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KEY DATES

Normally DfE makes available approximately 4 weeks prior to the collection going 'live'. Ends 25/09/2026 (4pm)	<i>Optional. Department for Education (DfE) strongly recommended, if possible.</i> <i>COLLECT familiarisation test period: A 'beta' release is available for testing purposes only, via COLLECT, prior to the census going 'live', and will be removed in advance of the 'live' collection.</i>
Thursday 1 October 2026	Census Day
Tuesday 6 October 2026	Maintained schools & PRU deadline for submission to the Local Authority for validation via COLLECT .
Wednesday 28 October 2026	Maintained schools & PRU deadline for submission to be approved by the Local Authority via COLLECT .
Wednesday 28 October 2026	Academies and free schools deadline for validated and approved submission directly by the Department for Education (DfE) via COLLECT .

Note: Following approval and final DfE checks, all state-funded school submissions must receive a final DfE 'authorised' status.

SCHOOLS INCLUDED:

The school census collects individual school characteristics and pupil records, 3 times a year.

In England, all of the following schools are required to provide a return to DfE:

- 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) and city technology colleges (CTCs).

PUPILS TO BE INCLUDED:

- all pupils on the register on census day.
- any additional pupils subject to any type of suspension or permanent exclusion in the previous 2 terms.
- any additional pupils who attended the school in the previous term for which termly attendance information is required – not applicable to nursery schools.
- any additional pupils who attended the school in the previous academic year for which learning aims are submitted – autumn census for secondary, all-through and AP schools only.
- any additional pupils who had an alternative provision (AP) placement within the collection period (since the last census day) – not applicable to nursery schools.
- any additional pupils awarded a bursary since the start of the academic year – spring and summer census only, and not applicable to nursery, primary and middle schools.
- any additional pupils who were recorded as in receipt of learner funding and monitoring since the start of the academic year – not applicable to nursery schools.

FUNDING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL CENSUS

The school census is the DfE's primary source of administrative data about pupils attending schools in England.

KEY CENSUS DATA ITEM COLLECTION PERIODS

Item	Period
Term dates	Start of the autumn term (from 2026-08-01) to 2026-12-31
Free school meal eligibility	Periods of eligibility for free school meals with: (a) An FSM eligibility start date and no FSM eligibility end date; or, (b) An FSM eligibility end date since the previous census, that is, on or after 2026-05-22 and up to and including the autumn census day (2026-10-01)
Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM) entity	Any Learner FAM assigned, where applicable since the beginning of the 2026 to 2027 academic year (from 2026-08-01) to students who are either on roll or off roll on census day (2026-10-01) Learner FAM codes of EMH and MMH planned for the 2026 to 2027 academic year.
Managed Moves	Any pupil no longer on roll where a managed move occurred between 2026-08-01 to 2026-09-30 inclusive
Termly suspensions and permanent exclusions	2026-01-01 to 2026-07-31
Termly suspension and permanent exclusion cancellations	Recorded in systems but not collected until Spring 2027
Termly suspension and permanent exclusion reviews	Recorded in systems but not collected until Spring 2027
Breakfast Club attendance	For schools participating. Recorded in systems but not collected until Spring 2027
Termly attendance	First half of the summer term From Easter Monday 2026-04-06 to the Sunday 2026-05-24 before spring bank holiday
Summer second half term attendance	From spring bank holiday Monday 2026-05-25 to 2026-07-31
Alternative provision (AP) placement module	Any current (open) AP placements and Any previous placements where the pupil has already left an AP placement between: 2026-05-14 to 2026-09-30 inclusive
Post-16 learning aims	For the current academic year covering the period from 2026-08-01 to 2026-10-01 (inclusive) for pupils with a status of 'C' (current – single registration) or 'M' (current main – dual registration) who have been on roll and in actual national curriculum year group 12 or above For the previous academic year covering the period from 2025-08-01 to 2026-07-31 inclusive for pupils who were on roll at any point during this period in actual national curriculum year group 12 or above. Learning aims are only required for those pupils with a pupil status of 'C' (current – single registration) or 'M' (current main – dual registration) at the time of the learning aims

More school census data items information is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>.

NEW, CHANGED & DELETED DATA ITEMS FOR AUTUMN 2026

1) New data items:

Item
• 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)

2) Existing data items:

Item
• 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.

3) Discontinued items:

Item
• No items have been discontinued.

More information about data item changes is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>.

FREE SCHOOL MEAL ELIGIBILITY (NEW DATA ITEMS)

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)
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

This also includes pupils eligible under the no recourse to public funds criteria (NRPF). 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.

Please note that these dates are subject to change.

(e) 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.

EARLY YEARS DATA FOR AUTUMN 2026

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
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	✓	✓

Data item	Description
Funded universal free entitlement hours.	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, the maximum hours are 30 hours per week, 15 universal free entitlement hours plus 15 extended free entitlement hours. <table><tr><th>Census</th><th>Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group</th><th>Maximum funded universal free entitlement hours</th></tr><tr><td>Autumn 2026</td><td>2 and 3 year olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2024-08-31 (inclusive) - all relevant schools and year groups</td><td>15 hours</td></tr><tr><td>Autumn 2026</td><td>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</td><td>15 hours</td></tr></table> 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.	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
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								
Extended free entitlement hours.	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. This data item records, for pupils (aged 3 and 4 where 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). <table><tr><th>Census</th><th>Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group</th><th>Maximum funded universal free entitlement and extended free entitlement hours</th></tr><tr><td>Autumn 2026</td><td>3 year olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2023-08-31 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - all relevant schools and year groups</td><td>15 funded universal free entitlement hours + 15 extended free entitlement hours equals 30 hours</td></tr><tr><td>Autumn 2026</td><td>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</td><td>15 funded universal free entitlement hours + 15 extended free entitlement hours equals 30 hours</td></tr></table>	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
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								

Expanded free entitlement hours.	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). <table><tr><th>Census</th><th>Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group</th><th>Maximum funded expanded hours</th></tr><tr><td>Autumn 2026</td><td>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</td><td>30 hours</td></tr><tr><td>Autumn 2026</td><td>2-year-olds Born between 2023-09-01 and 2024-08-31 (inclusive) - with a valid eligibility code - all relevant schools and year groups</td><td>30 hours</td></tr></table> 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.	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
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								
Eligibility code	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.									
Hours at setting	Hours at setting (N00205) are collected for the same pupils and schools for whom funded free entitlement hours are collected. 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.												
2-year-old basis for funding	The basis for funding data item (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. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Census</th><th>Date of birth ranges where 2-year-old basis for funding can be returned</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Autumn 2026</td><td>Born between 2023-09-01 and 2024-08-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups</td></tr> </tbody> </table> 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. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Code</th><th>Description</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>ECO</td><td>Economic criteria</td></tr> <tr> <td>HSD</td><td>High-level SEN or disability</td></tr> <tr> <td>LAA</td><td>Looked after or adopted from care</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	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	Code	Description	ECO	Economic criteria	HSD	High-level SEN or disability	LAA	Looked after or adopted from care
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												
Code	Description												
ECO	Economic criteria												
HSD	High-level SEN or disability												
LAA	Looked after or adopted from care												
Disability access fund indicator	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: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Census</th><th>Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group where DAF indicator can be returned</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Autumn 2026</td><td>9 months to 1-year-olds Born between 2024-09-01 and 2025-11-30 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups</td></tr> <tr> <td>Autumn 2026</td><td>2-year-olds Born between 2023-09-01 and 2024-08-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups</td></tr> <tr> <td>Autumn 2026</td><td>3-year-olds Born between 2022-09-01 and 2023-08-31 (inclusive) all relevant schools and year groups</td></tr> <tr> <td>Autumn 2026</td><td>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</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	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		
Census	Date of birth ranges and school type / pupil national curriculum year group where DAF indicator can be returned												
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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												
Early years pupil premium	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) • are in the care of the local authority (in England or Wales) • have left care (in England or Wales) through: - o adoption - o special guardianship - o 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-yearolds 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.
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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

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

More information about these data items is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>.

SUSPENSION AND PERMANENT EXCLUSION INFORMATION (NEW DATA ITEMS)

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

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, 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 is cancelled, the original exclusion should be returned with the cancellation details, and a 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 of Independent Review Panel) (N00650)

- 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.

KINSHIP CARE INDICATOR (NEW DATA ITEM) [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 221 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 the DfE 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.

FREE BREAKFAST CLUB ATTENDANCE MODULE (NEW DATA ITEMS)

From the autumn 2026 term onwards, schools participating in the government's 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 pupils in Reception to Year 6 in their systems daily.

From the spring 2027 school census onwards, the DfE 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.

Periods Covered

The breakfast club attendance module covers each term, with dates for the attendance periods for each of the breakfast clubs attendance modules.

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).

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: 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

Breakfast club number of sessions

The total number of sessions should be recorded.

MANAGED MOVES (NEW DATA ITEMS)

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 (N00839)
- The destination school URN (N00840)
- Reason for the managed move, (N00841), selected from: (CS135):
 - o To reduce the risk of exclusion for a pupil who has not yet been excluded
 - o Following a period of exclusion and decision to transfer
 - o 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.

'DRY RUN' & TESTING

Schools should take the opportunity to do a 'dry run' of their school census return from the school management information system (MIS). The purpose of a dry run is to provide details about any corrections that need to be made to your data to make it acceptable for inclusion. So that you are aware of any potential issues, it is advisable to do this as early as possible, even if you know that your data has not yet been fully prepared or checked. Contact your management information system (MIS) Support Provider for any procedural guidance to facilitate a dry run.

GENERATING MIS RETURN

All relevant pupil data has been entered and updated in your management information system (MIS) before the school census return is created.

Your MIS will have validation which will help you to identify and correct errors in your data before you generate your return. Follow your MIS support provider instructions to create, validate and authorise the return.

Schools should contact their MIS support provider for specific guidance on generating and validating the return.

AUTHORISING MIS RETURN

Your MIS will automatically generate a summary of the data in the school census return that will:

- allow you to check that the data is accurate and complete before sending it to the Headteacher; and
- allow the Headteacher authorising the return to check it is accurate and complete before submitting it to the local authority or DfE.

There should be a Headteacher sign-off process within each school. The Headteacher is responsible for reviewing and authorising census data before it is submitted.

SUBMITTING MIS RETURN TO COLLECT

Maintained schools including pupil referral units submit data to the Local Authority using COLLECT for further validation and approval before being submitted for DfE authorisation. Academies and Free schools submit data directly to the DfE using COLLECT for DfE approval and authorisation.

To use COLLECT to submit your school census data, you will need to log in via DfE Sign-in <https://services.signin.education.gov.uk>. Contact your school approver, if you want to request a DfE sign-in username or password so you can access COLLECT.

DfE Sign-in

DfE Sign-in is how schools and other education organisations access DfE online services.

To access your DfE online services, you'll either need:

- **an existing DfE Sign-in account.** This will be the email address and password you created when you first accessed DfE Sign-in.
- **to create a DfE Sign-in account.** If you haven't used DfE Sign-in before you'll need to [create a DfE Sign-in account](#).

Start now >

Sign in with username and password

Department for Education Sign-in

Sign-in to access DfE online services.

Email address

Password

Show

[Forgotten your password?](#)

By signing in you accept [DfE Sign-in terms and conditions](#).

Sign in

Create account

Select 'Collect'

[Collect](#)

COLLECT (Collections Online: Learners, Education, Children and Teachers) allows users to see and submit data collections and censuses to the Department for Education.

Click 'Continue'



Department for Education

You are logged in as 320gnyamundanda | [Log out](#)

COLLECT Portal

our last logon was 07/09/2024 12:24:05
our last session ended 07/09/2024 12:28:43

ollect Welcome

Welcome to COLLECT (Collections On-Line for Learning, Education, Children, and Teachers).
COLLECT is the DfE Centralised Data Collection and Management System for Education

*** Data Collection Visibility ***
ust to remind users, if the data collection has not yet opened you will not be able to see this in the list
if available data collections.

PROCEED INTO COLLECT

[Continue...](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

Select relevant School Census collection, and select 'Select Data Collection'

Select Data Collection ▶

Select 'Upload Return from file', browse local computer and select XML school census return.

What can I do with My Data Return?

Upload Return from file...

Press this button to Import a file into your data return

Follow on screen instructions to upload return.

COLLECT: FAMILIARISATION

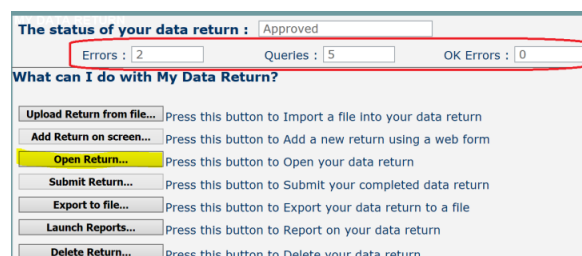
A 'beta' release of the 2026 autumn school census will be available via [COLLECT](#) prior to the census going 'live' for testing purposes in the autumn term. Once the familiarisation period is over the COLLECT blade will be removed and cleared out in advance of the start of the live collection.

The Department for Education (DfE) and Local Authority strongly recommend that, if possible, all schools take the opportunity to upload a 'test' census XML return from the school management information system (MIS) into COLLECT during the familiarisation process. This will allow schools to check that all the required data is being output correctly from their MIS into the census return and whether any validation errors or queries are generated against their data when loaded into COLLECT which need to be resolved before the collection goes live. This will be especially important for any schools completing the school census for the first time. Please note that some COLLECT checks require reference data which is not yet in place so may trigger incorrectly – this will be in place in time for 'go live' so genuine errors will remain at that point.

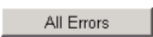
COLLECT familiarisation will take place on the same system as the 'live' collection. A DfE schools guide for using COLLECT is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/collect-guides-for-schools-and-local-authorities>.

COLLECT: RESOLVING ERRORS & QUERIES

Once the return is uploaded, the status screen indicates the status of the return; as well as any DfE COLLECT errors or queries present in the return following system validation.



To view the errors or queries, click on "Open Return", and click the 'All Errors' button.



Rule No.	Return Level	Error Message	Priority
2190Q	Y	Please check: Percentage of pupils in school with EHC plans seems high (greater than 10%)	Queries
1877Q	Y	Take up of school lunches for pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 (plus pupils aged 4 to 6 in year X) greater than 95%. Please confirm more than 95% of infant pupils took a school lunch on census day	Queries
4007Q	Y	Please check: no pupils on roll are in receipt of National Tutoring Programme (NTP)	Queries
4015Q	Y	Please check: no School Arranged Alternative Provision (AP) placements have been provided	Queries

Page 1 of 1

- Errors must be resolved by amending the MIS return and resubmitting to COLLECT.
- Checked and ok'd queries can remain if you add an explanatory COLLECT return-level note for each one using the DfE list of acceptable notepad entries which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/check-your-data> (section 'Adding explanation notes for queries').

COLLECT: RETURN LEVEL NOTEPAD ENTRIES FOR OK'D QUERIES

Checked and ok'd queries can remain if you add an explanatory COLLECT return-level note for each one using the DfE list of acceptable notepad entries which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/check-your-data> (section 'Adding explanation notes for queries').

To create a return level note select 'Open Return'.



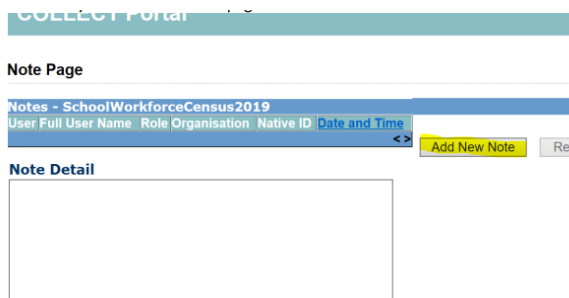
Once you have opened the return click on the pencil icon underneath "Return Level Notes" (all query notes needed to be added at return level, even if the query itself relates to an individual):



If you already have other notes on your return the icon will look like this:

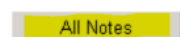


Once you are on the notes page click on the "Add New Note" button



- It is acceptable to return a separate notepad entry for each query; or one notepad entry for numerous queries i.e. start a separate line for each query.
- You can now type in the note you want to add. Begin the note with the query number. When you have completed your note, making sure to use the exact notepad entry advised by the DfE list of acceptable notepad entries. For example *"2190Q: confirmed as correct"*.
- If the DfE list of acceptable notepad entries states that a reason must be provided, do not return 'confirmed', 'correct', 'data is correct' etc. This would be an insufficient notepad entry and the DfE will be unable to process the return to 'authorised' stage.
- Where multiples of the same query occur, and the reason is the same for each one, use the "X" and number alongside the query number. For example: *"5240Q X2 - Though the pupil attends school for 25 hours or more, they do not attend the school for 10 sessions a week."*

To view all the notes you have added, click on "All Notes".



COLLECT: REPORTS USED FOR FUNDING – DfE VALIDATION QUERY

There are a number of reports in COLLECT that you should use to check your data.

All relevant reports for your school phase or type should be run and checked.

The Department for Education (DfE) school census has a validation query to check that your school has run all relevant reports. Schools with this COLLECT validation query should run the reports although this query will not prevent the return from being 'authorised'.

A list of COLLECT reports is outlined below:

Report	Description
Pupil number report	This provides a headcount of your pupils by national curriculum year group, the headcount of your pupils minus subsidiary registrations and the number of pupils that will be used in numerous funding streams and therefore will account for funded and extended hours and unresolved duplicate UPNs.
Free school meals (FSM) report	Allows schools to check the FSM eligibility data submitted in their census return. This report only refers to FSM eligibility reported in the current census and not the FSM ever measure used to allocate the pupil premium.
Universal infant free school meals	Provides a breakdown of the infant pupils that the DfE will use in the universal infant FSM funding calculation.
Early years pupil premium	Allows schools to check and verify the data in the census, which the DfE use for the early years pupil premium allocations.
Learner funding and monitoring (FAM)	Allows schools to check and verify the data returned in each termly census on pupils in receipt of specific elements of the education recovery package.
Zero funded hours	Highlights the number of early years pupils who have 'zero' funded hours recorded on the school census return. The DfE use funded hours to calculate the early years block of the dedicated schools grant.

More information about these reports is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/check-your-data>.

COLLECT: REPORTS USED FOR RESOLVING DUPLICATE RECORDS – DfE VALIDATION ERROR

Two COLLECT reports identify duplicate records in the census return, as outlined in the table below:

Report	Description
Duplicate report: Same UPN	A duplicate UPN is one where more than one pupil registration shares the same UPN and the registrations sharing the UPN have an invalid combination of enrolment statuses. Unresolved duplicates will impact on funding allocations such as the dedicated schools grant and pupil premium.
Duplicate report: Same Person Different UPN	Includes all cases where there appears to be duplication of a pupil based on the characteristics - for example, surname, forename, middle name, date of birth and gender - but where different UPNs are present.

More information about these reports is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/check-your-data>.

COLLECT validation error (DupUPNRprt)

The Department for Education (DfE) school census has a COLLECT validation error (DupUPNRprt) that will trigger if the COLLECT return has unresolved duplicates which impact funding allocations.

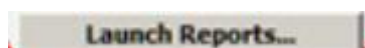
The return will not be authorised by the DfE until all errors are resolved. Please note if the return has been previously authorised and a duplicate UPN is introduced at any point during the 'live' collection the return status will revert to 'approved' i.e. not DfE authorised.

COLLECT: REPORTS NOT RUN VALIDATION QUERY ('Reports')

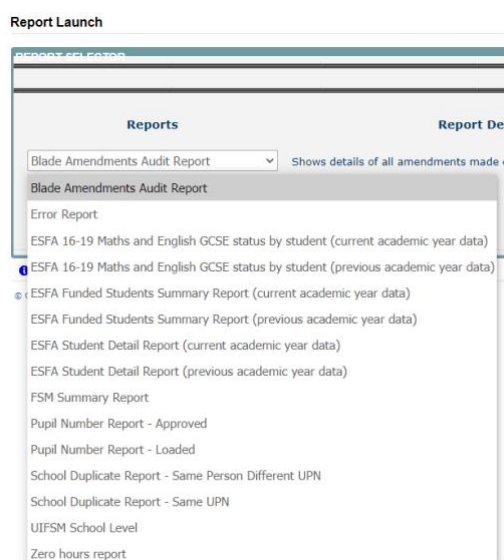
This query will trigger if the relevant reports for your school phase or type have not been run, the query will trigger until all relevant reports have been run, however this will not prevent the return from being 'authorised'.

COLLECT: VIEWING & DOWNLOADING REPORTS

To run these reports



You will then see a page where you can launch a number of different reports, with a brief description of what each report shows. Just select the report you want from the drop-down menu and then click the launch button.

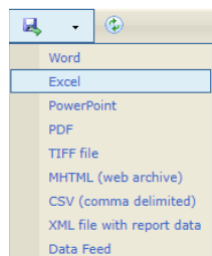


You may then see a second report parameters screen where you will need to click launch report again:

Report Parameter Selection

	Launch Report

You can view the report in browser and page back and forth using the arrow buttons. Or you can export the report in a variety of different formats:



WHO TO CONTACT?

Contact	Support
Business Intelligence Team E-mail: edu.performance@walthamforest.gov.uk	School Census data collection and return queries. Note: Maintained schools make returns directly to the Local Authority and should contact them regarding any matters to do with the data submitted.
Department for Education (DfE) Service Request: https://form.education.gov.uk/service/Data-collections-service-request-form	School Census data collection and return queries. Note: Academies/free schools make returns directly to the DfE and should contact them regarding any matters to do with the data submitted.
Management information systems (MIS) support provider	For specific training and guidance about producing the CTF/XML return. Here are links to Arbor and ScholarPack MIS guidance.

AUTUMN 2026 SCHOOL CENSUS – PREPARATION CHECKLIST

The checklist below indicates some of the tasks to undertake to prepare for the school census.

Your MIS Support Provider may provide a more specific procedural list of tasks that you should follow. Also include new data items preparation.

More information about school census data items is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items-2025-to-2026>.

Description of task	Completed
Check with your System Administrator/Manager that you have the appropriate permissions to run the Census and record associated data	☐
Upgrade to the latest SIMS release as soon as possible to enable dry runs to be carried out	☐
Check with your System Administrator/Manager that the latest filesset version has been imported	☐
Carry out a dry run to determine what information needs to be updated	☐
Check school-level information:	
Check establishment details	☐
Check the school telephone number and email address	☐
Check the school's support unit	☐
Check pupil/students' various registration details:	
Check that leavers and re-admissions have been recorded	☐
Remove any pupil/student records entered in error	☐
Check pupil/students' basic details	☐

Key:

N Nursery schools
 P Primary schools
 S Secondary schools
SP Special schools
 AT All-Through schools
 PRU Pupil Referral Units

Description of task	Completed
Check their enrolment status, admission date and boarder status	☐
Check and correct their UPNs	☐
Check and correct their Unique Learner Numbers S SP AT PRU <i>Applicable to schools with students over the age of 14</i>	☐
Check school-arranged Alternative Provision Placement details P S SP AT PRU	☐
Check and correct their part-time information	☐
Check pupil/students' home address information	☐
Check pupil/students' eligibility for free school meals	☐
Check pupil/students' ethnic and cultural information	☐
Check additional information	☐
Check the Youth Support Services Agreement (YSSA) status S	☐
Check Special Needs information	☐
Check exclusions information P S SP AT PRU	☐
Check attendance data P S SP AT PRU	☐
Check Universal Infant School Meals P SP AT <i>Applicable to schools with pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2</i>	☐

Description of task	Completed
Check hours for Early Years children information N P SP AT PRU <i>Applicable to schools with Early Years children</i>	☐
Update pupil/students with top-up funding	☐
Update pupil/students' post-looked-after arrangements	☐
Update funding and monitoring details P S SP AT PRU	☐
Check post-16 information recorded S SP AT PRU <i>Applicable to Secondary schools with a Sixth form</i>	☐

Key:

N Nursery schools **P** Primary schools **S** Secondary schools
SP Special schools **AT** All-Through schools **PRU** Pupil Referral Units

