**SEN TOP-UP FUNDING TO MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS - FAQ**

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## ***We have just received notification of some new Top-up funding for a pupil, when will the school receive this funding?***

In the normal run of events schools should start to receive funding within 8 to 10 weeks of it being agreed. This is a conservative time scale and we would hope that most funding will be processed sooner than that, however, it is dependent on when the funding is entered on the database by the caseworker in relation to the half-termly payment runs. Occasionally the SEN Provision team need additional information from the caseworker which can delay the payment.

## ***How do we find out which pupil(s) our recent payment relates to?***

The payments processed during the year are a proportion of the total funding due for all pupils, so do not necessarily breakdown as £X for pupil A and £Y for pupil B. At the end of the year the total payments received by the school, including any Section 251 payments to maintained schools, should match the total due.

## ***We have received notification of some new Top-up funding for a pupil, how can we work out how much funding is due for the current year?***

Funding calculations are based on the number of school days in the ECC financial year, Apr-Mar. This is 198 for 2021/22 (summer term 67 days, autumn term 73 days, spring term 58 days).

Please note – in years such as 2021/22 where the spring term ends in April, for funding purposes the 31st March is used as the end date for the term and this is reflected in the number of school days used in the calculations.

**Funding calculation 2021/22:**

In most cases this will be the annual Top-up amount / 198 x no of school days to be funded, where annual Top-up is either:

1. the banding Top-up value

Band 0 £0

Band 1 £1,800

Band 2 £2,700

Band 3 £4,800

Band 4 £7,500

Band 4+ £8,500

Band 5 £10,000

Band 5+ £12,500

Band 6 £15,000

or, for historical funding based on hours,

1. the number of hours x £458.85 - £6000 school contribution.

## A High Needs Funding Calculator can be found on the SEND Provision page <https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/SEND/Pages/SEND-Provision.aspx>

## It will calculate funding from 2017/18 through to 2021/22 ECC financial years.

## ***Our funding total has changed, how can we work out what the changes relate to?***

You should be able to use the information in the current report, in conjunction with previous reports, to identify any changes in the funding total:

* Newly funded pupils – compare the current report with the previous one to identify these pupils.
* Pupils removed because they had been included in error on the previous report (i.e. pupils funded at the wrong school, pupils who were expected to start at the school but subsequently didn’t, pupils who are Looked After to another authority or who left prior to the beginning of the ECC financial year) – compare the current report with the previous one to identify these pupils.
* Existing funding that has changed - compare the total funding for each pupil on the new report with their total on the previous one to identify the pupils whose funding has changed. Then check the dates and funding levels for these pupils as these will usually be the reasons for a change in the funded amount. Another reason might be a change to or from part-time attendance.

## ***There is a pupil missing from the funding report.***

This may be for one of the following reasons:

The funding has not been added to the database yet – the SEN Provision team are reliant on information provided by the SEND Operations Team to trigger funding payments. Please allow 8 to 10 weeks, as indicated [above](#Funding_timescale), before raising as a query about it.

* The SEN Provision team need additional information from the caseworker which can delay their inclusion on the funding report. Please allow 8 to 10 weeks, as indicated [above](#Funding_timescale), before raising as a query.
* The pupil is Looked After to another authority - these pupils are the financial responsibility of the other authority so are not funded by Essex. The school will need to claim their Top-up funding directly from the authority concerned.
* Pupils funded for 13 hours or less on the old funding system do not receive Top-up funding as this level of support is covered by the school contribution of £6,000.
* Their funding is not due to commence yet – at busy periods the picking up involvements for current and outstanding funding will be prioritised over funding that is not due to commence before the beginning of the next term.

## All funding queries to the SEND Provision team should be submitted using this [Mainstream SEN Funding Query Form](https://forms.office.com/r/YbJcJzNYS1)

## ***The funding allocated for a pupil doesn’t match what the school were expecting.***

This could be for a number of reasons:

* Funding allocations relate to the dates stated on the report, or until the end of the ECC financial year (31st March) if there is no end date. If a pupil starts after the beginning of the summer term funding will be allocated on a pro-rata basis.
* If the pupil is attending on a part-time basis the funding will have been adjusted to reflect this.
* If school estimates for hourly based funding came from the online budget calculator they may differ slightly to the actual allocations if the calculator has not been updated to the current year’s rate. The current annual rate for 1 hour of support in 2021/22 is £458.85. Please note that, due to the way that our database uses the number of weeks in the year to calculate the funding, we have to make an adjustment to allow for leap years so the annual rate for 1 hour of support in a leap year (ie 2019/20) is £459.07.
* The pupil’s funding level has changed during the year and hasn’t been picked up by the school or the SEN Provision team. If this is a recent change, please allow time for the adjustments to be reflected in the funding payments before contacting SEN Provision.

Details of how the funding is calculated can be found [here](#Funding_calculations).

## If, after checking the above reasons, you still think that the amount is incorrect, please use this [Mainstream SEN Funding Query Form](https://forms.office.com/r/YbJcJzNYS1) to raise a query about it.

## ***Why has funding been reclaimed for a previous year?***

This may be for one of the following reasons:

* It has come to our attention that the pupil in question is no longer on roll at the school and the funding has been reclaimed from the date that our records show they left.
* A pupil’s band changed prior to 1st April but was not picked up until this ECC financial year, in these cases there should be a corresponding payment for the same dates at the new banding level.
* Funding was paid in error for a pupil who is looked after to another authority. These pupils are the financial responsibility of the other authority so are not funded by Essex. The school will need to claim their Top-up funding directly from the authority concerned.

## ***Why has a pupil’s IPRA funding ceased?***

IPRA funding is time limited and there is no automatic continuation once the funding period has elapsed. If the school feels that the funding needs to continue then a further application, with evidence, needs to be sent to the SEND Operations Team.

## ***We are a maintained school and received funding on Section 251 for a pupil who has now left the school – how will their funding be clawed back?***

Where a pupil’s funding was originally included in the Section 251 allocation, then subsequently changes or ceases, this will be recorded as follows:

Where the S251 funding was paid out in a previous year, a clawback will be processed in the current financial year to recover the funds.

For current year changes an end date will be added and the amount will be recalculated.  The funding received via S251 will not change so the original S251 total will be deducted from the total funding due. If the total funding due is greater than the S251 total the balance will be paid in year; if it is less than the S251 total the balance will be clawed back in the spring term and invoices raised to local bank account schools.

## ***How is SEN Top-up funding paid when a school converts to an academy?***

When a school converts to an academy during the ECC financial year some of the Top-up funding originally allocated to their budget via Section 251 will be clawed back by Finance. This will be a pro rata amount relating to the number of funded school days remaining in the financial year. The clawback amount will be recorded as a separate entry on the payment statements for the remainder of the financial year.

The Top-up funding will then be reallocated to the academy and paid out on a termly basis as a cash payment.

At the beginning of the new ECC financial year, instead of receiving a statement listing pupils funded on S251, the academy will receive an estimate of Top-up funding based on known placements at that point in time.

## ***Why are we still receiving funding for a pupil who has left the school?***

This probably means that the school and/or funding information on the Capita database has not yet been updated with this information. Please complete this [Mainstream SEN Funding Query Form](https://forms.office.com/r/YbJcJzNYS1) with details of when the pupil left so that we can update our records.

## ***Why does our pupil summary show pupils who have left the school?***

The pupil summary includes all pupils for whom a funding transaction has been processed during the current ECC financial year, as these contribute to the funding total for the year. If the payment has no end date please complete this [Mainstream SEN Funding Query Form](https://forms.office.com/r/YbJcJzNYS1) with details of when the pupil left so that we can update our records.

## ***What are the steps involved in allocating and paying SEN funding to schools, and which teams are involved in the process?***

Below is a brief guide to the steps involved in making the Top-up funding payments to schools, which might assist with understanding the process and the responsibilities of the different teams involved.

1. SEND Operations Team band pupil as part of the EHCP assessment process, or in response to a request for IPRA funding.
2. Once an EHCP is finalised, or IPRA funding is agreed, SEND Operations notify the school of the funding to be allocated and add a funding involvement to the Capita database. The funding involvement provides details of the school to be funded, start date, end date & funding level. It also acts as the authorisation to make the payment. Without it, no funding will be released.
3. SEN Provision team run a report from the database, check data and use it to calculate the top-up funding due.
4. SEN Provision team collate all payments for schools and send payment requests to Finance Team.
5. Finance Team process payment requests, actioning budget adjustments and payments to maintained schools and payments to academies.
6. Payment system generates BACS notifications to academies and local bank account schools.
7. SEN Provision team emails payment summaries to schools, this will notify schools of the amount being paid. No pupil information will be published through this route.
8. SEN Provision team publishes updated pupil summary for school to access via the secure area of ESI.

## ***Where can I get help to understand our payment summary?***

The following documents have been produced to help schools understand the payment summaries that are emailed out after each payment run:

Understanding the payment summary – Maintained schools

Understanding the payment summary - Academies

They are located on the SEND Provision page <https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/SEND/Pages/SEND-Provision.aspx>

# **CONTACT DETAILS**

**If you still need to raise a query regarding your funding, please complete the** [**Mainstream SEN Funding Query Form**](https://forms.office.com/r/YbJcJzNYS1)