

Early Years FAQs – 22 June 2020

Should I complete Covid risk assessments for my BAME staff ?

At this time, the Department for Education (DfE) have not issued any guidance stating a requirement to complete additional risk assessments for Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) members of staff.

However, it is now known that BAME members of the community are at a higher risk from Covid-19 and therefore, any additional steps that can be taken to protect staff should be considered.

The BAMEed Education Network have produced guidance that calls for schools to follow the considerations proposed for the NHS to prioritise ethnicity when identifying risk.

<https://www.bameednetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/BAMEed-Network-Schools-and-Covid-19-guidance-for-BAME-staff-and-their-employers-2.pdf>

This schools guidance could also be adopted by Early Years Settings. It suggests that a conversation is held with each member of staff and individual risk assessments completed. The template in this link includes questions and solutions that could be used when considering risks for individual staff.

We have a child who is due to go to school in September 2020 whose parents are deferring his school place and wants him to stay with us for another year, are we able to claim funding for the sessions that he will attend until he goes to school.

We are being made aware that some parents are contacting schools regarding deferring their child's reception place, not starting their child in September where they aren't statutory school age yet and/or keeping them on in their Early Years setting for longer.

We would ask that if you receive a contact of this nature that you please let us know, including the rationale for the request. This is because there are implications to the FEEE funding allocation between the Early Years and Reception settings, which we would need to work through. It would help us to have an understanding of both the number of children and reasons leading to parents wishing to make this decision.

To support this, we are putting a process into place for you to inform us of these requests and the reasons so we can work with you, the school and parents on how this is managed for the best outcome for the child. If you wish to tell us about a parent requesting to defer their child's reception class space and / or keep the child with your setting for longer please email the Free Entitlement Funding Queries mailbox at FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk and we will send you a form to complete

In the meantime, please do not either: -

- confirm with parents that they will be able to access their FEEE funding with you until this has been reviewed or
- ask the parents to contact us directly

As parents are not allowed in the setting or if children are not attending until the autumn term, how do we get the parent declaration forms signed for the autumn term?

Parent declaration forms can be sent home with the children who are currently attending, and parents return them the next time their child attends.

For children not attending the setting until September, Essex will accept email confirmation from parents confirming FEEE hours for the autumn term until the forms can be signed once the child starts.

As we have had no guidance yet as to how we will be operating in September, do we claim for all of the hours booked which we would be able to fulfil under normal circumstances? Unless restrictions are relaxed considerably, our actual children attending will continue to be significantly less than the number of children who would normally attend in the autumn term, so we need some guidance on what we are allowed to claim for.

ECC has asked the DfE for urgent guidance on whether the FEEE funding will continue to be paid for settings that remain closed during the Autumn 2020 term or for any children that are not able to attend due to capacity issues. The Interim Headcount does not open until 6 July 2020 and we hope to have received guidance on this before this date and will update as soon as we receive confirmation

From September I have a child who is due to attend preschool for one day a week therefore shared care using 30 hour funding. As a childminder I would be taking him and picking him up. Normally this wouldn't be an issue but at the moment I know shared settings are not encouraged and I wonder if you have any idea or guidance on what to do about the headcount. Should I put on interim headcount or wait until the actual headcount, when shared settings are more acceptable?

If the guidance continues to recommend that children should limit the settings they are attending, the parent will need to decide which childcare they wish to access and / or in discussion with the parent both settings should risk assess the child's attendance to work out an appropriate pattern that follows guidance

A child who normally attends for 30 hours but, while her parent is furloughed, will only need 21 funded hours but will increase to 30 once the parent returns to work, which would hopefully be sometime in the Autumn term - should we apply for all 30 hours for the autumn term?

If the child normally attends for 30 hours per week, you will be holding a place for the child, and the child won't be attending any other setting to claim their funding it would be appropriate for you to claim the full 30 hours of FEEE funding for the whole term

What is the funding model for next term? We will only receive funding for the children who actually attend? If this is the case, how can we be financially viable given the staffing needed to operate in two separate bubbles? If settings are limiting numbers due to creating safe “bubbles” where is the childcare provision for those children that have been unable to access a place?

The increased operating costs of bubbles has been shared with the DfE and we have asked for an urgent update on how the FEEE funding will work for the Autumn 2020 term.

We have also flagged that this will almost certainly lead to a shortage of childcare places going forward. The DfE have added to the attendance survey questions to ask about the numbers of children that are unable to access a childcare place currently to inform them of the scale of the issue. ECC will also be using the Summer 2020 Childcare Sufficiency return to gather information on this point too.

We will update as soon as we receive a response

If schools take in reception children on a rota basis in September, will providers be able to claim FEEE funding if childcare is required on days the child is not able to attend school?

We have been informed that guidance about the plans for schools opening from September will be with us in the next two weeks and on Friday, during the press conference, Gavin Williamson talked of moving to whole class bubbles from September. This move will help with the wider opening plans for schools

However, if a child is attending both a reception class and an early years setting, it is unlikely that the early years setting will be able to claim the FEEE funding too and therefore parents may need to pay for the days in the early years setting.

This funding issue has been raised with the DfE