'	-
Special	'SP'	Maintained and non-maintained special schools, including hospital special schools and academy special schools
All-through	'AT'	Excludes PRU / AP and special schools. To be classified as all-through, schools must accommodate pupils under the age of 7 AND over the age of 14
Pupil referral unit / alternative provision	'PR'	This code should be used for pupil referral units, AP academies and AP free schools

Academies provide the following information:

- alternative provision ('AP') academies and 'AP' free schools provide the same data as pupil referral units
- academy special schools provide the same data as maintained special schools
- all other academies (including free schools) provide the data for the phase of education appropriate to the age range of their pupils

The collection schedules, at [annex F](#) (school level) and [annex G](#) (pupil level), provide details of which data items apply to each school phase in each census.

Please note: different validation rules also apply to different phases of schools.

(d) Provision of technical files

The department provides various XML-related components to facilitate the creation and validation of XML files generated from the school management information system (MIS). Please see [section 6](#) for more details of the XML based features.

1.1 Technical specification

The technical specification for the 2026 to 2027 (academic year) school census is comprised of the following documents:

- this Word document containing a narrative and sample XML messages
- the common basic data set (CBDS) Excel workbook
- the validation rules Excel workbook
- XML schemas and XSLT validations

Separate specifications for the school summary reports (which define the individual requirements for each termly collection) together with the associated XSLT are also provided.

A guide for schools is produced to inform them, in non-technical terms, of the data collection requirements. This documentation is available on the department's [website](#).

The scope of each census collection (that is, which schools, pupils and data items are included) is defined by this Word document and **not** by the validation rules or XSLT. The validation rules and XSLT are provided to assist suppliers in the development of their systems and to enable a check of the data extracted for each census collection.

1.2 Statutory requirement, data sharing and data subject rights

1.2.1 Statutory requirement

The submission of the school census returns, including named pupil records, is a statutory requirement on schools under [section 537A of the Education Act 1996](#), the Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013 (the **2013 Regulations**), and Section 99 of the Childcare Act 2006 (**CA 2006**) and the Childcare (Provision of Information About Young Children) (England) Regulations 2009 (**2009 Regulations**).

A statutory requirement:

- means that schools do not need to obtain parental or pupil consent to the provision of information
- ensures schools are protected from legal challenge that they are breaching a duty of confidence to pupils
- helps to ensure that returns are completed by schools
- means that all pupil census elements are mandatory unless specifically stated to be voluntary

1.2.2 Data protection and data sharing

The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) provide certain safeguards regarding the use of personal data by organisations, including:

- the department
- local authorities
- schools

The UK GDPR and DPA 2018 details the rights of those (known as) data subjects about whom data is held, such as:

- pupils
- parents
- teachers

This includes (amongst other information that we are obliged to provide):

- the right to know the types of data being held
- why it is being held, and
- to whom it may be communicated

For the purposes of data protection legislation, the terms ‘process’, ‘processed’ or ‘processing’ apply to any activity involving the personal data, such as:

- collecting
- storing
- sharing
- destroying
- etcetera – please note: this list is not exhaustive

The department provides suggested wording for [privacy notices](#) that schools and local authorities may wish to use. However, where the suggested wording is used, the school / local authority **must review and amend** the wording to reflect local business needs and circumstances. This is especially important, as the school will process data that is not solely for use within census data collections. As such, to comply with UK GDPR and DPA 2018, the privacy notice should contain details of all uses of data within the school, which may include, for example, information used locally for pupil achievement tracking and (where relevant) the use of CCTV data.

1.3 Structure of the school census

1.3.1 School and pupil census levels

The school census has two levels:

- ‘School’, and
- ‘Pupil’

Each level is comprised of modules, with each module containing a group of related data items.

Collection is undertaken on a termly basis (based on the three-term model) with different modules required in each collection. Generally, whole modules are collected, but, on occasion, a few individual data items (from within a module) are collected separately (Please see [Annex A](#) and [Annex B](#)).

1.3.2 Snapshot and continuous data

Much of the data collected represents a particular characteristic or status as at census day. However, there are also continuous items that capture data for a term or a year, for example:

- pupil attendance
- suspensions and permanent exclusions
- free school meal eligibility periods
- post-16 programme aims and learning aims
- alternative provision placement details
- learner funding and monitoring (FAM) information

Please note: these may legitimately include data for pupils who have left school prior to the relevant census day. Therefore, successive instances of the census collections build up a continuous picture of, for example, a pupil's attendance and suspension and / or permanent exclusion history.

It is recognised that some schools have six term years. Where this is the case, the terms are considered to be as follows:

- terms 1 and 2 - autumn term
- terms 3 and 4 - spring term
- terms 5 and 6 - summer term

Whilst schools remain free to define their own term dates, for data collection purposes, the term times and collection dates are those provided at [Annex C](#).

1.3.3 Collection timing

The school census is collected on a termly basis

All of the dates in respect of the above can be found at [Annex C](#) (census collection dates and data periods).

1.4 Changes from 2025 to 2026 school census specifications

1.4.1 New data items

- Data Item Reason for Cancellation (N00836) and associated code set CS132, has been created to record the reasons exclusions can be cancelled.
- Data item N00837 has been created to record the last date FSM eligibility was checked.
- Data item N00838 and associated Code set CS133, has been created to record the FSM Category set that applies to each pupil.
- Data item N00839 and associated code set CS134, has been created to record pupils recorded as living in Kinship care.
- Data item N00840 and associated code set CS135, has been created to record attendance at government-funded free breakfast clubs.
- Data item N00841 has been created to record a managed move start date.
- Data item N00842 has been created to record the destination school Name for a managed move.
- Data item N00843 and associated code set CS136 has been created to record the reason for a managed move.
- Data item N00844 has been created to record the reinstatement date following a cancelled exclusion.
- Data Item N00855 has been created to record the number of possible breakfast club sessions for each pupil.
- Data Item N00856 has been created to record the number of breakfast club sessions attended for each pupil.
- Data Item N00857 and associated code set CS137 has been created to record the exclusion review category.

Data items transferred from the APEX collection to School Census:

- Data items:
 - Review Date - (Date of Independent Review Panel) (N00650)
 - Exclusion Review Result – (N00651) and the linked code set CS105 (Exclusion Review Reason) has been updated.
 - Exclusion Reinstatement Date – (N00652)
 - SEN Expert Indicator – (N00653)

1.4.2 Existing data Items

- For Data item N00685, N00686 and N00687 the linked Code Set CS010 (Exclusion Reason) has been updated.
- Code set CS105 (Exclusion Review Reason) has been updated.

1.4.3 Discontinued items

- No items have been discontinued.

1.4.4. Other changes

- Paragraph 1.1.1. - Work placement entity QN has been updated to accept the HVCP construction Industry Placement: ZWRKX004.

2. XML message header

A standard XML message header is required for each school census file. The data items required within the header are as follows:

Survey collection name <Collection> (N00600) will be 'SC' for school census. <i>Description: Name of the data collection: 'SC'.</i>
Survey term <Term> (N00601) will be 'AUT', 'SPR' or 'SUM'. <i>Description: Whether the collection is from the autumn, spring or summer terms.</i>
Survey year <Year> (N00602) will be '2026' for the autumn term and '2027' for spring and summer terms. <i>Description: The calendar year of the collection.</i>
Survey reference date <ReferenceDate> (N00603) will be: '2026-10-01', '2027-01-21' or '2027-05-20' <i>Description: The reference date is normally the day of the census or collection. It is used as the baseline date from which comparisons with other dates in the return can be made.</i>
Source level <SourceLevel> (N00604) will be 'S' or 'L' <i>Description: The source of the data submission. PRUs can use either 'S' (school) or 'L' for a local authority all other schools will use 'S' (school).</i>
LA <LEA> (N00216) is the local authority number. <i>Description: Standard departmental three-digit local authority number.</i>
Establishment <Estab> (N00279) is mandatory and the tags must be included in the XML. <i>Description: Standard departmental four-digit establishment number.</i>
Establishment unique reference number <URN> (N00278) is mandatory and the tags must be included in the XML. <i>Description: Standard departmental 6-digit GIAS unique reference number.</i>
Software code <SoftwareCode> (N00605) is the code indicating the software supplier. The supplier allocates this. <i>Description: Software product identification. Suppliers should advise the department of the code used.</i>
Release <Release> (N00607) is a code / date (or combination) provided by the software supplier to assist in identification. <i>Description: Software product release identification.</i>
X version <Xversion> (N00608). <i>Description: Version number of the XML / XSLT package provided by the department if used or "not used" if the software supplier produces their own XSLT.</i>

Serial No <SerialNo> (N00606) will start at '001' and then be incremented by 1 each time a new file is prepared for submission.

Description: An incremented number generated by a provider's software. Enables data collection systems to identify re-submissions.

Date / time <DateTime> (N00609) is the date and time when the file was prepared or generated in CCYY-MM-DDThh:mm:ss format.

Description: Date and time of generation of the return.

2.1 Overall message structure

The overall message structure is:

Overall message structure
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<Message>
<Name>school census</Name>
<Header> See 2.2 below for details
<School> See Annex A for details
<Pupils> See Annex B for details
</Message>

2.2 Header structure

-	Header structure
-	<Header>
-	<CollectionDetails>
N00600	<Collection>SC</Collection>
N00601	<Term>AUT</Term>
N00602	<Year>2026</Year>
N00603	<ReferenceDate>2026-10-01</ReferenceDate>
-	</CollectionDetails>
-	<Source>
N00604	<SourceLevel>S or L</SourceLevel>
N00216	<LEA>999</LEA>
N00279	<Estab>9999</Estab>
N00278	<URN>999999</URN>
N00605	<SoftwareCode>DfE</SoftwareCode>
N00607	<Release>1.0 2026-10-01</Release>
N00608	<Xversion>1.0</Xversion>
N00606	<SerialNo>001</SerialNo>
N00609	<DateTime>2026-10-01T11:14:05</DateTime>
-	</Source>
-	</Header>

Pupil and school XML message structures are given in Annexes [A](#) and [B](#) respectively.

3. School level information

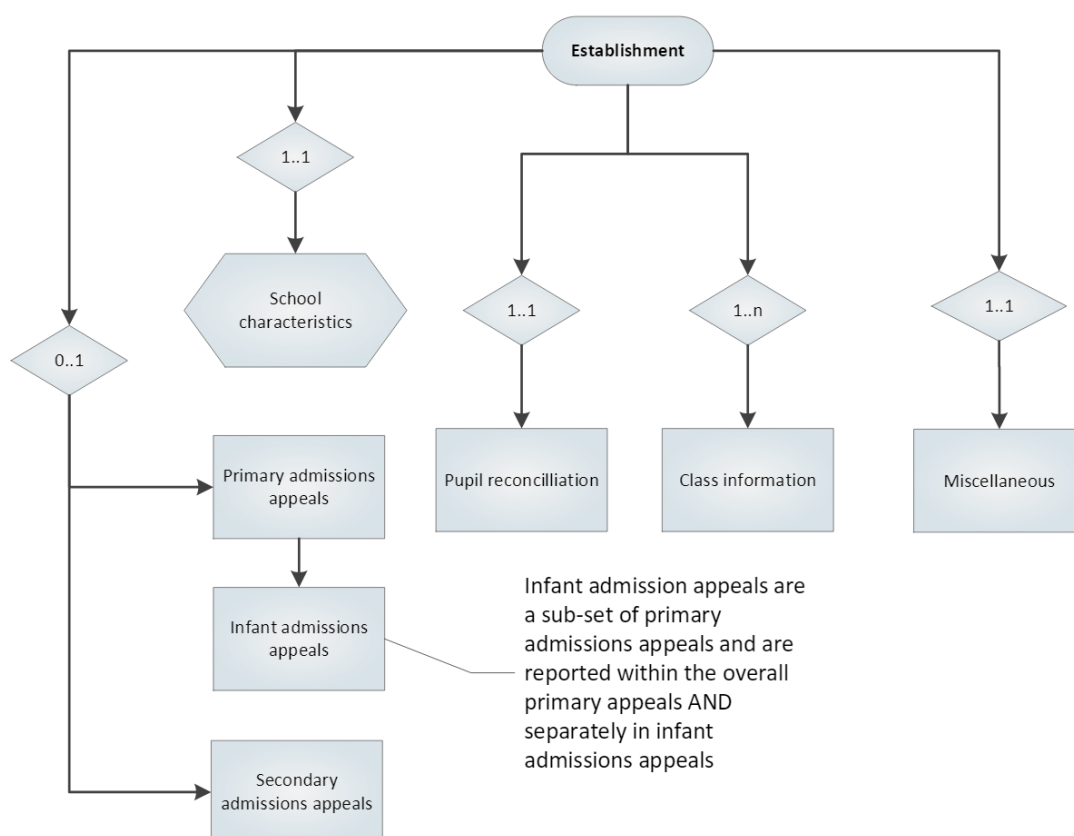
3.1 Overall description and scope

This section describes the modules and data items that combine into the school level element of the school census.

3.2 Outline data content

The return contains a number of modules for each school. The data items included in each of the modules can be found in the school level collection schedule at [Annex F](#) with full descriptions of each data item provided in the common basic data set ([CBDS](#)) database.

An outline of the school structure for each school in the school census collections broken down by module is as follows:



For PRU / AP, Special and Nursery schools, only School characteristics and Miscellaneous modules are required.

The paragraphs below provide information on the individual data items by module.

[Annex A](#) contains the school XML message structure showing the modules and data items required in each census collection from each phase of school.

3.2.1 School characteristics module [ALL schools]

The school characteristic module is collected from all schools. However, the school phase codes below show which school types are appropriate to these codes:

- 'PR' – used by:
 - pupil referral units
 - AP academies
 - AP free schools
- 'SP' – used by:
 - special schools (including non-maintained special schools)
 - academy special schools (including free special schools)
- 'AT' – used by:
 - all-through schools (must have appropriate age groups – pupils aged 7 years and under to 14 years and over – and excludes PRU / AP and special schools)

3.2.1.1 Academies - general

Sponsor-led academies use the appropriate phase for their age range.

In the majority of cases, all other academies use the phase appropriate to their establishment number (for example, where the academy has an establishment number appropriate for a primary school then they should return under the primary phase). Where a school converts to an academy and retains their 'old' number, which no longer represents the new academy's phase of education, the academy should confirm their details with the department who will advise on which phase of education to report against. Where a school has converted to an academy and extended its age range, should it not be clear what phase is now to be used, the department will advise.

3.2.1.2 Sponsor-led academies

Where a school converts to a sponsor-led academy, thought must be given to how to handle entry dates for year 12 and above off-roll pupils - where post-16 learning aims are required.

Whilst the date that the sponsor-led academy opens is usually considered to be the 'entry date' for a pupil; where a pupil has post-16 learning aims this, can lead to problems where the pupil completed a learning aim prior to the opening date of the academy.

As such, where off-roll pupils have post-16 learning aims, their original entry date must be retained upon conversion.

This guidance also applies to any school type that is provided with a new establishment number.

For more detail on when a pupil should be given a new entry date and which historical data is required in these circumstances, please refer to the [pupil date of entry section](#) of the school census manual.

3.2.1.3 School type

Academies must use school type '49' and governance code 'CA'. Validation rules ensure that all academies (including 'AP' academies, 'AP' free schools and academy special schools) return this combination of codes.

Pupil referral units use school type '54' (local authority maintained pupil referral units) and local authority maintained all-through schools (which therefore excludes academies) use school type '55'.

CTCs use type '47' and special schools (including non-maintained special schools) type '52'.

3.2.1.4 Governance

Code 'IN' – 'Independent' is not valid for the school census. The values for the CBDS data item governance (N00219) are contained within codeset C0030.

Establishment unique reference number (URN) [ALL schools]

Data item (N00278) <URN> records the six digit establishment unique reference number as held on the department's [GIAS](#) (get information about schools) system. This data item is included within the XML file header.

3.2.2 Primary admission appeals module [spring census only]

Primary admission appeals are required from the following schools in the spring census with phase and governance of:

Phase	Governance
'PS' – primary	'VA' – voluntary aided
'MP' – middle-deemed primary	'FO' – foundation
'AT' – all-through	'CA' – academy

Primary and middle-deemed primary is defined as <NCyearActual>: 'R' (reception) to 6 inclusive. Primary and middle-deemed primary schools are to provide information on all of their appeals.

Please note: Primary admission appeals contain the subset of infant admission appeals. As such, infant admission appeals information will appear in **both** primary admission appeals **and** infant admission appeals.

Information is required on the number of appeals:

- lodged
- withdrawn
- heard
- rejected
- decided in favour of the parents

for all appeals lodged before 2026-09-01 against a refusal to admit a pupil to the school for a place at the school at the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year.

Information about appeals lodged on or after 2026-09-01 is not required. Nor is information required about in-year appeals (that is, appeals against a refusal to admit a pupil during the course of the 2026 to 2027 academic year) - just those that relate to entry at the start of the academic year.

Please note: All through schools – that have age ranges that cater for pupils aged 7 years and under to 14 years and over – are to provide information on all admission appeals appropriate to their age range.

3.2.3 Infant admission appeals module [spring census only]

Infant admission appeals are required from the following schools in the spring census with phase and governance of:

Phase	Governance
'PS' – primary 'AT' – all-through	'VA' – voluntary aided 'FO' – foundation 'CA' – academy

Infant is defined as <NCyearActual>: 'R' (reception), '1' and '2' (inclusive) with all-through schools completing all years appropriate to their age range.

Please note: Infant admission appeals are a subset of primary admission appeals. As such, the information will appear in **both** infant admission appeals **and** primary admission appeals.

Information is required on the number of appeals as detailed at [3.2.2](#) above.

Please note: All through schools – that have age ranges that cater for both pupils aged 7 years and under to 14 years and over - are to provide information on all admission appeals appropriate to their age range.

3.2.4 Secondary admission appeals module [spring census only]

Admission appeals are required from the following schools in the spring census with phase and governance of:

Phase	Governance
'PS' – primary	'VA' – voluntary aided
'SS' – secondary	'FO' – foundation
'AT' – all-through	'CA' – academy

Secondary and middle-deemed secondary is defined as <NCyearActual>: '7' to '13' inclusive. Middle-deemed secondary and secondary schools are to provide information on all of their appeals.

Information is required on the number of appeals as detailed at [3.2.2](#) above

Please note: All through schools – that have age ranges that cater for both pupils aged 7 years and under to 14 years and over - are to provide information on all admission appeals appropriate to their age range.

3.2.5 Pupil reconciliation module

Pupil reconciliation details can be found at [Annex G](#).

3.2.6 Class information module

Class type (N00267), class key stage (N00268) and class activity (N00247) are required for all classes from primary schools and all classes for year groups up to and including year 6 from all-through schools.

With regard to class activity (N00247), primary and all-through schools with infant classes are to ensure that the selected period is one when the infant class (KS1 and / or

Reception) are engaged in academic activity rather than one of the excepted activities of PE, music, singing, drama and watching TV or listening to the radio. This selected period should be enacted for all primary classes (and not just for the infant classes).

The class activity code (N00247) should not be defaulted to 'OT' (other). The code of 'OT' should only be used where none of the other categories are appropriate.

3.2.6.1 Unlawful infant classes

For primary and all-through schools, where a key stage 1 and / or a reception class reports a pupil : teacher ratio greater than 30, the schools must record where this is due to:

- any pupils within the class recorded as excepted – the number of pupils in the relevant exception field (N00665 – N00672)
- a teacher on planning and preparation time (PPA) or learning manager time (LMT) or newly qualified teacher (NQT) time and the class is being supervised by a teaching assistant – record the number of teachers in the PPA field (N00664)

3.2.7 Miscellaneous module

Miscellaneous data items are those that do not fit within the other modules.

3.2.7.1 Free school meals [spring census only]

Data item (N00238) free schools meals ('FSM') taken is collected in the spring census only and collects data on the number of free school meals taken on census day.

Pupils are recorded as 'FSM' eligible when a claim for the meal has been made on their behalf and their eligibility has been verified by the school where they are enrolled or the local authority.

Where pupils receive a free school lunch due to the universal infant free school meal entitlement **only**, such pupils must **not** be recorded as 'FSM' and must **not** be included in the free school meals taken count.

3.2.7.2 School time [spring census only][Not for Nursery]

Data item (N00767) collects data on the total compulsory time pupils spend in school, in a typical 5 day week. Data must be recorded to 2 decimal places and rounded to the nearest 15 minutes.

Where a school is open for 32 and a-half-hours, for example, this is recorded as 32.50, with 32 and three-quarter hours being 32.75. For guidance on converting hours to decimals please see the following [information](#).

This includes the total time each day from the official start of the compulsory school day (morning registration) to when the compulsory school day ends, (official home time).

This figure will be inclusive of breaks and lunchtime, as these form part of the total compulsory school day, however it will not include optional activities either before or after school. The data entered should be representative for pupils aged 5-16 in the school.

We recognise some schools have different school weeks for different pupils or key stages. In these circumstances, schools should report a middle year group, for example, NC Year 3 in primary or NC Year 9 in secondary schools. All other schools / settings such as all-

through schools or middle schools should use a middle year group or age group, which represents an average week in their school.

3.2.7.3 School childcare

Schools **must** provide information on the provision of – or signposting to – childcare, together with the nature of the childcare provided / signposted. The school **must** provide an answer to whether there is on-site provision (together with any related information) and whether the school signposts off-site provision for **each** of the four types of childcare:

- i. Before school
- ii. After school
- iii. Holiday
- iv. Childcare for children aged 0-4

For each record the school must provide an answer to indicate whether the school:

- provides childcare on site
- signposts people to other childcare
- does both

Where unusual circumstances affect data items as of census day schools should report data based on the 'normal' situation.

Where opening / closing times are required, these are provided using the 24-hour clock format (03:00 equals 3 am 15:00 equals 3 pm).

The minimum return from a school which does not provide on-site childcare and also does not signpost off-site provision would be **for each type of childcare** a 'NO' for on-site and an 'N' for signposting.

Where a school delivers - or signposts - childcare provision, this element records the nature of such provision / signposting via four scenarios:

- i. **Before school** [Type of childcare (N00288) equals 'B']

By this, we mean a guaranteed, regular service provided on days when the school is open. This will provide a safe and secure place where working parents can leave their children before the school opens formally. Before school childcare staff have responsibility for taking the children to their classes when the school opens.

The question 'How many places' is a measure of total available capacity and not the number of children that attend each day.

If the provision has variable capacity across the week the day with the largest capacity for supporting children should be provided.

Is there a regular before school childcare service on the school site? (YES / NO)

Where YES:

- What time does it open?
- How many places?
- Are you currently able to offer a place to every parent that wants one?
(YES/NO/UNKNOWN/ Information not available from external provider)
- Who provides the service?
- Is it open to children from other schools (with transfer included)? (YES / NO / UNKNOWN)

Signposting

- Is there a regular off-site service that the school promotes or signposts parents towards? ('YF' / 'YL' / 'N' / 'U')

Where:

- 'YF' equals Yes, we have formal arrangements with another provider for them to provide childcare to our pupils, including escort to/from the site
- 'YL' equals Yes, we keep a list of other local providers that will pick up from our school to help parents
- 'N' equals No
- 'U' equals Not known

Where YF is provided a supplementary question is asked:

- Is the provision open 8am or earlier? (YES/NO/UNKNOWN)

Where YL is provided a supplementary question is asked:

- Do the listed providers offer childcare covering the time period 8am-6pm?
(ALL(100%)/MOST(over 50%)/SOME (Less than 50%)/NONE/UNKNOWN)

ii. **After school** [Type of childcare (N00288) equals 'A']

By this, we mean a guaranteed, regular service provided on days when the school is open. This will provide a safe and secure place where children spend time after the school day has finished. The setting will take the responsibility of collecting the children from their classes and looking after them until parents can collect them.

The question 'How many places' is a measure of total available capacity and not the number of children that attend each day.

If the provision has variable capacity across the week the day with the largest capacity for supporting children should be provided.

Is there a regular after school childcare service on the school site? (YES / NO)

Where YES:

- What time does it close?
- How many places?
- Are you currently able to offer a place to every parent that wants one?
(YES/NO/UNKNOWN/ Information not available from external provider)
- Who provides the service?
- Is it open to children from other schools (with transfer included)? (YES / NO / UNKNOWN)

Signposting

- Is there a regular off-site service that the school promotes or signposts parents towards? ('YF' / 'YL' / 'N' / 'U')

Where:

- 'YF' equals Yes, we have formal arrangements with another provider for them to provide childcare to our pupils, including escort to/from to the site
- 'YL' equals Yes, we keep a list of other local providers that will pick up from our school to help parents
- 'N' equals No
- 'U' equals Not known

Where YF is provided a supplementary question is asked:

- Is the provision open to at least 6pm? (YES/NO/UNKNOWN)

Where YL is provided a supplementary question is asked:

- Do the listed providers offer childcare covering the time period 8 am-6pm?
(ALL(100%)/MOST(over 50%)/SOME (Less than 50%)/NONE/UNKNOWN)

iii. Holiday [Type of childcare (N00288) equals 'H']

By this, we mean a service that usually opens Monday to Friday during school holiday periods. It may not cover all holiday periods but should provide a useful service to parents. We do not include activities that are only available for morning or afternoon sessions, such as a football class or a language school, although the service may be integrated with such offers. If the offer only applies during the summer break, we are aware that this may change, so answer for your current arrangements or plans.

Is there a holiday childcare service or scheme offered on the school site? (YES / NO)

Where YES:

- What time does it open?
- What time does it close?
- For how many weeks is the service open?
- How many places?

- Are you currently able to offer a place to every parent that wants one?
(YES/NO/UNKNOWN/ Information not available from external provider)
- Who provides the service?
- Is it open to children from other schools? (YES / NO / UNKNOWN)

Signposting

- Is there an off-site service or scheme that the school promotes or signposts parents towards? ('YF' / 'YL' / 'N' / 'U')

Where:

- 'YF' equals Yes, we have formal arrangements with another provider for them to provide childcare to our pupils
- 'YL' equals Yes, we keep a list of other local providers
- 'N' equals No
- 'U' equals Not known

Where YF is provided a supplementary question is asked:

- Are the holiday childcare provider hours from 8am or earlier and to at least 6pm?
(YES/NO/UNKNOWN)

Where YL is provided a supplementary question is asked:

- Do the listed providers offer childcare covering the time period 8 am-6pm?
(ALL(100%)/MOST(over 50%)/SOME (Less than 50%)/NONE/UNKNOWN)

iv. **Childcare for Children aged between 0-4 years** [Type of childcare (N00288) equals 'U']

Does the school have an on-site offer of regular childcare for children aged under 5 (that is, between 0 and 4) for more than 9 hours / day (YES / NO). **NOTE:** Do not include provision that is only available during school hours or where children can only attend for a morning or afternoon session.

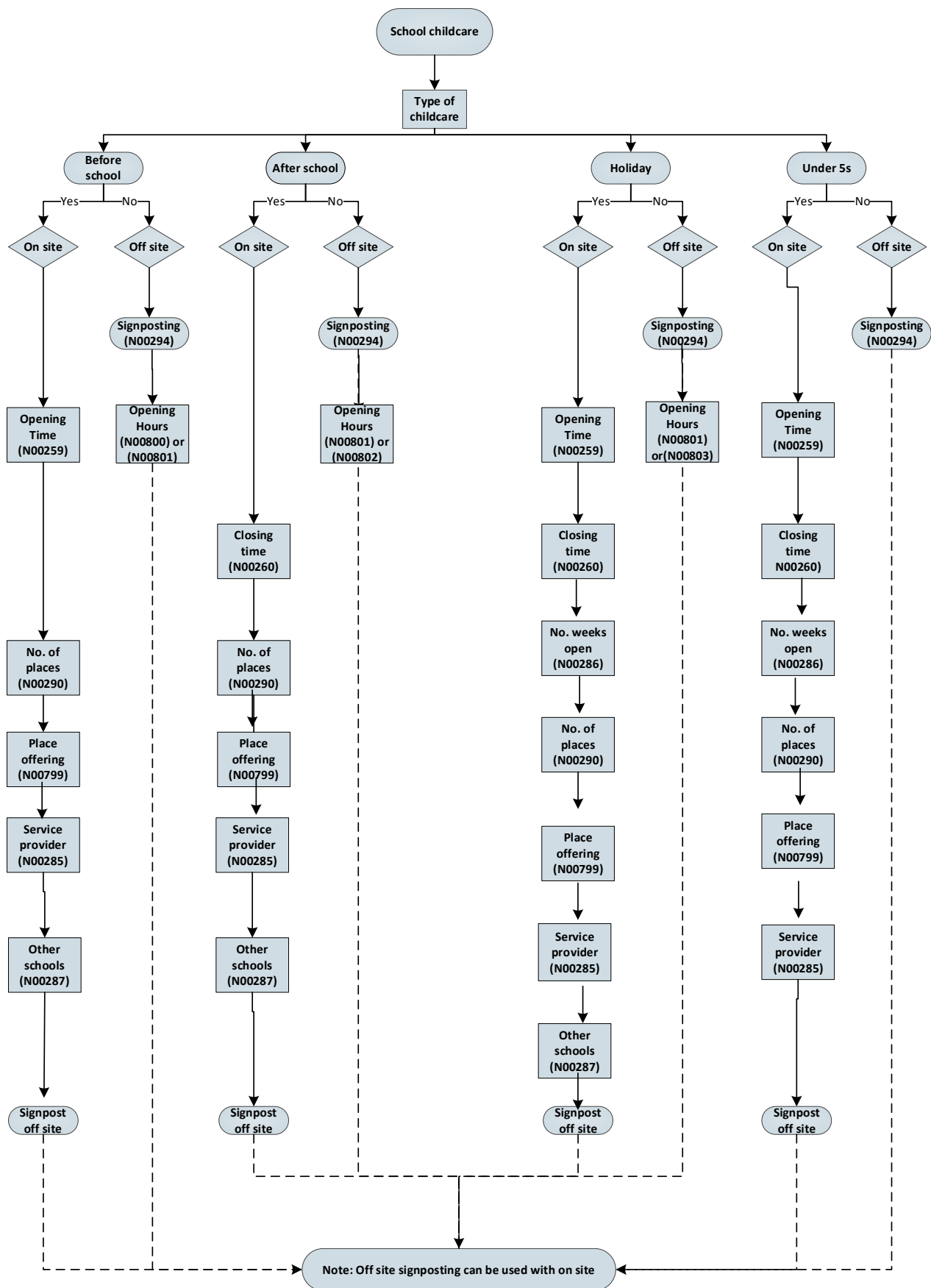
Where YES:

- What time does it open?
- What time does it close?
- For how many weeks is it open?
- How many places?
- Are you currently able to offer a place to every parent that wants one?
(YES/NO/UNKNOWN/ Information not available from external provider)
- Who provides the service?
- Signposting - Is there an off-site service or scheme that the school promotes or signposts parents towards? ('YF' / 'YL' / 'N' / 'U')

Where:

- 'YF' equals Yes, we have formal arrangements with another provider for them to provide childcare to our pupils.
- 'YL' equals Yes, we keep a list of other local providers.
- 'N' equals No
- 'U' equals Not known

A flow diagram of the above scenarios is below:



3.3 Coverage and timing

As different data items are collected each term, the table at [Annex F](#) shows when each school level module is collected.

4. Pupil level information

4.1 Overall description and scope

This section describes the modules and data items that combine into the pupil level element of the school census.

4.2 Categories of pupil for which data are required

Records are generated for all pupils who are on roll (that is, registered at the school and who have a current record on the school's MIS) at the school on census day. There are particular cases where records are required for pupils' no longer on roll, for example:

- attendance
- suspensions and permanent exclusions
- post-16 programme aims and learning aims (including maths and English prior attainment)
- 16 to 19 bursary fund
- alternative provision placement details
- learner funding and monitoring (FAM)

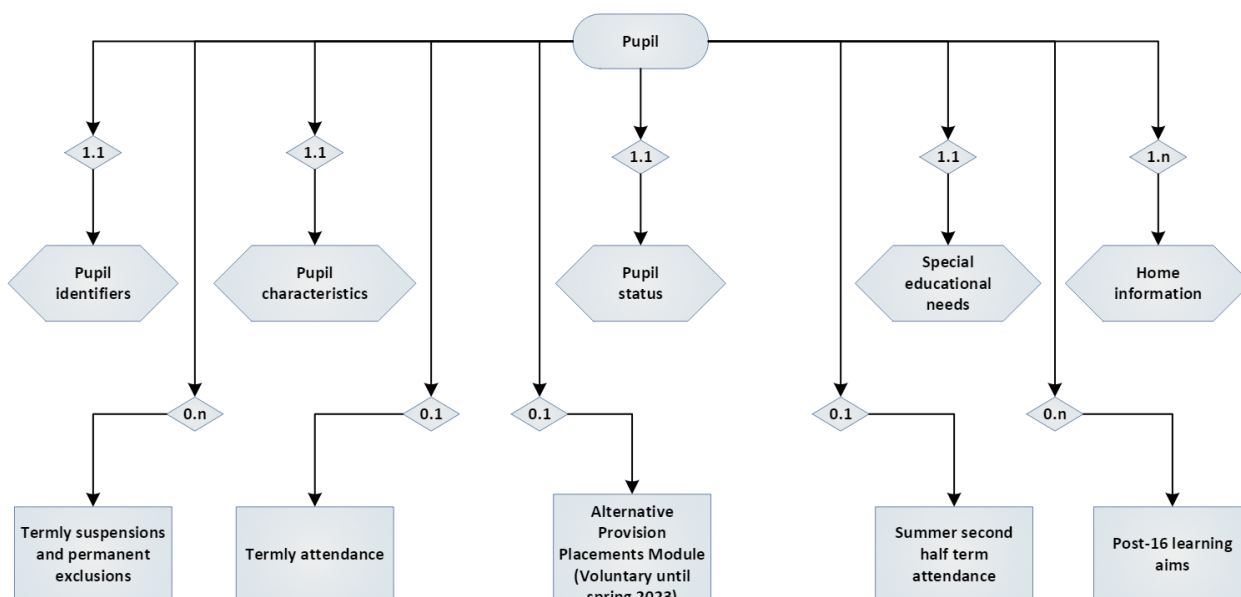
Records for guest (not a pupil at the school) pupils are NOT required and must NOT be returned.

The pupil level collection schedule table ([Annex G](#)) indicates, by school phase, the modules and individual data items required for on and off roll pupils.

4.3 Outline data content

The return is comprised of a number of modules for each pupil within the school. Each module contains related data items. The data items included in each of the modules can be found at [Annex G](#) with full descriptions of each data item provided in the common basic data set ([CBDS](#)) database.

An outline of the pupil structure for each school in the school census collections broken down by module is as follows:



[Annex B](#) contains the pupil XML message structure showing the modules and data items required in each census collection from each phase of school.

4.3.1 Pupil identifiers module

Pupil identity information (such as sex and date of birth) is collected for all pupils on roll (registered at the school on census day).

This data is also required for those pupils no longer on roll on census day and for whom information is collected in respect of:

- suspensions and permanent exclusions
- attendance
- 16 to 19 bursary fund
- post-16 programme aims and learning aims (including maths and English prior attainment)
- alternative provision placement details
- learner funding and monitoring (FAM)

4.3.1.1 Unique learner number (ULN) [For: Middle-deemed secondary, secondary, all-through, special and PRU / AP] [used for funding]

A ULN (N00011) is mandatory for all pupils aged 14 and over on census day.

4.3.2 Pupil characteristics module

This module contains pupil characteristics information.

4.3.2.1 Ethnicity [ALL schools]

Ethnicity code (N00177) is required for all pupils, including pupils no longer on roll. The census includes the value held within the school MIS, whether the school has opted to use extended codes or to use the main codes. Where the ethnicity has not yet been collected this is recorded as 'NOBT' (information not yet obtained). Where a parent / guardian or pupil declines to provide ethnicity data, code 'REFU' (declined to provide) is recorded and returned.

4.3.2.2 Language code [ALL schools]

The language code (N00015) is collected for all pupils, including pupils no longer on roll. This information enables those schools and authorities who wish to do so, to collect and transmit information on the specific languages of those pupils whose first language is other than English. In these instances, an extended language code set will be available as an alternative to recording a pupil's language as 'OTH' or 'OTB'. The census includes the value held within the school MIS, whether the school has opted to use extended codes or to use 'OTH' / 'OTB'. School MIS systems should also hold more than one specific language where this is required locally. In this case, the MIS will include the language marked as 'First' by the CBDS item language type (N00015). Where the parent / guardian or pupil have declined to provide a first language, code 'REF' (declined to provide) must be used.

4.3.2.3 Free school meal eligibility [ALL schools] [used for funding]

From the start of the 2026/27 academic year, the Department is delivering an expansion to FSM eligibility to include **all** pupils from households in receipt of Universal Credit (UC).

Pupils should only be recorded as 'FSM' eligible when a claim for the meal has been made on their behalf and their eligibility has been verified by the school where they are enrolled or the local authority.

There will be two categories of free school meals:

- "Targeted FSM" which continues to be based on the existing threshold, covering pupils who are in households in receipt of universal credit with an annual household income of no more than £7,400.
- "Expanded FSM" which will apply to meals only, covering pupils who do not qualify for "targeted FSM", but who are in households in receipt of universal credit.

At the same time as the expansion of FSM eligibility enters into force at the start of the school year, the government intends to end the transitional protections that were in place during the rollout of universal credit. This means that it will now be compulsory to recheck eligibility for all pupils annually, and a new "last verified" date box has been included to ensure that this requirement is met.

Free school meal eligibility is recorded via the <FSMstartDate> (N00142); the ,<FSMEligibilityVerificationDate> (N00837); and the, <FSMendDate> (N00143) data items, together with the <UKcountry> (N00277) and <FSMCategory> (N00838) data items.

FSM Category - Targeted FSM (TFSM)

This category refers to the original cohort of pupils eligible for benefits related FSM. That is pupils in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of:

- Universal Credit (provided they have a household income of no more than £7400)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Households in receipt of Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the guarantee element of Pension Credit or households with 'no recourse to public funds' may also be eligible for targeted FSM. FSM periods issued in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland should be recorded as 'Targeted' FSM.

Only pupils eligible for Targeted FSM will be counted towards the following:

- FSM6 cohort. (That is pupils who are, or have been, recorded as eligible for FSM at any point in the last 6 years.) The FSM6 cohort is used for accountability, Pupil Premium funding and deprivation funding in the national funding formula (NFF);
- to determine eligibility for Home to School Transport (HTST) and;
- the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

FSM Category - Expanded FSM (EFSM)

This category refers to the expanded cohort of pupils eligible for FSM. That is, those pupils from households in receipt of universal credit (UC), but who do not meet the criteria for Targeted FSM. This cohort of pupils will be eligible for *meals only*, and so will not attract disadvantage funding or be counted towards the FSM6 cohort for accountability purposes.

FSM periods versus Universal Free School Meals (UiFSM)

FSM periods should only be completed for pupils who are entitled to either targeted or expanded FSM. Where pupils receive a free school lunch due to the universal infant free school meal entitlement only, FSM periods should not be returned.

Data Required

The following data items are collected in the autumn, spring and summer school census collections:

- 'FSM' eligibility start date (N00142)
- 'FSM' eligibility verification date (N00837)
- 'FSM' eligibility end date (N00143) – where applicable

- country of UK (N00277)
- 'FSM' Category (N00838)

These data items are collected for pupils who are on roll on census day and have periods of 'FSM' eligibility since the last census.

(a) Pupils who previously qualified for FSM prior to the autumn 2026 term and are re-confirmed as eligible under the targeted category will retain their original FSM start date.

(b) Pupils whose eligibility changes from the targeted category to the expanded category will have their targeted FSM period closed with an end date, followed by a new FSM period recorded under the expanded category.

(c) An 'FSM' eligibility start date on or before the current census day is required for all pupils eligible for either targeted or expanded FSM". Pupils who are eligible for 'Expanded FSM' should have a start date no earlier than 1st August.

(d) An 'FSM' eligibility verification date will be required for any 'live' periods of eligibility. From September 2026, eligibility needs to be rechecked for each pupil at least annually. For the 2026-27 academic year, all pupils need to have been rechecked on or after [1 June 2026]. For the "last verified date" to be valid, it will therefore need to be:

- For the autumn school census; between 2026-06-01 and 2026-10-01 (inclusive);
- For the spring school census: between 2026-06-01 and 2027-01-21 (inclusive); and
- For the summer school census: between 2026-06-01 and 2027-05-20 (inclusive).

Without a valid verification date, pupils will not be counted as eligible, which will result in a loss of funding for schools.

Software suppliers could consider adding a bespoke "prompt" to remind schools to re-check eligibility annually within the period cited above.

(c) An 'FSM' eligibility end date will be required for any pupil which has had a period of FSM eligibility since the previous census, but where that eligibility has ended by the time of the current census. If an end date is entered it must be between the first day after the previous census and on or before the current census day

The 'FSM' eligibility end date would be:

- for the 2026 autumn school census between 2026-05-22 and 2026-10-01 (inclusive)
- for the 2027 spring school census between 2026-10-02 and 2027-01-21 (inclusive)
- for the 2027 summer school census between 2027-01-22 and 2027-05-20 (inclusive)

The data returned reflects the position as at census day. If a system holds a period of 'FSM' eligibility that matches the criteria for the return, but that period has a stored 'FSM' eligibility end date that is after the census day, then the returned version of that period will include an 'FSM' eligibility start date but no 'FSM' eligibility end date. Similarly, 'FSM' eligibility start dates returned in the census will be on or before census day. Stored start or end dates after census day would not have been known on census day and so cannot be returned.

Multiple 'FSM' eligibility start and end dates falling within the period are to be returned where applicable.

For example: if a pupil had been eligible for FSM from 1 September until 31 October in a school in Wales and moved to a school in England and claimed eligibility from 1 November then the following will be returned in 2027 spring school census:

- for the first period of eligibility:
 - 'FSM' eligibility start date of 2026-09-01 and 'FSM' eligibility end date of 2026-10-31 UK country code must be recorded as 'WLS' and
- for the second period of eligibility:
 - 'FSM' eligibility start date of 2026-11-01 and no 'FSM' eligibility end date, UK country code must be recorded as 'ENG'

Each period of 'FSM' eligibility must have an associated country of UK reported to ensure that those pupils who have only experienced periods of 'FSM' eligibility outside of England do not attract the pupil premium.

4.3.2.4 School lunch taken [ALL schools – with appropriate age range] [used for funding]

This data item (N00162) indicates whether a pupil has taken a 'school lunch' on census day.

A 'school lunch' is defined as 'food made available by the school for consumption by the pupil as their midday meal on a school day'.

This data item is collected from all school types in each census for the following pupils on roll on census day:

- pupils in reception (NCyearActual equals 'R')
- pupils in year 1 (NCyearActual equals '1')
- pupils in year 2 (NCyearActual equals '2')
- pupils aged 4 to 6 not following the national curriculum (NCyearActual equals 'X' AND pupil born between 2019-09-01 and 2022-08-31 inclusive)

Please note: if the pupil is absent on census day, this field cannot equal 'true'.

Where ‘school lunches taken’ are affected, a day and time when the situation is regarded as normal is to be substituted. You could use the next normal day, an earlier day in census week or the previous Thursday where that reflects the normal situation. Where other days or times are used, schools must record these for audit purposes.

This field should be defaulted to ‘true’ within school systems to reduce the burden of data entry by schools.

4.3.2.5 Youth support services agreement indicator [Not for: Nursery schools and primary]

The youth support services agreement indicator (N00145) applies to:

- pupils with SEN aged between 12 and 25 with date of birth between 2000-09-01 and 2014-08-31
- all other pupils aged between 12 and 20 with date of birth between 2005-09-01 and 2014-08-31

The youth support services agreement should be returned for all pupils who are aged 12 and above as at 31 August. If it is not completed, the system will default too ‘unsought’.

4.3.2.6 Service children in education indicator [ALL schools] [used for funding]

The service children in education indicator (N00093) collects:

- ‘yes’
- ‘no’
- ‘refused’
- ‘unknown’ - used to indicate no response given or other reason for no information

MIS systems will default to ‘No’ and allow for bulk editing.

4.3.2.7 Early Years entitlements

The table below shows a summary of entitlements against ages:

Autumn 2026	Age ranges	Funded hours	Basis for funding	Expanded hours	Eligibility code	Extended hours
9 months to 1-year-olds	Born between 2024-09-01 and 2025-11-30 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups	X	X	✓	✓	X

Autumn 2026	Age ranges	Funded hours	Basis for funding	Expanded hours	Eligibility code	Extended hours
Early learning for 2-year-olds	Born between 2023-09-01 and 2024-08-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups	✓	✓	X	x	x
2-year-olds	Born between 2023-09-01 and 2024-08-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups	x	x	✓	✓	X
3-year-olds	Born between 2022-09-01 and 2023-08-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups	✓	X	X	✓	✓
4-year-olds	4-year-olds born between 2021-09-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) - for pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only	✓	X	X	✓	✓

Spring 2027	Age ranges	Funded hours	Basis for funding	Expanded hours	Eligibility code	Extended hours
9 months to 1-year-olds	9-month-olds to one-year-olds born between 2025-01-01 and 2026-03-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	X	X	✓	✓	X

Spring 2027	Age ranges	Funded hours	Basis for funding	Expanded hours	Eligibility code	Extended hours
Early learning for 2-year-olds	2-year-olds born between 2024-01-01 and 2024-12-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	✓	✓	X	X	X
2-year-olds	2-year-olds born between 2024-01-01 and 2024-12-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	X	X	✓	✓	X
3-year-olds	3-year-olds born between 2022-09-01 and 2023-12-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	✓	X	X	✓	✓
4-year-olds	4-year-olds born between 2022-01-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) - for pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only	✓	X	X	✓	✓

Summer 2027	Age ranges	Funded hours	Basis for funding	Expanded hours	Eligibility code	Extended hours
9 months to 1-year-olds	9-month-olds to one-year-olds born between 2025-04-01 and 2026-06-30 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	X	X	✓	✓	X

Summer 2027	Age ranges	Funded hours	Basis for funding	Expanded hours	Eligibility code	Extended hours
Early learning for 2-year-olds	2-year-olds born between 2024-04-01 and 2025-03-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	✓	✓	X	X	X
2-year-olds	2-year-olds born between 2024-04-01 and 2025-03-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	X	X	✓	✓	X
3-year-olds	3-year-olds born between 2022-09-01 and 2024-03-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	✓	X	X	✓	✓
4-year-olds	4-year-olds born between 2022-04-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) - for pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only	✓	X	X	✓	✓

4.3.2.8 Funded universal free entitlement hours [Not for: CTC and NMSS] [used for funding]

Funded hours (N00204) record, for eligible pupils aged 2, 3 and 4, the total number of hours in education provision (following the learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage) at the school funded via the [free entitlement to early education](#). This information is collected each term from all schools with relevant age children, except city technology colleges and non-maintained special schools.

All 3 and 4 year old children become eligible for free early education from the term following a child's third birthday irrespective of background or family circumstances (the universal free entitlement).

A specified subset of 2-year-olds also become eligible from the term following a child's second birthday for the early learning for 2-year-olds entitlement. Eligible 2 year olds are those who have attained the age of 2 and meet the criteria that are available on the department's [website](#). Local authorities will be able to confirm which children meet the eligibility criteria should schools not know.

The table below shows the dates of birth, and year groups, of children for whom funded free entitlement hours are required. If a child falls into the cohorts listed below but is not in receipt of any funding via the free entitlement, then a value of zero should be recorded for funded universal free entitlement hours.

All children included in the table below are entitled to up to 15 hours per week inclusive of free entitlement funding.

Where extended free entitlement hours are claimed (see [4.3.2.9](#) below), the maximum hours are 30 hours per week, 15 universal free entitlement hours plus 15 extended free entitlement hours.

Census	Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group	Maximum funded universal free entitlement hours
Autumn 2026	2 and 3 year olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2024-08-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	15 hours
Autumn 2026	4 year olds Born between 2021-09-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) For pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only	15 hours
Spring 2027	2 and 3 year olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2024-12-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	15 hours
Spring 2027	4 year olds Born between 2022-01-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) For pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only	15 hours

Census	Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group	Maximum funded universal free entitlement hours
Summer 2027	2 and 3 year olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2025-03-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups	15 hours
Summer 2027	4 year olds Born between 2022-04-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) For pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only	15 hours

Please note: Pupils aged 4 at the start of the academic year in reception and above are funded as full time equivalent pupils via the schools block of the dedicated schools grant and therefore funded free entitlement hours are not required for those pupils, as they are not funded via the free entitlement.

Funded free entitlement hours are recorded to two decimal places, and it should be noted that this is a decimal of hours and therefore does not record hours and minutes. For example, where a pupil has 10 hours and 30 minutes, this is recorded as [10 plus (30 divided by 60)] equals 10.50 with 10 hours and 45 minutes quarter hours being [10 plus (45 divided by 60)] equals 10.75.

4.3.2.9 Extended free entitlement hours [Not for: CTC and NMSS] [used for funding]

Extended hours (N00201) are collected for a sub-set of the same pupils and schools (that is, pupils who were aged 3 or 4 as at 31 August, 31 December or 31 March) for whom funded universal free entitlement hours are collected – see [4.3.2.8](#) above. This data item records, for pupils (aged 3 and 4 where <NCyearActual> equals 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' or 'N2' only) with working parents who hold a valid eligibility code the number of extended free entitlement hours.

As with funded universal free entitlement hours, extended free entitlement hours are recorded to two decimal places, and it should be noted that this is a decimal of hours and therefore does not record hours and minutes. For example, where a pupil has 10 hours and 30 minutes, this is recorded as [10 plus (30 divided by 60)] equals 10.50 with 10 hours and 45 minutes quarter hours being [10 plus (45 divided by 60)] equals 10.75

Please note: Where a child is in receipt of extended free entitlement hours, the maximum funded universal free entitlement hours allowable is 15 hours. The maximum allowable entitlement, inclusive of funded free entitlement and extended entitlement hours is 30 hours.

This field must NOT include any hours funded under the universal entitlement for free early education, which should still be recorded against funded hours (N00204), nor should it include any expanded entitlement hours, which should be recorded against expanded hours (N00787).

Census	Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group	Maximum funded universal free entitlement and extended free entitlement hours
Autumn 2026	3 year olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2023-08-31 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - all relevant schools and year groups	15 funded universal free entitlement hours + 15 extended free entitlement hours equals 30 hours
Autumn 2026	4 year olds Born between 2021-09-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - for pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only	15 funded universal free entitlement hours + 15 extended free entitlement hours equals 30 hours
Spring 2027	3 year olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2023-12-31 (inclusive) – with a valid eligibility code - all relevant schools and year groups	15 funded universal free entitlement hours + 15 extended free entitlement hours equals 30 hours
Spring 2027	4 year olds Born between 2022-01-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - for pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only	15 funded universal free entitlement hours + 15 extended free entitlement hours equals 30 hours
Summer 2027	3 year olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2024-03-31 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - all relevant schools and year groups	15 funded universal free entitlement hours + 15 extended free entitlement hours equals 30 hours
Summer 2027	4 year olds Born between 2022-04-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - for pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only	15 funded universal free entitlement hours + 15 extended free entitlement hours equals 30 hours

4.3.2.10 Expanded free entitlement hours [Not for: CTC and NMSS] [used for funding]

Expanded hours (N00787) records, for 9 month to 2-year-old (inclusive) pupils with working parents who hold a valid eligibility code, the number of expanded entitlement hours.

As with funded universal free entitlement hours and extended free entitlement hours, expanded free entitlement hours are recorded to two decimal places, and it should be noted that this is a decimal of hours and therefore does not record hours and minutes. For example, where a pupil has 10 hours and 30 minutes, this is recorded as [10 plus (30 divided by 60)] equals 10.50 with 10 hours and 45 minutes quarter hours being [10 plus (45 divided by 60)] equals 10.75.

Please note: Where a child is in receipt of expanded free entitlement hours, the maximum expanded entitlement hours allowable is 30 hours.

This field must NOT include any hours funded under the universal entitlement for free early education, which should still be recorded against funded hours (N00204), nor should it include any extended entitlement hours, which should still be recorded against extended hours (N00201).

Census	Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group	Maximum funded expanded hours
Autumn 2026	9 months to 1-year-olds Born between 2024-09-01 and 2025-11-30 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - all relevant schools and year groups	30 hours
Autumn 2026	2-year-olds Born between 2023-09-01 and 2024-08-31 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - all relevant schools and year groups	30 hours
Spring 2027	9 months to 1-year-olds Born between 2025-01-01 and 2026-03-31 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - all relevant schools and year groups	30 hours

Census	Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group	Maximum funded expanded hours
Spring 2027	2-year-olds Born between 2024-01-01 and 2024-12-31 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - all relevant schools and year groups	30 hours
Summer 2027	9 months to 1-year-olds Born between 2025-04-01 and 2026-06-30 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - all relevant schools and year groups	30 hours
Summer 2027	2-year-olds Born between 2024-04-01 and 2025-03-31 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - all relevant schools and year groups	30 hours

Please note: In some circumstances, 2-year-olds may be eligible for both the 15-hour entitlement for early learning for 2-year-olds and the expanded entitlement. In those circumstances, parents should use the early learning entitlement first, then the working parent entitlement up to a maximum of 30 hours in total. For example, a parent eligible for both entitlements and using 25 hours of provision would record 15 hours of early learning entitlement and 10 hours of the working parent entitlement.

4.3.2.11 Eligibility Code [Not for: CTC and NMSS] [used for funding]

The eligibility code indicator (N00202) is an 11-digit integer that is required for pupils who claim extended or expanded entitlement hours. This applies to all eligible 9 month to 3-year-olds and those pupils aged 4 in 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only. The code confirms the eligibility of working parents to receive the additional 15 hours of extended entitlement, or the 30 hours of expanded entitlement. This is particularly important as parents may split this entitlement between two providers.

The code, once issued, remains fixed and refers to a single parent / child combination (that is, where a parent has two children, each child will have their own code). However, when the school is presented with the code by the parent, the school must confirm the code's validity with the local authority.

Where a child transfers school, the local authority must be informed of the transfer.

4.3.2.12 Disability access fund indicator [Not for: CTC and NMSS]

The disability access fund (DAF) indicator (N00203) records, eligible pupils aged 9 months to 3 years and 4 year olds in 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only, in receipt of DAF funding. Pupils will be eligible for the DAF where they meet both of the following criteria:

- the child is in receipt of child disability living allowance
- and**
- the child receives free early education

Please note: Pupils aged 4 as at the 31 August in reception and above, who are funded via the schools block of the dedicated schools grant, are not eligible for DAF funding. Further information on the DAF is available in the [early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide](#).

The DAF indicator should only be returned for eligible children within the date of birth range, and year groups, outlined below:

Census	Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group where DAF indicator can be returned
Autumn 2026	9 months to 1-year-olds Born between 2024-09-01 and 2025-11-30 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups
Autumn 2026	2-year-olds Born between 2023-09-01 and 2024-08-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups
Autumn 2026	3-year-olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2023-08-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups
Autumn 2026	4-year-olds Born between 2021-09-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) For pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only
Spring 2027	9 months to 1 year olds Born between 2025-01-01 and 2026-03-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups
Spring 2027	2-year-olds Born between 2024-01-01 and 2024-12-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups

Census	Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group where DAF indicator can be returned
Spring 2027	3-year-olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2023-12-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups
Spring 2027	4-year-olds Born between 2022-01-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) For pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only
Summer 2027	9 months to 1 year olds Born between 2025-04-01 and 2026-06-30 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups
Summer 2027	2-year-olds Born between 2024-04-01 and 2025-03-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups
Summer 2027	3-year-olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2024-03-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups
Summer 2027	4-year-olds Born between 2022-04-01 and 2022-08-31 (inclusive) For pupils in national curriculum year groups 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only

This indicator should default to '0' or 'false' to only require a positive input from schools.

4.3.2.13 Hours at setting [Not for: CTC and NMSS] [used for funding]

Hours at setting (N00205) are collected for the same pupils and schools for whom funded free entitlement hours are collected – see [4.3.2.7](#) above. This data item records, for pupils aged 9 months to 3 year olds and 4 year olds in 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only, the total number of hours in education at the school, irrespective of how the hours were funded.

That is:

- universal funded entitlement hours, plus
- any extended funded entitlement hours (if the child is eligible), plus
- any expanded funded entitlement hours (if the child is eligible) plus
- any unfunded hours that the child spends at the provider per week.

Hours are recorded to two decimal places, and it should be noted that this is decimal of hours and therefore does not record hours and minutes. For example, where a pupil has 10 hours and 30 minutes, this is recorded as [10 plus (30 divided by 60)] equals 10.50 with 10 hours and 45 minutes quarter hours being [10 plus (45 divided by 60)] equals 10.75.

4.3.2.14 Unit contact time [PRU / AP only]

Unit contact time (N00117) indicates the number of contact hours that pupils should have in census week in a PRU / AP.

4.3.2.15 Early years pupil premium [[Not for: CTC and NMSS]] [used for funding]

Early years pupil premium (EYPP) (N00639) is for eligible children aged 9 months to 3 year olds and 4 year olds in 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' and 'N2' only.

Pupils taking the 30 hours expanded entitlement for working parents will become eligible to receive early years pupil premium from the term following the child turning 9 months old.

Pupils taking the 15 hours funded entitlement for early learning for 2-year-olds will become eligible to receive early years pupil premium from the term following their second birthday.

Pupils taking the universal 15 hours funded entitlement will become eligible to receive early years pupil premium from the term following their third birthday.

They will retain this entitlement until they move from Nursery ('N1' and 'N2') class into Reception ('R'), when they become eligible to receive the 'mainstream' pupil premium.

Children in **receipt** of EYPP in census week should be recorded with early years pupil premium receipt equal to "true".

EYPP is paid by local authorities direct to settings. Its award is dependent on the application by parents of eligible children to their local authority, which will use the eligibility checking service to verify their application against benefits related data.

Children are eligible to receive EYPP (N00639) if they are taking any of the following:

- universal funded entitlement for three and four-year-olds
- early learning for 2-year-olds
- expanded entitlement for 9 month olds up to 2 year olds inclusive

And meet the following eligibility criteria:

- meet benefits related criteria equivalent to those for free school meals (Targeted FSM) (please note: meals delivered as part of the universal entitlement are not 'FSM'; **receipt of FSM does not automatically qualify a child for EYPP**)¹
- are in the care of the local authority (in England or Wales)
- have left care (in England or Wales) through:
 - adoption

¹ Further guidance on EYPP eligibility here: [Early years funding: 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-funding-2025-to-2026)

- special guardianship
- a child arrangements order (formally known as a residence order)

EYPP is not payable on the extended entitlement for three and four-year-old children of working parents.

There may be circumstances where a child under 3 is taking up the working parent entitlement, is eligible for EYPP and is splitting their provision across two or more schools/EY settings. For these children, local authorities and providers may wish to use the parental declaration form to enable parents to indicate at which school/EY setting they are taking their EYPP entitlement and, where appropriate, pass this information onto the provider or local authorities. This is comparable to the position that exists for 3-and-4-year-olds as this information is used to determine a 'main' provider where the child will continuously benefit from provision for their first (universal) 15-hour entitlement.

The table below shows the cohorts of children for whom early years pupil premium is required.

This table below shows the dates of birth of children for whom early years pupil premium data are required	Age	Date of birth ranges
Autumn 2026	9 months to 1-year olds	2024-09-01 and 2025-11-30 inclusive
Autumn 2026	2-year olds	2023-09-01 and 2024-08-31 inclusive
Autumn 2026	3-year olds	2022-09-01 and 2023-08-31 inclusive
Autumn 2026	4-year-olds: For pupils in 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' or 'N2' ONLY regardless of Phase	2021-09-01 and 2022-08-31 inclusive
Spring 2027	9 months to 1-year olds	2025-01-01 and 2026-03-31 inclusive
Spring 2027	2-year olds	2024-01-01 and 2024-12-31 inclusive

This table below shows the dates of birth of children for whom early years pupil premium data are required	Age	Date of birth ranges
Spring 2027	3-year olds	2022-09-01 and 2023-12-31 inclusive
Spring 2027	4-year olds: For pupils in 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' or 'N2' ONLY regardless of Phase	2022-01-01 and 2022-08-31 inclusive
Summer 2027	9 months to 1-year olds	2025-04-01 and 2026-06-30 inclusive
Summer 2027	2-year olds	2024-04-01 and 2025-03-31 inclusive
Summer 2027	3-year olds	2022-09-01 and 2024-03-31 inclusive
Summer 2027	4-year olds: For pupils in 'E1', 'E2', 'N1' or 'N2' ONLY regardless of Phase	2022-04-01 and 2022-08-31 inclusive

For those pupils in receipt of the early years pupil premium, the reason why (N00639) is also required against the basis of eligibility field. This should be recorded as follows:

Code	Early years pupil premium basis of funding
RE	In receipt through eligibility for economic reasons: where they are in receipt via eligibility for the benefits related criteria for Targeted FSM
RO	In receipt through eligibility for other reasons: where they are in receipt due to being in care or due to leaving care through adoption, a special guardianship order or a child arrangement order
RB	In receipt through eligibility for both reasons: where they are in receipt through eligibility for both economic and other reasons
RU	In receipt through eligibility for unknown basis: where the school or AP provider knows the child is in receipt of EYPP (due to receiving funding from the local authority) but does not necessarily know the reason why

4.3.2.16 Learner support code (bursary funding for 16 to 19 year olds) [used for funding]

This data item (N00146) relates to the government's bursary fund to help the most vulnerable 16 to 19 year olds in full-time education. The scheme comprises two parts as follows:

- a payment by the provider of up to £1,200 to students in the designated vulnerable groups
- a discretionary award for other students needing financial support

Data is collected in respect of pupils, aged 16 to 19 who are on roll on census day or became off roll since the start of the academic year.

The data collected identifies whether a pupil has been awarded 16 to 19 bursary funding in the **current academic year**. During the period covered by a collection it may be possible that the circumstances of a pupil awarded the discretionary element may have changed and they become part of a designated vulnerable group. In such circumstances, the pupil would qualify for the award of 16 to 19 bursary funding to students in the designated vulnerable groups (on a pro-rata basis for the academic year). Due to possible changing circumstances of pupils, returns should allow for submission of both 16 to 19 bursary fund categories awarded since the start of the academic year.

The census collection will not require information about whether a pupil is actually in receipt of funding. The purpose of the collection is to establish how many pupils have been **awarded** support from the 16 to 19 bursary fund in the academic year.

The school holding the current single registration ('C') or current main dual registration ('M') for the pupil will be responsible for awarding the 16 to 19 bursary fund and it is they who must return the required data. PRU / AP must return the required data for any pupils with the following enrolment status: 'C', 'M', 'F' or 'O'.

To facilitate the identification of 16 to 19 bursary funding awarded during the academic year of the census the collection of data in the school census will be on a cumulative basis during this period as follows:

- Spring term - any 16 to 19 bursaries awarded since the beginning of the 2025 to 2026 academic year to students who are either on roll on census day or became off roll since the start of the academic year
- Summer term - any 16 to 19 bursaries awarded since the beginning of the 2025 to 2026 academic year to students who on are either on roll on census day or became off roll since the start of the academic year

4.3.2.17 Top-up funding indicator [ALL schools] [used for funding]

This data item (N00155) is a 'true' / 'false' flag to indicate those pupils on roll for whom the school receives, on census day, high needs top-up funding either from a local authority or, in the case of a PRU / AP, a local authority or another school.

This data item is required for pupils of all ages. The time period the top-up funding relates to is the period that a pupil or student in a mainstream primary or secondary school is identified as requiring additional support which costs more than £6,000 per annum and for whom the school receives top-up funding from a local authority. In a special school or PRU / AP, the top-up funding is paid for a pupil or student whose additional support costs more than the school or PRU / AP receives as place funding of £10,000 per place per annum. In many cases such a period may not be defined but the high needs top-up funding will, as with SEN provision, be subject to periodic review. Please note: Sometimes terminology other than high needs top-up funding is used locally. Often, but not always, top-up funding is linked to pupils or students with an education, health and care plan. Schools should check with the local authority if they are in doubt about whether payments received from a local authority are high needs top-up funding.

4.3.2.18 Post looked after arrangements [used for funding]

This data item (N00186) identifies those children on roll on census day who were looked after immediately before adoption or prior to being subject of a residence or special guardianship order. Those who have parental responsibility (adoptive parents, special guardians and carers) choose if they wish schools to know whether children have been adopted, or are under a special guardianship order, residence order or a child arrangements order.

Only those children who have left care under one of the measures above are currently eligible for the post looked after element of the pupil premium.

Schools will be able to record the information using the following code set; only one of the values will apply to each pupil:

Code	Post looked-after arrangements
N	Not declared
A	Ceased to be looked-after through adoption from England and Wales
G	Ceased to be looked-after through a special guardianship order (SGO) from England and Wales
R	Ceased to be looked-after through a residence order (RO) from England and Wales. (Residence orders were replaced by child arrangements order (CAO) in April 2014).
C	Ceased to be looked-after through a child arrangements order (CAO) England and Wales

Code	Post looked-after arrangements
O	Ceased to be looked-after through adoption from state care outside of England and Wales

The default value will be 'N', not declared.

4.3.2.19 Planned learning hours [used for funding] - not returned for T Level programmes

The total planned timetabled hours for the student in the current academic year; used on departmentally approved qualifications are recorded in this field (N00163). The value recorded is the number of hours as planned at the start of the programme. If the number of planned hours changes later in the year, schools do not need to update the census.

Previous year's total planned timetabled hours

We collect the previous year's total planned timetabled hours (N00654) for all post 16 pupils who:

- were not undertaking a T Level programme
- were on roll in the previous academic year
- were in national curriculum year 12 or above

The **previous year** fields must be populated from the previous autumn census (2024) return.

The values in these fields can be entered or corrected, where appropriate.

This will allow institutions to:

- correct errors in the previous year's return
- record information related to the previous year for pupils who started after census day.

Circumstances under which these fields should be returned:

This table sets out the circumstances under which these fields should be returned in the autumn 2026 census.

On roll in the 2025 to 2026 academic year and in NC year 12 or above	On roll in the 2026 to 2027 academic year and in NC year 12 or above	Data required
Yes	Yes	Previous year and existing current year fields populated: <QualHrs> <QualHrsPreviousYear>
No	Yes	Only existing current year fields populated: <QualHrs>
Yes	No	Only previous year fields populated: <QualHrsPreviousYear>

Planned hours **must not** be changed to reflect actual hours

Other timetabled hours - for non-qualification activity - that make up a study programme for a student with learning aims funded by the department , are recorded in the planned employability, enrichment and pastoral hours field – see section [4.3.2.19](#).

The total of both hours fields determines within which funding band the student's programme resides.

Timetabled hours for learning aims that **are not** funded by the department **must not** be included in the total number of hours recorded in this field.

4.3.2.20 Planned employability, enrichment and pastoral hours [used for funding] - not returned for T Level programmes

The total planned timetabled employability, enrichment and pastoral hours (N00164) for the student in the current academic year. These are the planned hours relevant to the academic year. The value recorded is the number of hours as planned at the start of the programme. If the number of planned hours changes later in the year, schools do not need to update the census.

Include in this field all planned, timetabled hours included in the study programme that are not included in the planned learning hours field. The total of both hours fields is used to determine the full or part time funding rate for the student.

Previous year's total planned timetabled employability, enrichment and pastoral hours

We collect the previous year's total planned timetabled employability, enrichment and pastoral hours (N00655) for all post 16 pupils who:

- were not undertaking a T Level programme
- were on roll in the previous academic year
- were in national curriculum year 12 or above

The **previous year** fields must be populated with the value in systems from the previous autumn census (2025) return.

The values in these fields can be entered or corrected, where appropriate.

This will allow institutions to:

- correct errors in the previous year's return
- record information related to the previous year for pupils who started after census day

Circumstances under which these fields should be returned:

This table sets out the circumstances under which these fields should be returned in the autumn 2026 census.

On roll in the 2025 to 2026 academic year and in NC year 12 or above	On roll in the 2026 to 2027 academic year and in NC year 12 or above	Data required
Yes	Yes	Previous year and existing current year fields populated: <Non_qualHrs> <Non_qualHrsPreviousYear>
No	Yes	Only existing current year fields populated: <Non_qualHrs>
Yes	No	Only previous year fields populated: <Non_qualHrsPreviousYear>

Planned hours **must not** be changed to reflect actual hours

4.3.2.21 T Level planned learning hours and planned employability, enrichment and pastoral hours [used for funding]

T Level planned hours must be returned for all students undertaking T Level programmes. As T Levels are 2 year programmes, the value should **cover the whole programme**, and will, in all but a few exceptional circumstances cover multiple years. This differs from planned qualification hours and non-qualification hours, for study programmes which are recorded annually for each student.

Where a student is only undertaking a T Level programme in the year you should only return T Level Qualification hours and T Level Non-Qualification hours.

Conversely where a student is only undertaking a study programme or a T Level Foundation Year you should only return Qualification hours and Non-Qualification hours. The only scenarios we envisage where a student should have both sets of planned hours recorded in the same academic year is where a student undertakes a short T Level Foundation Year progressing onto a T Level programme in the same year or transfers from a T Level programme to a study programme in-year.

T Level planned hours **must** include:

- the technical qualification,
- specialist content, and
- non-qualification activity
- English and maths delivery,

T Level planned hours **must not** include:

- industry placements, or
- other qualifications that are not part of the T Level

There are no previous year T Level planned hours fields as the hours recorded for T Levels cover the whole programme and are not annual as they are for study programmes. You must ensure that T Level planned hours are returned for every year a student remains on their programme. As each Autumn census return collects post 16 data for the end of one academic year and the start of the next (for Autumn 2026 this means the end of academic year 2025 to 2026 and the start of academic year 2026 to 2027) you must ensure that T Level planned hours are recorded for both students studying a T level programme in the current year and those students in the Autumn census return who have completed their T level programme. For example, in Autumn 2026 you must return T Level planned hours for:

- T Level students completing their T level programme in academic year 2025 to 2026
- T Level students continuing their T level programme in academic year 2026 to 2027 from academic year 2025 to 2026
- T Level students starting their T level programme in academic year 2026 to 2027

4.3.2.22 Post-16 pupils who are in full-time employment

This data item is a 'true' / 'false' flag to identify those pupils in year 12 and above, who are in full time employment.

Under the 'raising the participation age' (RPA) policy, young people (16-19 year olds) must be in full-time education / training unless they are in full-time employment (20 hours or more per week). Where a young person's employment hours vary, employment of an average of 40 or more hours over a two-week period can be considered as meeting the

requirement. Part-time work (for example, a weekend or evening job) is not affected by these requirements. Data item (N00158) indicates those pupils who are in full-time employment and are therefore eligible for part-time education / training.

Although we do not require start and end dates for this flag, schools may find them useful and software suppliers may therefore wish to include them in MI systems.

4.3.2.23 Learning aim withdrawal reason

A learning aim withdrawal reason (N00167) is completed whenever a learning aim status of '3' - the learner has withdrawn from the learning activities leading to the learning aim - is recorded. The reason that most closely matches the reason for the student leaving the course is selected from the list of options. If more than one reason applies the one which is considered to be the main driver for the withdrawal is selected.

For 2026-27 this is the learning aims of students who withdraw following the 6-week qualifying period.

4.3.2.24 Maths and English GCSE prior attainment [used for funding]

The highest prior attainment (grade achieved) for each pupil is recorded for maths and English (using Codeset C0074) for year 12 and above pupils who have at least one learning aim. The value should reflect the highest prior attainment at the start of the academic year.

The grade will be used to determine whether or not a student is required to undertake maths or English GCSE, Functional Skills or other approved stepping stone qualification in order to meet the condition of funding on mathematics and English. It is also used in the calculation of the Level 3 programme maths and English payment

If the learner achieves a maths GCSE grade 9-4 during the year, this field does not need to be updated until the start of the following teaching year.

If the learner does not have GCSE maths and English (not taken exam) or they have come from abroad or another UK country other than England, then the prior attainment code should be recorded as 'NR'.

The exemptions fields record (using Codeset C0079) whether the pupil is exempt from the condition of funding or holds a UK equivalent qualification of functional skills level 2 pass in English and/or maths.

To reduce burdens, systems should default to 'N' – no exemption.

Previous year fields

The highest prior attainment for the student in the previous academic year is also collected (N00656 and N00657).

The **previous year** fields must be populated with the value in systems from the previous autumn census (2024) return for all post-16 students who were on roll in the previous academic year and in national curriculum year 12 or above.

The values in these fields can be corrected, where appropriate.

This will allow institutions to:

- correct errors in the previous year's return
- record information related to the previous year for pupils who started after census day
- record where the pupil's status has changed between years

Circumstances under which these fields should be returned:

This table sets out the circumstances under which these fields should be returned in the autumn 2026 census.

On roll in the 2025 to 2026 academic year and in NC year 12 or above	On roll in the 2026 to 2027 academic year and in NC year 12 or above	Data required
Yes	Yes	Previous year and current year fields populated: <MathsGCSEHighestPriorAttainment> <EnglishGCSEHighestPriorAttainment> <MathsGCSEFundingExemption> <EnglishGCSEFundingExemption> <MathsGCSEHighestPriorAttainmentPreviousYear> <EnglishGCSEHighestPriorAttainmentPreviousYear>
No	Yes	Only existing current year fields populated: <MathsGCSEHighestPriorAttainment> <EnglishGCSEHighestPriorAttainment> <MathsGCSEFundingExemption> <EnglishGCSEFundingExemption>
Yes	No	Only previous year fields populated: <MathsGCSEHighestPriorAttainmentPreviousYear> <EnglishGCSEHighestPriorAttainmentPreviousYear>

4.3.2.25 Maths and English GCSE prior attainment at end of year 11 [used for funding]

Codeset C0076 (for maths grades) and codeset C0075 (for English Language grades) records whether the pupil attained grade A*-'C / 9-'4 in maths and in English by the end of year 11.

This data is used to determine whether a pupil generates block 2 funding as part of the disadvantage element of the 16-19 funding formula.

4.3.2.26 2-year-old basis for funding [[Not for: CTC and NMSS]]

The basis for funding data item <FundingBasis> (N00178), records the basis under which a 2-year-old has been funded whilst taking up a place in the school. This data item is not required for 3- and 4-year-olds. This is not required for 2-year-olds taking up the expanded entitlement hours.

Census	Date of birth ranges where 2-year-old basis for funding can be returned
Autumn 2026	Born between 2023-09-01 and 2024-08-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups
Spring 2027	Born between 2024-01-01 and 2024-12-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups
Summer 2027	Born between 2024-04-01 and 2025-03-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups

2-year-old children may meet more than one criterion in the code set shown below and each relevant criterion is returned in the census.

Code	Description
ECO	Economic criteria
HSD	High-level SEN or disability
LAA	Looked after or adopted from care

4.3.2.27 Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM) Entity [Not for Nursery schools]

This entity collects additional attributes of the learner that will inform either the funding of the learner or additional monitoring.

The Learner Funding and Monitoring entity is only required if any of the FAM type characteristics apply to that pupil. Please refer to the individual FAM types for collection requirements.

The FAM type identifies the type of data to be collected and is recorded with an associated FAM identifier. Both a FAM type and FAM code are required for this data to be unique.

To understand the pupil funding and monitoring during the academic year, the collection of data in the school census will be on a cumulative basis. These data items are to be

returned for pupils who are either on roll on census day or became off roll since the start of the academic year.

For the 2026/27 academic year, the maths and English condition of funding guidance requires 16- to 19-year-olds to continue studying these subjects at a level 2 qualification level, where they have not yet achieved a GCSE grade 4 or equivalent. To meet the condition of funding in the 2026/27 academic year, students must study eligible qualifications for a minimum number of hours 100 hours for maths and/or 100 hours for English, to be delivered at any point in the academic year. This support must be delivered as in-person, whole class, stand-alone teaching.

Institutions must use the FAM types EMH and MMH to confirm whether or not the minimum hours have been planned for the relevant subject(s) for students undertaking eligible qualifications who do not yet have a GCSE grade 4+ or equivalent in the subject.

Further information can be found in [the condition of funding guidance](#).

4.3.2.27.1 Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM) Type

This data item, (N00763), identifies the type of funding and monitoring.

NOTE: EMH and MMH are only required for the Autumn Census.

Type	Description
NLM	National Learner Monitoring: to identify any additional monitoring characteristics for the pupil
EMH	English Minimum Hours
MMH	Maths Minimum Hours

4.3.2.27.2 Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM) Type

This data item (N00764) identifies those who are in receipt of additional funding or monitoring characteristics of the student.

- Tutoring is defined as those who are in receipt of school funded tutoring.

A pupil can have multiple codes.

Code	Description	Pupils / school types applicable
01	In receipt of tutoring	Schools: All schools (except Nursery), with appropriate year group or age-ranges Pupils: Only applicable to pupils and in NCYearActual 1-14 Or where national curriculum year groups do not apply, aged 5 to19 (as at 2026-08-31) in NCYearActual 'X'
02 (only required for Autumn Census)	Student has at least the minimum classroom teaching hours planned for an eligible English qualification	Schools: Only schools with Phases SS,AT or PR, with appropriate year group or age-ranges Pupils: Only applicable to pupils and in NCYearActual 12-14.
03(only required for Autumn Census)	Student does not have at least the minimum classroom teaching hours planned for an eligible English qualification	Schools: Only schools with Phases SS,AT or PR, with appropriate year group or age-ranges Pupils: Only applicable to pupils and in NCYearActual 12-14.
04(only required for Autumn Census)	Student has at least the minimum classroom teaching hours planned for an eligible maths qualification	Schools: Only schools with Phases SS,AT or PR, with appropriate year group or age-ranges Pupils: Only applicable to pupils and in NCYearActual 12-14.
05 (only required for Autumn Census)	Student does not have at least the minimum classroom teaching hours planned for an eligible maths qualification	Schools: Only schools with Phases SS,AT or PR, with appropriate year group or age-ranges Pupils: Only applicable to pupils and in NCYearActual 12-14.

22	Learner repeating up to one year of 16-19 funded provision	Schools: Secondary, all-through and PRU / AP with appropriate year groups Pupils: Only applicable to pupils in NCYearActual 12 or above, with current single registration ('C') or current main dual registration ('M'). PRU / AP for any pupils with the following enrolment status: 'C', 'M', 'F' or 'O'.
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4.3.2.28 Young carer indicator [Not for : Nursery schools]

The young carer indicator (N00766) records, for those children on roll on spring census day, whether they have been identified as a young carer and if so, by whom.

Section 17ZA of the Children Act 1989 says a young carer is a person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person (which isn't to a contract or voluntary work).

Young carers show immense commitment in providing care and support to family members at home; but their own needs may remain 'hidden' from wider view. The increased pressures young carers have faced due to the pandemic has further highlighted the need to improve formal identification of this cohort in schools, understand their needs and to provide early help as outlined in statutory guidance [Keeping children safe in education 2024](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) also outlines how school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need of early help for students who have taken on caring responsibilities.

Schools will be able to record the information using the following codeset (CS118):

Code	Young carer indicator
N	Not declared
P	Identified as young carer by parent or guardian
S	Identified as young carer by school

The default value will be 'N', not declared

Although we do not require start dates (and end dates; if appropriate) for this flag; schools may find them helpful in providing further context of any disclosures and software suppliers may therefore wish to include them in MI systems.

4.3.2.29 Kinship Care indicator [Not for: Nursery schools]

The kinship care indicator (N00839) records, for those children on roll on autumn census day only, whether they have been identified as living in Kinship Care (Pupils in Kinship care will not be PLAA).

Kinship care is defined as:

Section 22I of the Children's Wellbeing and School's Bill (n.b. this Bill has not yet received Royal Assent) says a child lives in kinship care if –

- (a) the child lives with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child for all or part of the time, and
- (b) the child lives with that person for all of the time, or for more time than the child lives with a parent, and they provide all of the care and support provided for the child, or more of that care and support than is provided for the child by a parent, or
- (c) the child lives with two or more people mentioned in part (a) all or most of the time (whether or not the child lives with those people at the same time), and those people, taken together, provide all or most of the care and support provided for the child.

Kinship carers do not include:

- a) a parent of the child,
- b) a local authority foster parent who had no connection with the child prior to the child being placed with them, or
- c) a person caring for the child in a professional capacity.

There are different types of kinship arrangements. These include:

- a) Formal arrangements: these are where the carer has been granted a legal order for the care of the child, such as a Special Guardianship (SGO) or Child Arrangement Order (CAO), or where they have become kinship foster carers.
- b) Informal arrangements:

Page 7 of the Kinship care statutory guidance defines informal arrangements as follows:

- Informal arrangements are when a close family member or friend look after a child for a temporary or permanent amount of time. This arrangement is agreed privately with the parents and parental responsibility for the child remains with the parents.
 - a. Informal kinship care arrangements (not approved foster care) including:
 - i. A private family arrangement in which a close family member who does not hold parental responsibility, raises the child and
 - The local authority has had no major role in making the arrangement for the child; and
 - Where a Family Court has not made an order in respect to the care of the child.

- ii. Where a child under the age of 16 is being provided with accommodation for less than 28 days by an individual in their own home who is not a close relative
- iii. Where a 16 or 17 year old is being provided with accommodation by an individual who is not a close relative in their own home.

Schools will be able to record the information of the position on census day using the following code set (CS134):

Code	Kinship care indicator
ND	Not declared (default)
KF	Kinship identified (formal arrangement)
KI	Kinship identified (informal arrangement)
KU	Kinship identified (unknown under what arrangement)

The default value will be 'ND', not declared

Although we do not require start dates (and end dates; if appropriate) for this flag; schools may find them helpful in providing further context of any disclosures and software suppliers may therefore wish to include them in MI systems.

4.3.3 Pupil status module

This module gives information about a pupil in relation to the school for example, enrolment status and date of entry. Pupils, who are no longer on roll on census day, are included in the return to record:

- attendance
- suspensions and permanent exclusions
- post-16 programme aims and learning aims - including maths and English prior attainment
- learner support data
- alternative provision placement details
- learner funding and monitoring (FAM)

and require the following data fields:

- pupil date of entry (N00016) [used for funding] - **Please note:** Pupils who transfer from nursery to reception or those entering year 12 and above from within the same school are **NOT** given new entry dates
- pupils who change their enrolment status from one term to the next within the same school are **NOT** given new entry dates

For more detail on when a pupil should be given a new entry date and which historical data is required in these circumstances, please refer to the [pupil date of entry section](#) of the school census manual.

- pupil date of leaving (N00019)
- pupil part-time indicator (N00020)
- boarder indicator (N00021) [not required from hospital special schools]
- pupil's actual national curriculum year group on leaving (N00182) [only for those learners who were in secondary or all-through phase schools with sixth forms and for whom post-16 learning aims data are being returned]

4.3.4 Alternative provision (AP) placement module

The alternative provision placement module, records details of the pupil's placement into alternative provision.

4.3.4.1 School coverage

There are two modules which will collect AP placement data:

- Alternative provision for single registered pupils module - Only state place-funded AP providers (PRUs, AP academies and AP free schools) are requested to record and return this data for pupils with an enrolment status of 'C', 'F' or 'O'.
- School arranged alternative provision module - This includes any AP placements arranged by all state-funded schools: mainstream schools, special schools and state-funded AP schools (PRUs, AP academies, AP free schools).

4.3.4.2 Data required

Data is requested for both on and off roll pupils and should include:

Single registered pupils module - AP/PRU only	School arranged placements module - All schools (except nursery)
This includes all: single-registered pupils on roll on census day pupils who were single registered, but who have been removed from the roll within the census period If a pupil has been single registered in the school on more than one occasion within the census period, return the information for the most recent placement only. If the school has arranged placements in other AP settings for these pupils, they should also complete the alternative provision placements arranged by schools module for each placement.	Data should be submitted for pupils both on and off roll who have attended AP placements within the census period. This includes: AP placements that are taking place on census day Previous placements, where the pupil has left the AP placement within the census period Where pupils have attended more than one AP placement within the census period, including multiple placements with the same AP provider, you should return information on each placement separately Single-registered pupils in PRU or AP schools should also be included in the alternative provision module for single-registered placements.

See [Annex C](#) for the collection schedule.

4.3.4.3 Alternative provision for single registered pupils module [PRU / AP only]

This data module contains the following three data items, for all pupils who have been single registered (those with an enrolment status of 'C', 'F' or 'O') in an AP school (PRU / AP) and are on roll on census day or became off roll within the census period.

Only state place-funded AP providers (PRUs, AP academies and AP free schools) are requested to record and return this data which records information relating to the pupil's placement into alternative provision.

If a pupil has been single-registered at the AP provider on more than one occasion during the census period, please return the information for the most recent placement only.

4.3.4.4 URN of previous school - [PRU / AP only]

This data item records the URN (Unique Reference Number) (N00278) of the establishment that the pupil attended prior to becoming single registered at the AP school (PRU / AP). Please refer to Get information about schools (GIAS) to obtain the Unique Reference Number (URN) of the establishment. If no URN is available, for example because the pupil has recently moved to the UK from abroad, please leave blank.

4.3.4.5 Alternative provision reason – [PRU / AP only]

This data item (N00722) and codeset (CS114) records the main or primary reason why the pupil was placed in alternative provision at the PRU / AP.

Code	Description
ASP	awaiting an appropriate special school place
EHC	setting named on education, health and care plan
MHN	medical condition (mental health need)
NEW	new arrival without a school place
OTH	other
PEX	permanent exclusion
PHN	medical condition (physical health need)
RHE	returning to state education from elective home education

4.3.4.6 Alternative provision SEN provision on entry – [PRU / AP only]

SEN provision (N00729) at the time of the placement is also requested, suppliers are asked to include SEN provision as at the 'date of entry' into the PRU / AP.

4.3.4.7 School arranged alternative provision [Not for: Nursery Schools]

This data module records information about AP placements arranged by state funded schools, including AP schools (PRU / AP), in state place-funded and independent settings. The commissioning / arranging school (including where the PRU / AP school is acting as a commissioner) should record and return these data items, rather than the placement provider.

Where alternative provision has been arranged by the local authority, for example for children with medical conditions, but the pupil also remains dual registered with the mainstream school and the PRU / AP school, then the mainstream school should complete the data items.

Scenario 1: If a pupil is at a mainstream school and at any AP setting, the mainstream school should record and return the data items for this placement. If the same pupil receives additional off-site alternative provision at another AP setting (for example, with an independent or unregistered provider) then the mainstream school should also complete the information for any additional placement.

Scenario 2: If a pupil is single registered at a state place-funded AP school (Pupil referral units, AP Academy, AP Free school), but the school arranges additional off-

site AP with another provider part-time, then the AP school placing the pupil should complete the additional placement information.

Scenario 3: If the local authority has arranged an AP placement at a state place-funded AP school (PRU, AP Academy, AP Free school) and the pupil remains on the roll of a mainstream school, then the mainstream school should complete the placement information as this data cannot be returned by the local authority.

For all placement commissioners, the following data items should be returned for all AP placements arranged for a child on or off roll during the census period.

4.3.4.8 Alternative provision placement URN

The 'URN' data item (N00278) records the [GIAS](#) unique reference number (URN), where available, of establishment within which the pupil has taken up an alternative provision placement.

Please note: The URN and UKPRN are mutually exclusive, but the URN should be recorded where available. Where one is returned, the other is not. Where the provider is not registered on [GIAS](#), the URN field is left blank.

However, where left blank, and no UKPRN is returned, the 'AP type of setting' must be completed. Where URN is completed, type of setting is left blank.

4.3.4.9 Alternative provision placement UKPRN

The 'UKPRN' data item (N00530) records the UK provider register number (UKPRN), where available, of establishment within which the pupil has taken up an alternative provision placement.

Please note: The UKPRN and URN are mutually exclusive. Where one is returned, the other is not. Where the provider is not registered with UKPRN, this field is left blank.

However, where left blank, and no URN is returned, the 'AP type of setting' must be completed. Where this field is completed, type of setting is left blank.

4.3.4.10 Alternative provision placement type of setting

The 'AP setting type' (N00531) data item records, where neither the URN nor UKPRN are available, the type of setting within which the pupil has taken up an alternative provision placement. Allowable values are shown in the table below:

Code	Description
NFE	Non-maintained further education college
OOT	One on one tuition
OTH	Other unregistered provider

Code	Description
WBP	Work based placement

Where type of setting is completed, URN and UKPRN must be blank. If URN or UKPRN are completed, type of setting must remain blank.

Where the type of setting is included, a Companies House company number and the setting's postcode must also be included.

4.3.4.11 Alternative provision placement Companies House company number

The 'Company number' (N00768) data item records, where available, the [Companies House](#) company number for the setting in which the pupil has taken up an alternative provision placement.

This data item is only required for placements where neither a URN nor UKPRN are available and instead an 'AP setting type' has been recorded.

4.3.4.12 Alternative provision placement postcode

The 'AP placement postcode' (N00769) data item records, the setting's postcode, within which the pupil has taken up an alternative provision placement.

This data item is only required for placements where neither a URN nor UKPRN are available, an 'AP setting type' has been recorded.

4.3.4.13 Placement reason

This data item (N00723) and codeset (CS115) records the main or primary reason why the school arranged AP was arranged.

Code	Description
BHS	off-site placement for behavioural support
SUS	suspension
EXR	permanent exclusion (where still going through the review process)
MHN	medical condition (mental health need)
OTH	Other
PHN	medical condition (physical health need)

4.3.4.14 Alternative provision placement date of entry

The 'entry date' (N00018) data item records the pupil's entry date into alternative provision. As pupils may enter into alternative provision more than once within a census period. Each placement is recorded and returned in the census.

4.3.4.15 Alternative provision placement SEN at date of entry

The 'SEN at date of entry' (N00729) records SEN provision at the time of entry into alternative provision. Suppliers are asked to include SEN provision at date of entry into the placement.

4.3.4.16 Alternative provision placement date of leaving

The 'leaving date' (N00019) data item records the date the pupil leaves alternative provision placement. As pupils may leave alternative provision more than once within a census period. Each placement is recorded and returned in the census.

4.3.4.17 Alternative provision placement SEN at date of leaving

The 'SEN at date of leaving' (N00730) records SEN provision at the time of leaving alternative provision.

4.3.4.18 Alternative provision placement attendance pattern

The 'AP attendance pattern' (N00214) data item records the pupil's planned attendance pattern at the alternative provision provider.

As a pupil may attend more than one provider of alternative provision this indicator is 'provider specific' and records the attendance pattern at the reporting provider.

Please note: this data item relates to the pupil's attendance pattern in alternative provision and does not indicate whether the pupil is part-time in education.

Allowable values are:

Code	Description
FT	Full time in alternative provision at this provider
PT	Part time in alternative provision at this provider

Where the pupil is in part-time provision (attends less than 10 sessions a week in the alternative provision placement), the number of sessions must be provided. For the purposes of this data item, part-time is defined as being expected to attend fewer than 10 sessions per week at the placement.

4.3.4.19 Alternative provision placement sessions per week

The 'AP sessions per week' (N00215) data item records, where the pupil's attendance pattern is part time (PT), the pupil's planned number of sessions per week.

4.3.5 Special educational needs module [used for funding]

This module contains information on the special educational needs (SEN) of a pupil.

Schools record pupil SEN provision according to the SEND code of practice 2015.

SEN provision at the time of any suspension or permanent exclusion and alternative provision placement is also required, for all schools apart from nursery schools (see [4.3.4](#) and [4.3.6](#) for more details).

The spring school census collects SEN type for all pupils with SEN, that is, those with:

- SEN provision – code 'E' – pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- SEN support - code 'K' - pupils who are identified as having a special educational need and are receiving additional support but not holding an EHC plan

Only two pupil SEN types (N00166) can be returned in the spring census. These are ranked using pupil SEN type ranking (N00024) to show the primary and secondary need of the pupil. Pupil SEN types cannot be given the same ranking: where there is more than one pupil SEN type reported, they cannot both have a ranking of '1'.

The indicators for pupils in special SEN units (N00022) and resourced provision (N00023) attached to a mainstream primary school (including middle deemed), secondary school (including middle deemed) or all through are collected each term. This indicator applies to pupils in special SEN units and resourced provision that have been designated by the relevant local authority as specialist provision. The indicator is not used for pupils in other units or provision set up by a school, which is not recognised by the local authority as specialist provision.

Please note that some of this information is used to determine funding levels for schools. Incorrect data may result in incorrect levels of funding.

4.3.6 Managed moves [Not for: Nursery schools]

This new section introduces data collection on **managed moves**, which are permanent transfers arranged to reduce a pupil's risk of exclusion and or following a review of off-site direction.

For each managed move arranged during the collection period, schools must provide:

- Start date of the managed move (N00841)

- The destination school URN (N00842)
- Reason for the managed move, (N00843), selected from: (CS135):
 - To reduce the risk of exclusion for a pupil who has not yet been excluded
 - Following a period of exclusion and decision to transfer
 - Following review of an off-site direction placement

This data will improve transparency around pupil movement and provide insight into how managed moves are used.

Where a school is not using an integral package - whereby relevant data can be extracted at pupil level and incorporated into the school census return - then a facility must be available for the school to manually input that data as part of completing the school census return. The manual entry facility will need to allow for the data items of:

- Managed Move Start Date (N00841)
- Destination School URN (N00842)
- Reason for Managed Move (N00843)

4.3.7 Termly suspension and permanent exclusion module

This module contains information on the suspension and / or permanent exclusion records of a pupil.

For the purpose of this document, where 'suspensions' are written, it refers to the definition of fixed-period exclusions as defined in s.51a of the Education Act 2002.

Suspensions and permanent exclusions are collected for the **previous two terms**. See [Annex C](#) for the collection schedule.

Schools are to return all permanent exclusions including those which are still going through the review process

This means some permanent exclusions may be returned on two consecutive censuses. Please note, this will not result in double counting of permanent exclusions in national statistics, as only the latest information returned for each term will be used.

For example, if a pupil was permanently excluded during the spring term, and the permanent exclusion and the review process was not completed prior to census day, then it is expected that this exclusion record will be returned in the summer census with an exclusion review result of '**ongoing**'

Where a permanently excluded pupil is offered reinstatement following a governing board review, or, where an independent review panel directs or recommends that the governing board reconsiders their decision on reinstatement, a suspension record for the number of

sessions missed through permanent exclusion before the pupil was reinstated should be recorded. The exclusion review result for the permanently excluded record will show as reinstatement.

4.3.7.1 Suspension and permanent exclusion information

Suspensions and permanent exclusions are detailed within this module.

For both suspensions and permanent exclusions, the start date (N00028) and up to three reasons (N00685, N00868 and N00687) are collected.

Schools should only select more than one reason where it is appropriate. Where the description is covered in more than one category, please record all reasons that apply, such as 'Bullying' and 'Racist abuse' when racist bullying has taken place.

Please note: There is no requirement to order the reasons, which will be presented as unweighted counts in statistical outputs.

For suspensions, the actual number of sessions (N00029) are also collected. Suspensions can sometimes span over 2 terms and for data collection, we would expect it to be recorded as one suspension in the term (for example 2 days before Easter and 3 days after, should be recorded for data purpose as one 5-day suspension in the spring term) and not be recorded as two separate suspensions.

All suspensions during the relevant time period (See [Annex C](#)) are included with pupils, who are subject to more than one suspension during the relevant time period, requiring multiple suspension records.

The start date reflects the date the suspension or permanent exclusion actually begins and not the date at which the decision is upheld by the governing body or independent review panel.

We would not normally expect the permanent exclusion start date to be the same as the pupil leaving date.

Software systems should allow schools to manually adjust the number of sessions from which a pupil has been suspended where this has been derived from the start and end date of a suspension. This is because the number of sessions from which a pupil has been suspended cannot necessarily be derived from the start and end dates of a suspension. The period of suspension only covers the number of sessions the pupil would normally be at the school. Suspensions can occur on non-continuous days (a two and a half days suspension could be given for one session each day for five days, or for one session a week for five weeks). For example, where a pupil was suspended for ten sessions starting on a Monday but is registered at another school on the Wednesday then the suspension would include the following Monday. It is therefore necessary for schools to be able to manually adjust the number of sessions from which a pupil has been suspended.

The suspension or permanent exclusion return may legitimately include pupils who have left the school prior to census day. To make the data required clear, there is a separate section of the XML messages, <PupilsNoLongerOnRoll> Termly suspension or permanent exclusion cancellations This information should be available in school systems from autumn 2026 term and will be collected for the first time in the spring school census 2027 for autumn term exclusions. Any suspension or permanent exclusion can be cancelled before the governing body review meeting. The date the pupil is reinstated (N00842) back to the original school following the cancellation should be recorded along with the reason for each cancelled exclusion (N00836). **Reason for the cancellation** can be selected from the following options:

Code Set CS132	Reason For cancellation
NE	New evidence came to light
MM	Managed move (permanent) agreed
AS	Off-site direction to alternative setting (temporary)
EC	Exceptional Circumstances

The number of days of schooling missed before the pupil was reinstated following a cancelled exclusion should be recorded as a suspension.

If a permanent exclusion or a suspension is cancelled, the original exclusion should be returned with the cancellation details, and a separate suspension record should be provided for the sessions missed.

Termly suspension and permanent exclusion reviews

This information should be available in school systems from autumn 2026 term and will be collected for the first time in the spring school census 2027 for autumn term exclusions.

Exclusion Review Result

Where a suspension or permanent exclusion is the subject of a governing board review the following data is required:

- Exclusion Review Result – (N00651)

Governing Board Outcomes

Schools must record which of the following outcome that applies:

- After initial consideration governing board decided that pupil should not be reinstated and no request for an Independent Review Panel was made (pupil not offered reinstatement);
- The governing board has decided that the pupil should be reinstated, and the relevant person has not declined reinstatement, but the pupil has not yet resumed attendance at the school; (pupil offered reinstatement);

- The governing board has decided the pupil should be reinstated but the relevant person has declined reinstatement (pupil is not offered reinstatement);
- The governing board has decided that the pupil should not be reinstated, the time for an application for a review has not yet expired, and the relevant person has not yet given notice in writing that they do not intend to apply for a review; (pupil not offered reinstatement)
- Parents made representations where the governing board is required to consider reinstatement, (review ongoing)
- Pupil offered reinstatement after initial governing board (pupil offered reinstatement)
- Pupil not offered reinstatement after initial governing board, a request for an Independent Review Panel was made but not determined (pupil not offered reinstatement)

Independent Review Panel (IRP) Outcomes

In the case of an Independent Review Panel these data items are also needed:

- Exclusion Appeal Date - (Date the Independent Review Panel is held) (N00650) (Review Date)
- Exclusion Reinstatement Date – (N00652)
- SEN expert Indicator – (N00653)

Where an IRP review has been lodged, record:

- Withdrawn
- Independent review panel upheld governing board's initial decision that pupil should not be reinstated (pupil not offered reinstatement)
- Pupil offered reinstatement after independent review panel recommended governing board to reconsider reinstatement (pupil offered reinstatement)
- Pupil offered reinstatement after independent review panel directed governing board to reconsider reinstatement (pupil offered reinstatement)
- Pupil not offered reinstatement after independent review panel recommended governing board to reconsider reinstatement (pupil not offered reinstatement)
- Pupil not offered reinstatement after independent review panel directed governing board to reconsider reinstatement (pupil not offered reinstatement)
- Ongoing (no decision yet)

Following an IRP recommendation or direction, record whether:

- Pupil was offered reinstatement
- Pupil was not offered reinstatement

This will show the outcome of the governing board review, lodgements with the IRP and any determinations.

Where a school is not using an integral package - whereby relevant data can be extracted at pupil level and incorporated into the school census return - then a facility must be available for the school to manually input that data as part of completing the school census return. The manual entry facility will need to allow for the data items of:

- category (N00026)

- reason / s (N00685, N00686, N00687)
- start date (N00028)
- actual number of sessions (suspensions only) ((N00029)
- SEN provision (N00209)
- Exclusion Review Category (N00857)
- Exclusion Review Result – (N00651)
- Exclusion Appeal Date - (Date of Independent Review Panel) (N00650)
- Exclusion Reinstatement Date – (N00652)
- SEN expert Indicator – (N00653)

Data is required on suspensions and permanent exclusions for the previous two terms, please see [Annex C](#) for data collection periods.

4.3.8 Home information module

This module gives information about where a pupil lives **during term time**, and will be a **UK address** (in some cases this may be the school address).

This information is used to identify the number of children resident in an area and has an impact on local government funding for areas such as health, transport, et cetera, as well as education. The only exception to this is in the case of children attending service schools overseas, where validation is in place in COLLECT to accept their international addresses as valid.

Ordnance Survey defines the 'UPRN' (N00185) as: 'The unique identifier for every spatial address in Great Britain. It provides a comprehensive, complete, consistent identifier throughout a property's life cycle – from planning permission through to demolition'.

Where the 'UPRN' is returned, this is on a termly basis – as with all address information.

For pupils on roll:

Address data should only be provided for current addresses. Multiple current addresses should be provided where available.

Postcode (N00037) **must** be provided together with the remainder of the address in either BS7666 or line address format.

Unique property reference number (N00185) should be provided together with the remainder of the address in either BS7666 or line address format. **Please note: the return of this data item is voluntary.**

Items from BS7666 to be collected (verified and unverified) are:

- SAON (N00030)
- PAON (N00031)

- street (N00032)
- locality (N00033)
- town (N00034)
- administrative area (N00035)
- post town (N00036)

Or line address format items:

- address line 1 (N00040)
- address line 2 (N00041)
- address line 3 (N00042)
- address line 4 (N00043)
- address line 5 (N00044)

Both formats also submit:

- Postcode (N00037) – **mandatory data item**
- Unique property reference number (N00185) – **voluntary data item**

Postcode and unique property reference number (UPRN); are also collected in the autumn census for those pupils no longer on roll for which post-16 learning aims data are being submitted. UPRN is also voluntary for off roll pupils.

4.3.9 Free Breakfast Club attendance module

4.3.9.1 Pupil and School Coverage

From the autumn 2026 term onwards, schools participating in the government's **free breakfast club programme** and receiving funding in exchange for meeting the minimum requirements of the programme (as set out at [Free breakfast clubs: guidance for schools and trusts - GOV.UK](#)) must record attendance at free breakfast clubs for the following pupils in their systems daily:

- pupils with enrolment status C (current), M (dual main) or F (FE colleges) or O (other AP providers)
- pupils aged 4 to 10 years old as at 31 August (DOB between **2022-09-01 and 2016-08-31 inclusive**) in Year Groups R to 6 or
- pupils aged 4 to 10 not following the national curriculum (NCYearActual equals 'X' AND pupil born between **2022-09-01 and 2016-08-31 inclusive**)

From the spring 2027 school census onwards, we will collect this attendance data for pupils who attended at least one session during the specified collection period. This includes pupils who may have left the school before census day.

Please note: Attendance at breakfast clubs operating outside of the government's free breakfast club programme (e.g., parent paid breakfast clubs or clubs funded through other organisations) should **NOT** be recorded.

Through the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill, all state-funded schools with primary-aged pupils will be required to offer a free breakfast club. The programme is currently being rolled out to schools in scope of the duty. Schools not participating in the programme – either because they are not yet eligible or have only secondary pupils on roll – should **NOT** record breakfast club attendance data.

4.3.9.3. Periods Covered

The breakfast club attendance module covers each term, with dates for the attendance periods for each of the breakfast clubs attendance modules at [Annex C](#).

4.3.9.3 Breakfast club possible sessions

All pupils in Reception through to Year 6 attending a school participating in the government’s free breakfast club programme must have a recorded value greater than zero for the number of possible breakfast club sessions (N00855).

4.3.9.4 Breakfast Club Attendance codes

Schools must keep the breakfast club attendance register electronically and use the national breakfast club attendance codes.

Breakfast club attendance data is required from the previous term (see collection schedule [Annex C](#)): return one or more attendance codes entries (N00840) against each pupil along with the number of breakfast clubs sessions

Breakfast club Attendance codes returned for the census are contained in code set CS135 of the CBDS . These are:	Breakfast Club Attendance codes
FBC0	The pupil has NOT attended free breakfast club.
FBC1	The pupil has attended the free breakfast club before the start of the compulsory school day.
FBC2	Unable to attend the free breakfast club due to staff shortages – Fully Closed
FBC3	Unable to attend the free breakfast club due to unsuitable space or premises – Fully Closed
FBC4	Unable to attend the free breakfast club due to other reasons – Fully Closed
FBC5	Unable to attend the free breakfast club due to staff shortages – Partial Closure
FBC6	Unable to attend the free breakfast club due to unsuitable space or premises – Partial Closure

FBC7	Unable to attend the free breakfast club due to other reasons – Partial Closure
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Note:

- The default position is FBC0.
- Where any of the codes FBC 2-4 apply then the MI system should be set up to automatically apply to all pupils in Reception to Year 6
- Where any of the codes FBC 5-7 apply then the MI system should be set up to automatically apply to all pupils in Reception to Year 6 who do not have code FBC0 or FBC1

4.3.9.3 Breakfast club number of sessions

The total number of sessions should be recorded using (N00856).

4.3.10 Termly attendance module

4.3.10.1 Pupil coverage

The 2026 autumn census collects attendance and absence data on pupils aged from 4 to 15 years as at 2025-08-31; with the spring and summer collections collecting data for pupils aged 4 to 15 as at 2026-08-31; on roll for at least one session during the specified collection period for attendance. This may include pupils who have left the school prior to census day.

Attendance data is only required for non-boarder pupils (where pupil boarder indicator (N00021) is equal to 'N').

For pupils registered at more than one school, please see dual registration below.

4.3.10.2 School coverage [Not for: Nursery schools]

All schools (excluding nursery schools) are required to submit attendance and absence data for the pupils detailed at [4.3.9](#) above in each census collection.

Please note: Nursery schools are **NOT** required to submit attendance and absence data (even if they have children aged 4 or 5 years who are attending)

4.3.10.3 Periods covered

The termly attendance module covers the start of the autumn term (from 1 August) up to, and including, the Sunday before the late spring bank holiday, with dates for the attendance periods for each of the termly attendance modules at [Annex C](#).

4.3.10.4 Possible sessions

Every pupil will have an entry for the number of sessions possible (N00052).

For pupils **aged 4 years**, the number of possible sessions to be recorded are those that the pupil is expected to attend and will vary from child to child and from school to school. This is specifically relevant to pupils aged 4 who attend part-time. Absence code 'X' – non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (not counted in possible attendances) – is used for those sessions when a 4-year-old pupil is not timetabled to attend.

Zero possible sessions should be recorded where a dual registered pupil has spent all of the previous term for which attendance data is being collected at the other registration. For example, if a dually registered pupil spent all of the autumn term at their subsidiary registration then the main registration would have zero possible sessions recorded in the spring census.

4.3.10.5 Returning attendance and absence reasons

Schools must keep the attendance register electronically and use the national attendance and absence codes.

Attendance and absence data is required from the previous term (see collection schedule [Annex C](#)): return one or more attendance codes entries (N00157) against each pupil along with a number of sessions (N00056).

4.3.10.6 Absence for pupils aged 4 years old

Schools are also obliged to use individual attendance codes (N00157) for pupils **aged 4 years**.

Absences recorded for 4-year-olds will not be treated as authorised or unauthorised and instead will be reported, and published, as overall absence.

4.3.10.7 Attendance dates

The dates for attendance information are provided at [Annex C](#). As the start of the autumn term (and academic year) may be any date from 1 August.; where schools do not use electronic registration systems, the data will need to be manually calculated for each pupil. The aggregates for each pupil will then need to be entered into the census return.

4.3.10.8 Dual registration

Measures are in place to avoid the double counting of attendance and absence for pupils who are registered at more than one school (referred to as dual registered). Each school marks the register – present or absent – for the sessions that the pupil is due to attend their school only.

The remaining session(s) where the pupil is attending another school are marked in the register using code 'D', which is now also included in the census return. The number of 'sessions possible' for a dual registered pupil against the main school **exclude** those where the pupil attends the subsidiary school and vice versa.

4.3.10.9 Summer second half term attendance module

The school census collects pupil attendance and absence up to the end of the summer term – 31 July.

Data for the second half of the summer term (late spring bank holiday – 31 July) is collected in a separate module to that for the first half term.

Special schools are also expected to provide attendance information for the second half of the summer term using the summer second half term attendance module.

Note: Pupil coverage is the same as for the termly attendance module ([4.3.8](#) above). With the exception of periods covered, all of the other text in section [4.3.8](#) applies to the summer second half term attendance module and is not duplicated here.

Attendance codes returned for the census include all categories of school attendance and absence. Suppliers should be aware of the full range of attendance and absence codes – contained in codeset CS066 of the [CBDS](#).

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the national absence statistics.

- Code D - Dual registered at another school. This code is used to record sessions where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.
- Code Q - Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements. This code is used to record sessions where the pupil is absent because the local authority has a duty to enable the pupil's attendance and arrangements have not been made.
- Code X - Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school. This code is used to record sessions where the pupil is not timetabled to attend.
- Code Y1 - Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available. This code is used to record session where the pupil is absent because transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available.
- Code Y2 - Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel. This code is used to record sessions where the pupil is absent because a local, national, or international emergency has cause widespread disruption to travel.
- Code Y3 - Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. This code is used to record sessions where the pupil is absent because part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil cannot practicably be accommodated in parts of the premises that remain in use.

- Code Y4 - Unable to attend due to the whole school premises being closed. This code is used where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school closed unexpectedly.
- Code Y5 - Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.
- Code Y6 - Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. This code is used to record sessions where the pupil is absent because their travel or attendance at school would be contrary to any guidance from the DHSC or prohibited in any legislation relating to the incident or transmission or infection or disease.
- Code Y7 - Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. This code is used to record sessions where the pupil is absent because something in the nature of an emergency, not covered by other 'unable to attend' codes has prevented them from attending.

The following code is not collected in the school census.

- **Code #** - Planned whole school closure. This code is used for administrative purposes to represent whole school closures that are known and planned in advance.
- **Code Z** - Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances (not collected in the school census)

Full information on the above codes will be included in the updated 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance to be published in due course.

4.3.11 Post-16 learning aims module [autumn census only] [For secondary, all-through and PRU / AP with a sixth form only] [used for funding]

This module is required annually from all schools with a phase of secondary, all-through or pupil referral unit that have a sixth form (pupils in national curriculum year 12 or above).

Information about learning aims **taken in the previous and current academic year** is used by the department for:

- calculating funding
- business performance reporting
- modelling the impact of new policies
- assessing the costs of future provision
- performance table reporting
- providing information on the mix of provision being offered in each local authority

Learning aims taken in the current academic year will be collected for any learners who have been on roll in the school at any point between 2025-08-01 and census day and were in actual national curriculum year group 12 or above in that period, regardless of their age.

With regards to any learning aim included within a T Level only (those with programme type equal to 31) – the start date may be a future date within the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

Learning aims that were taken in the previous academic year will be collected for any learners who have been on roll in the school at any point between 2024-08-01 and 2025-07-31 and were in actual national curriculum year group 12 or above in that period, regardless of their age.

This may include students who have left school prior to the autumn census day.

Note that the school census should include learning aims for any student who is undertaking the majority of their learning at level 3 or above, as they would be expected to be in actual national curriculum year group 12 or above. If a student is in actual national curriculum year group 11 or below, studying towards some level 3 (or above) qualifications but with the majority of their learning at level 2 (or below), learning aims should **NOT** be returned for them in the school census.

Where a student has dual registration, it is important that the learning aims are assigned to the school that holds his / her main registration. Subsidiary schools should **NOT** submit learning aims in respect of subsidiary registrations. Schools may need to exercise some judgement in deciding which dual registered students they can claim for.

While students at other schools, such as special schools, may be studying learning aims, the department does not calculate funding based on this information. However, learning aims for all appropriate schools remain a requirement and are to be returned.

The eligibility for funding is shown below, however all aims regardless of duration are included in the data return. A failure to return all aims may affect the department funding calculation (excluding special schools – see above).

Study programme planned hours	Planned length in-year	Qualifying period
485 hours or more	-	6 weeks (42 days)
Fewer than 485 hours	≥ 24 weeks	6 weeks (42 days)
Fewer than 485 hours	2 to 24 weeks	2 weeks (14 days)

Learning aims must be included in the autumn school census if the learning aim actual end date is:

- after 2025-07-31
- blank, that is, the learner is still participating on the learning aim

For T Level programmes (programme type 31) all learning aims that are part of the programme must be returned in each census return until the T level programme has ended. This is because T levels are 2 year programmes and component aims (even those that have finished in a previous year of the programme) are necessary to calculate accurate funding for T Levels each year.

To assist schools, the department provides software suppliers and schools with a comprehensive list of qualification numbers (QNs). These are available via web [services](#) and as a downloadable [file](#).

This website also contains information on how to use the web services. Each QN is linked to subject (via the subject classification (SC) code), qualification level and awarding body data to allow enhanced user functionality and statistical analysis.

Schools will need to record, at the beginning of the academic year, information about the course(s) of study their students are following. Schools must check that they are using the correct QN for the qualification on which students are enrolled, particularly when awarding organisations update a syllabus, as this is often assigned a new QN.

For each learning aim, schools will need to record the QN, learning aim start date and learning aim planned end date. Learning aim actual end date and learning aim status are to be updated on an event driven basis throughout the year. However, the learning aim start and planned end dates remain unchanged throughout the duration of the learning aim (if the learning aim finishes before or after the planned end date this would be reflected in the actual end date – the planned end date would not alter).

For those learning aims that have been completed, schools should return the QNs and SC codes provided by QWS. For those learning aims that have not been completed, that is, they are continuing or students withdrew or transferred from them, schools will check the QWS to ensure the most up to date QNs and SC codes are recorded and returned in the autumn census.

QNs are available for the overall International Baccalaureate (IB) and for each component (or subject) qualification. For those students taking the full IB, it is essential that the overall IB QN is returned, but it is not necessary to return the individual components. If a student is only taking some components of the IB, then only the components being studied should be returned, the overall QN should not be returned.

A re-sit occurs when an examination is taken again, or coursework resubmitted, but the student does not attend regular lessons for the course (attendance at revision classes may occur). Information in relation to re-sits is not required for the purposes of this collection and therefore must not be returned by schools.

A re-take occurs when a student is retaking a complete qualification, including attendance at regular classes, and this will be treated in the same manner as any other course and recorded as a new learning aim. However unless the reasons for the student re-taking are

exceptional because of circumstances outside either the student's or school's control – or to undertake the mandatory re-take of maths and English (see paragraph [4.3.2.23](#) above) – it must not be included in planned hours as it will not be funded.

Further guidance on the preparation and processing of qualifications using QNs is provided in [Annex E](#).

Each student may have a number of learning aims. For each learning aim, up to sixteen data items are required to be submitted:

- programme type (N00674)
- qualification accreditation number (QN) (N00194)
- SC code (N00195)
- learning aim start date (N00058)
- learning aim planned end date (N00059)
- learning aim actual end date (N00060)
- learning aim status (N00141)
- core aim (N00154)
- Partner UKPRN (N00168)
- learning aim withdrawal reason (N00167)
- work placement start date (N00675)
- work placement end date (N00676)
- work placement hours (N00677)
- work placement mode (N00678)

4.3.11.1 Programme aim [used for funding]

There are 3 types of 16-19 programme:

- study programme
- T Level Foundation Year
- T Level programme

With multiple types of programme available to students, it is important to be able to:

- identify the type of programme a student is undertaking
- record programme level information for each student and
- link component learning aims to a programme.

This is particularly important where a student undertakes more than one type of programme in 1 year.

All pupils undertaking 16-19 programmes **must** have a programme aim recorded which encompasses the associated component learning aims.

Note: not all component learning aims may be collected in the current census as some may start in the future. Future start dates are only required for T Levels, see [4.3.10.11](#) for more information on T Level reporting expectations.

The programme aim is **ZPROG001** and is used for all 3 programme types. The programme type field below identifies the type of programme undertaken.

The programme aim captures information about the whole programme. Therefore, the start and end dates reflect the overall programme duration, and the completion status reflects whether all the components in that programme were completed or not.

4.3.11.2 Learning aim start date [used for funding]

The date on which the student began the learning activity necessary to achieve the learning aim at the school reporting the learning aim.

With regards to any learning aim included within a T Level only (those with programme type equal to 31) – the start date may be a future date within the 2026 to 2027 academic year.

4.3.11.3 Learning aim planned end date [used for funding]

The date by which the school and student **plan** to complete the activities related to this learning aim, as agreed when the learning commenced. The planned end date reflects the length of the course being undertaken and will remain unchanged throughout the duration of the learning aim. Where the learning aim finishes before or after the planned end date this would be reflected in the actual end date – the **planned** end date will **not** alter.

4.3.11.4 Learning aim status [used for funding]

This reflects the status of the learning aim on autumn census day and have a default value of '1' – the student is continuing or intending to continue the learning activities leading to the learning aim'. This also includes T Level learning aims (those with programme type equal to 31) – where the start date of the learning aim may be in the future.

Failure to update the learning aim status from the previous academic year may negatively impact on student reporting in retention measures in 16 to 18 performance tables (a completed aim incorrectly recorded as either continuing '1' or withdrawn '3').

4.3.11.5 Learning aim actual end date [used for funding]

The date that the student completed the learning activities necessary to achieve the learning aim or the date they withdrew or transferred from the learning activities. This includes time for examinations and assessments. Unless a student has completed, withdrawn from or transferred to another learning aim prior to census day, then the learning aim actual end date is left blank.

4.3.11.6 Programme type [used for funding]

The census records a programme type against all learning aims. The programme type indicates what type of programme each learning aim belongs to.

A student undertaking one type of programme should have only 1 programme type recorded against all learning aims whereas a student undertaking 2 different programmes will have more than one programme type; each recorded against the learning aims that belong to the different programmes.

The programme type code indicates whether a student is studying:

- a T Level Foundation Year (code 30)
- a T Level programme (code 31)
- another 16 to 19 study programme (code 01)

The programme type must default to code 01 – allowing those institutions delivering T Level or T Level Foundation Years to amend locally.

4.3.11.7 Core aim [used for funding]

This field identifies the core aim within a **vocational departmental funded study programme** and should default to a 'false' field.

As the autumn census collects learning aims taken in the previous and current academic year, this means that a core aim is returned for each year where a vocational departmental funded study programme is being followed.

Where a student is following an academic program, a core aim should not be returned.

The core aim is the substantive vocational learning aim being undertaken in a student's program of study.

Where a learner withdraws from the core aim, the core aim should only be reassigned where the new core aim is clearly demonstrable to be a substantial and core component of the learner's study programme. Where an alternative aim that meets these criteria cannot be identified, the withdrawn aim remains as the core aim.

Schools **must** identify the substantive learning aim for the learner at the start of their study programme. Where the core aim is unknown by the end of the funding qualifying period, another aim should be designated as core until the substantive learning aim is decided upon and recorded. The aim type should then be re-assigned. The core aim must be finalised by the end of the teaching year.

For T Level programmes the core aim must be the T Level technical qualification (please see the section **QN codes for T Level programmes** below). For T Level Foundation Years, instead of recording students' core aim as their main qualification (if they are doing

one), the core aim must reflect the T Level route that the student is preparing for. In order to record this, the core aim flag must be recorded against the relevant T Level route learning aim (QNs: ZTPR0001 – ZTPR0011).

4.3.11.8 Partner UKPRN

This field (N00168) is collected against all learning aims. Where learning is sub-contracted out by the school to be provided by a non-funded partner organisation (provided other than by the school) the UK provider register number (UKPRN) is recorded against the learning aim(s) that are sub-contracted to the partner organisation. Please note this field should only be returned for provision that is formally sub-contracted and should not be used for collaborative delivery that is not sub-contracted.

The field defaults to an unfilled field and, where a UKPRN is present, this confirms that learning was sub-contracted to be provided by a partner organisation with the individual UKPRN number identifying the partner learning provider.

4.3.11.9 Work placement entity [used for funding]

The school census records work experience and industry placements using a QN for one of the following:

- T Level industry placement: ZWRKX003,
- 16 to 19 study programme work experience: ZWRKX001
- HVCP construction Industry Placement: ZWRKX004

A work experience / industry placement QN can have more than one work placement entity. This means that students who have more than one placement, possibly with more than one employer, will have one QN and multiple work placement entities.

For each work experience / industry placement, the following fields should be recorded:

- the start (N00675) and end (N00675) dates for each episode of a placement,
- the planned work placement hours for each episode of a placement (N00677),
- whether the placement is internal or external (N00678)

4.3.11.10 QN codes for T Level programmes

This paragraph is provided for information only. Each of the 25 T Levels are assigned a regulated technical qualification. These are recorded on the Ofqual register, approved on the department's List of Qualifications approved for funding 14-19 and listed in QWS.

Every T Level programme **must** have a T Level qualification recorded.

The T Level qualification is split between core content (which is common activity for all students undertaking the T Level) and Occupational Specialist content (which will differ from student to student depending on the area(s) they have chosen to specialise in).

Whilst the overall T Level qualification will be a regulated qualification the individual occupational specialisms will not. However, identifying these for each T Level student is important as they will determine how much funding a T Level student receives. Therefore, QWS will hold QNs for every occupational specialism assigned to each T Level.

Every T Level programme **must** have at least one occupational specialism related to the T Level recorded.

4.3.11.11 T Level recording expectations

The department understand that timetabling software is usually maintained on a yearly basis and entry of all components of a T Level programme which would span two years, may not be possible. Therefore, we have agreed the following with suppliers:

In year 1 of the programme – The following **MUST** be provided:

- Programme aim – spanning 2 years confirming a T Level
- T Level Technical qualification, which would start in year 1
- A T Level occupational specialism learning aim
- Any other components planned to start in year 1

Validation will allow for any aim with <ProgType> of '31' (T Level) to have a <LearningStartDate> in the future.

In year 2 of the programme – ALL components of T Levels **MUST** be provided – including any components that started in year 1 of the programme and any components that have already started or are planned to start in year 2 of the programme.

- Programme aim
- Technical qualifications
- occupational specialisms
- industry placements
- maths and English where relevant

4.4 Pupils no longer on roll

Some modules are collected for pupils no longer on roll, that is, those that left the school prior to census day:

- pupil identifiers
- pupil characteristics
- pupil status
- managed moves
- termly suspensions and permanent exclusions – including the reviews
- home information (for those pupils for whom post-16 learning aims are being submitted)

- termly attendance
- summer second half term attendance
- post-16 programme aims and learning aims
- 16 to 19 bursary fund
- alternative provision placement details
- learner funding and monitoring (FAM)

4.5 Coverage and timing

[Annex C](#) shows the collection dates for each school census and the periods relating to attendance, suspensions and permanent exclusions, bursary funding for 16 to 19 year olds, free school meal eligibility, alternative provision placement module and post-16 learning aims data.

[Annex F](#) shows the school level collection schedule. This indicates which school level data items and modules will be collected in which census.

[Annex G](#) shows the pupil level collection schedule. This indicates which pupil level data items and modules will be collected in which census.

5. Validation checks

An Excel workbook defines the validation rules that are applied to the data by the department using the COLLECT system. They should be applied, as far as possible, in school systems prior to loading the data onto COLLECT to identify any problems with the data and allow any issue to be resolved. The validation rules are used to produce the XSLT. Please note that some of this information is used to determine funding levels for schools. Incorrect data may result in incorrect levels of funding.

The Excel workbook is available on the department's [website](#).

It is assumed that all data held in MIS systems will be validated on entry to conform to the definitions within the common basic data set ([CBDS](#)) spreadsheet.

A validation rule should only be applied to phases of schools to which it relates, and in the term or terms when it is appropriate.

Validations are classified as either 'errors' or 'queries'.

An 'error' is a failed validation check that must be corrected before the return is submitted. There may be rare scenarios where a few errors can be incorrectly triggered. The department will assess these scenarios on a case-by-case basis and, where appropriate, allow the error to be 'ok-able' in COLLECT.

A 'query' is one that must be investigated, and potentially corrected, as it identifies data that would usually be:

- Invalid

or

- missing (a census return which does not contain any records for pupils on roll)

Queries may be accepted with appropriate explanations provided via notepad entries in COLLECT. The department will accept notes at return level that include the relevant query numbers and pupil identifiers.

Additional validation is carried out in COLLECT, checking the data submitted by a school against that provided for a previous term or year. The rules for these validation checks will be published on the department's [website](#).

LAs can download an academy export from COLLECT, not all academy data fields can be shared, therefore this may impact importing academy school census returns into LA software systems.

6. XML / XSLT features

A number of XML based components are provided by the department in the XML / XSLT package, the contents of which are:

- SchoolCensus25-26-ErrorList.xsl
- SchoolCensus25-26-HTMLPresentation.xsl
- SchoolCensus25-26-IntermediateFile.xsl
- SchoolCensus25-26-SchoolSummaryPresentation.xsl
- SchoolCensus25-26-SchoolSummaryreferenceLists.xsl
- SchoolCensus25-26-SchoolSummaryStylesheet.css
- SchoolCensus25-26-ValidationRules.xsl
- SchoolCensus25-26-XMLPresentation.xsl
- XSLT Change Summary Template v1.1.xlsx

Software suppliers may avail themselves of this feature to reduce development effort should they wish. With the use of the <Xversion> tag in the header showing whether an XML / XSLT package provided by the department has been used and which version of the package has been used.

The first of these components is a set of XML schemas (that is, XSD files, based on the W3C XML Schemas Second Edition, October 2004 Standard), which will define the content of the XML census return. Separate schemas are provided for each of the autumn, spring and summer school census returns.

Additionally, sets of XSL transformations (based on W3C XSLT V1.0 Standard) will be provided to validate the school census XML files – according to the rules specified within the technical specification – and produce HTML error reports (which can be read using a suitable browser).

All of these reports will contain the error message and key information regarding the data that is in error. For example, for an error relating to a pupil, the:

- UPN
- DOB
- surname
- forename
- sex

will be provided.

This key information from the XML error report can then be utilised within the school's MIS to direct the user (possibly by means of hyperlinks or similar) to the particular detail in error.

Further sets of XSL transformations will be provided to process the XML return and produce a school summary report.

Once baselined (version 1.0), COLLECT will maintain compatibility with the baselined version unless agreed by departmental change control procedures.

7. General notes

7.1 Data items with no values

There are three scenarios when there may be no values for particular data items. These are:

- values shown as not applicable (as denoted with an 'x' in the XML message structures at [Annex A](#) and [Annex B](#))
- values contingent on the contents of other tags (for example, the <SENtypeRank> tag is only required where <SENProvision> has particular values)
- values which may be missing for any school / pupil (for example, the <MiddleNames> tag is only required where a pupil has a middle name)

In these scenarios, the XML tag is not required to be present in the census return. In all other scenarios, a missing or blank value will result in an error being output. This is known as the 'no data, no tag' principle.

Instances may arise where all of the data items within an XML container have no value. In such cases, the XML container is not required to be present in the return. For example, if a pupil has no periods of FSM eligibility then as well as the <FSMstartDate>, <FSMendDate> and <UKcountry> not being required, <FSMperiod> and <FSMeligibility> would not be present.

7.2 Block entry

For suppliers creating applications for local authorities or schools, a block entry facility for fields is highly desirable in order to reduce burdens. This should allow a user to choose a selection (for example, a year group) and specify a value to be applied to all. However, it should also allow data to be edited on an individual basis.

7.3 Selected time on census day [Not for: Nursery schools, special and PRU / AP]

The selected time on the census day, used for the class information module, is based on the last digit of the departmental school number. Please note these times move down by one each academic year; that is, a school using 'one hour before the end of morning school' in 2025 to 2026 will use 'one hour after the start of afternoon school' in 2026 to 2027. This is not relevant for nursery schools, special schools or PRU / AP, as they do not submit class information.

If different parts of the school use different timetable structures, then systems should allow the school to return class information for the timetable structure that applies to Key Stage 1. For example, if lunch is at 12:00 hours for pupils following a primary timetable but at

13:00 hours for pupils following a secondary timetable, then the end of morning school should be taken to be 12:00 hours and not 13:00 hours.

Last digit of departmental number	Selected time
2, 3 or 6	The selected time is one hour before the end of morning school
4, 7, 8 or 9	The selected time is one hour after the start of afternoon school
0, 1 or 5	The selected time is one hour after the start of morning school

If the selected time is not appropriate to the school timetable, (for example, if the selected time is when the whole school or a large proportion of the school is in an assembly with the head teacher) schools should choose an hour / period that reflects a 'normal' class situation that applies at the selected time each Thursday of the term.

Please note: times used within the census follow the 24-hour format (03:00 equals 3 am 15:00 equals 3 pm).

7.4 Special characters

The XML convention should be followed for special characters which is to use & for & with > used for >. For special characters such as é, use a character reference such as é. This produces a generic XML file that can be viewed as such in a suitable browser. Details of all such characters are found within the XML standard documentation – see for example, [Section 2.2](#) of Extensible Mark-up Language (XML) 1.0 (Fifth Edition) on the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) [website](#).

It is expected that all numeric data will be supplied as integers except where specified otherwise (for example, funded hours and hours at setting).

7.5 XML file generic naming conventions

The following file naming conventions apply:

- the file extension will be XML
- the file name shall be constructed from the following components:
 - a) origin identifier consisting of the local authority number (3 digits) followed by the establishment number (4 digits) which, combined, equals 7 digits
 - b) census / data extraction type where 'SC3' indicates that it is a school census file containing pupil and school data relating to the autumn term (3 characters), 'SC1' for the spring term and 'SC2' for the summer term

- c) destination Identifier where the first three characters are the local authority number, fourth / fifth characters are LL and the sixth / seventh characters are the last two digits of the year (7 characters)
- d) serial number (3 digits)

The components should be separated by underscore characters (“_”).

An example of a school census file name sent from a school to its local authority would be:

8012000_SC1_801LL25_001.XML

The total file name length equals 27 characters.

Annex A: School XML message Structure – Term/phase applicability

Annex B: Pupil XML message structure – term/phase applicability

Annex C: Census collection dates and data periods

Annex D: Pupil ages and dates of birth

Annex E: Post-16 learning aims

Please note: Where this specification refers to a qualification reference, the abbreviation 'QN' is used for 'Qualification Number' as this reflects the terminology used on the Ofqual register and the [list of qualifications approved for funding \(previously known as Section 96\)](#) (please see (b) below). QWS has retained the older term 'QAN'.

a) Additional guidance

This section outlines suggested methodologies for processing Post-16 learning aims data in software systems (especially the use of the QAN table).

This does not form part of the census specification.

The autumn 2026 data collection will be based on the May 2026 software release of the school MIS system. We would advise schools to begin recording details of the sixth form qualifications they will be providing in the 2026-27 academic year during June / July 2026. This will greatly ease the burden of recording student qualification details in the autumn.

b) Examination timetable

Using the 2025 cycle as indicative, a normal timetable for Level 3 examinations can be found in Annex E: Table 1.

We would advise that schools use their MIS to enter learning aims much earlier in the academic year (September) which can feed into the appropriate examination registration processes.

The regulation of qualifications is initiated by awarding organisations and the department updates QWS on an event driven basis. To ensure that all available qualifications are available for data providers, these are added to QWS up until the census collection period commences. Therefore, it is important that the latest possible version of QWS be used for the census download. Should you have any queries regarding the approval of qualifications for delivery to 16-19 students please visit the list of qualifications approved for funding (previously known as Section 96) for the latest version.

c) QAN data

Provision of the QAN table (please see note at the start of this Annex).

A comprehensive list of QNs (with associated data) is available as a [downloadable file](#). The structure of the QAN table is in Annex E: Table 2.

Please note: The term ‘Disc code’ was replaced with ‘Subject Classification Code’ in line with ongoing work to merge QWS and the [list of qualifications approved for funding \(previously known as Section 96\)](#). Since this the completion date for this development is not yet confirmed, the field continues to be described here as ‘Discount Code’ for clarity.

i) Updating the QAN table

As new qualifications are introduced, it will be necessary to update the QAN table in school systems.

Ofqual will provide details of new qualifications to the department, and these will be available for provision to software suppliers on QWS as soon as is practicable.

The introduction / approval of qualifications can take place throughout the year and is initiated by their submission by awarding organisations. QWS is updated on an event driven basis and as soon as possible once notification is received (generally once per month). To stabilise the database, no routine updates are made to QWS during the autumn census collection period.

ii) Unitary awarding body (UAB) base data files

The formats for UAB base data files are specified by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)² in the document “[Formats for the exchange of examination related data \(Version 14\)](#)”. It should be noted that base data files are only issued by the UABs represented by the JCQ. The vast majority of awarding organisations do not issue base data files although the majority of qualifications taken by students in school sixth forms will be those provided by JCQ UABs.

iii) Base data file types

Base data refer to information required by centres and others to enable them to be made aware of the various syllabuses, options and components that a UAB offers. It includes information such as syllabus and option definitions, entry codes, the dates and times of examination papers and details of the internally assessed components for which centres need to supply marks.

Four base data file types are defined in Part IV of the JCQ document. (A fifth file may be included containing details of disallowed combinations of subjects.)

² Membership of JCQ comprises Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA), City and Guilds, Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CEA), OCR, Pearson, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC).

- ‘S’ Syllabus definitions
- ‘O’ Option definitions
- ‘C’ Component definitions
- ‘L’ Option / Component link file

Base data file names would take the following forms (literal values in bold).

Saaaaaaa.Xnn / Oaaaaaaa.Xnn / Caaaaaaa.Xnn / Laaaaaaa.Xnn

Where:

a equals any alphanumeric or underscore character

n equals any numeric character

The option definitions file contains data of relevance.

iv) Option definition file

The file should be created according to the rules for common format data outlined previously, using the data type ‘O’ as the first byte of the file name. The record length is 117 bytes including the end of line marker as per Annex E: Table 3.

v) Importing UAB base data files

When a base data file is imported, it is important that the contained data do not overwrite or delete any “QAN” or “SCC” data supplied in the QAN table. Analysis of the base data files indicates that most UABs include comprehensive QAN data in their files. (The omissions from the “QCA accreditation number” in the base data files relate only to units, not full qualifications.)

Any “QAN” or “SCC” data conflicts must be reported immediately to the department. The department will seek clarification and feedback the result to software suppliers within ten working days.

(a) The QAN table and subject hierarchy

The QAN table contains details for many thousands of qualifications. It would be inappropriate to present the full QAN list to school staff selecting a particular qualification. It is suggested that a tiered system of selection is used for displaying the QAN list. The QAN table provides links to a number of coding structures, which can assist in this.

One possibility, though certainly not the only one, could be:

Stage 1: The sector / subject framework (SSF) tier 1 provides a high-level classification of subjects (see section (xi) below).

(Please note: the classification of discount codes within SSFT is not 100% consistent, but overall, this is a useful way to categorise the vast majority of qualifications).

Stage 2: SSF tier 2 provides sub-categories within each tier 1 classification.

Stage 3: Subject classification code (SCC) subject, utilising either LEAP or LearnDirect classification system (LDCS) codes, provides a list of commonly understood subjects.

Stage 4: National Qualification Framework (NQF) level provides a means of classifying a qualification according to whether it is at entry level, level 1, level 2, level 3 etc. QWS uses the title NQF though this is out of date, as NQF has been replaced with QCF. The levels remain the same under either system.

Stage 5: At this stage, a list of the relevant qualifications, with appropriate QNs, may be displayed.

Example data for level 3 science is shown in at the end of this Annex.

It should be noted that, while stages 1-3 follow a natural hierarchical order, stage 4 might be applied at any stage in the process.

vi) School QAN list

For individual establishments, only a small minority of all the potential qualifications will be provided to their pupils in any one year. It is suggested that, for each academic year, schools identify those qualifications that they will be providing. This would allow a school to use the restricted list when identifying qualifications for individual students. It would also allow a potentially burdensome exercise to be carried out prior to an academic year, at a time that is convenient to the school. (We would advise schools to begin recording details of the sixth form qualifications they will be providing in the 2026 to 2027 academic year during June / July 2026).

This school QN list may be selected using the subject hierarchy process described above.

vii) Date defaults

It is suggested that for each QAN the following defaults are applied:

- A) The learning aim start date should have a default value of the first day of the autumn term (or term 1 for a six term system) of the relevant academic year.
- B) The learning aim planned end date should have a default value of the last day of the summer term which should not be later than July 31 of the

relevant academic year (or term 6 for a six term system) of the relevant academic year.

viii) Entry validations

- A) The learning aim start date must be a valid date within academic year. Note: Where a school changes type (for example, converts to a sponsored academy) within an academic year, the start date of the learning aim 'carries over' from the 'old' school, that is, whilst the school may change, the dates of the learning aim do not.
- B) The learning aim planned end date must be a valid date and must not change during this time.
- C) The learning aim planned end date must be after or equal to the learning aim start date.

Schools should not be offering qualification courses where the approval end date of the qualification has expired, and awarding organisations should not be issuing certificates after the certification end date has expired. Many of the qualifications contained in the QAN table provided have passed approval end dates and / or expired certification end dates.

The database is cleansed of QANs with expired certification end dates as quickly as possible. However, care must be taken when selecting qualifications, as QANs with expired approval end dates will still be present on the database to accommodate retakes'.

ix) Timescales

It is suggested that schools produce their school QN list, for the 2026 to 2027 academic year, in the preceding summer term (the list must be editable to allow the addition of qualifications, most obviously due to unforeseen re-takes and / or re-sits) and also because, exceptionally, some new qualifications may only appear on the QWS list after the beginning of September.

(a) Student QAN list

Students' individual learning aim qualifications could be selected from the school QAN list, if the school has created it for the relevant academic year; if not, qualifications could be selected using the hierarchy process described above. When presenting the school QAN list for student selection the subject hierarchy process described above may be applied.

Initial values and inter field relationships

When details of a learning aim are first entered for a student, the following rules should be applied:

- A) When a QAN is selected, the learning aim planned end date, and the learning aim start date should default to the values contained in the school QN list.
- B) The learning aim start date must be editable to allow for students who enter a course during the academic year.
- C) The learning aim planned end date must NOT be edited to allow for earlier completion.
- D) The learning aim planned end date must be after or equal to the learning aim start date.
- E) The learning aim status should default to “1” (the student is undertaking, but has not yet completed, the course).
- F) The learning aim actual end date must be editable to allow for earlier completion.

x) Maintenance changes and inter field relationships

Student learning aim data should be maintained by schools on an event-driven basis. When changes are made, the following rules must be applied:

- A) The learning aim planned end date must be after or equal to the learning aim start date.
- B) If the student has a non-blank value for the leaving date (that is, the student has left the school) then the learning aim actual end date should be no later than the leaving date.
- C) If the student has a learning aim status of “1” then the learning aim actual end date must be blank.
- D) If the student has a learning aim status of “2”, “3” or “4” then the learning aim actual end date cannot be blank.
- E) If the learning aim actual end date is blank then the learning aim status must be “1”.
- F) If the learning aim actual end date is not blank then the learning aim status cannot be “1”
- G) Must be completed if <LearningAimStatus> is ‘3’ – ‘Withdrawn; Must be left blank if <LearningAimStatus> is ‘1’, ‘2’ or ‘4’

xi) Additional functionality

When editing student data the following would assist in reducing burdens:

- A) Ability to select a QAN from school QAN list and allocate students to that qualification.
- B) Ability to amend school QAN list while editing student data.
- C) Ability to select a group of students and allocate multiple QANs to that group of students.

xii) Tiered system for presentation of QANs – Example

[Annex F: School level collection schedule](#)

[Annex G: Pupil level collection schedule](#)

Annex H: Errata

The errata lists all changes to the document from the baselined version (Version 1.0) onwards.

Version	Changes made	Author / date
1.1	4.3.9.1 – opening paragraph has been updated. 4.3.6 – Title updated - [Not for: Nursery schools] Data items have been updated to: • Managed Move Start Date (N00841) • Destination School URN (N00842) • Reason for Managed Move (N00843) 4.3.7 – Example updated Annex B and Annex G have been updated to reflect these changes. Annex B exclusions module has been updated and various data items have been updated to be applicable for the appropriate term. 3.3.7.1 – IRP Outcomes paragraph has been updated Annex C – Dates updated XML Header message – has been updated to: Survey reference date <ReferenceDate> (N00603) will be: '2026-10-01', '2027-01-21' or '2027-05-20' 4.3.2.3. FSM Category - Targeted FSM (TFSM) has been updated.	Nicola Berryman July 2026.
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-



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for Education

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