Autumn School Census - Guidance Released by DfE to LA's

Autumn school census 2023

The purpose of this post is to provide school census contacts with important information in readiness for the 2023 autumn school census. The first readiness bulletin is in the process of being issued to all school census contacts.

Why is the school census important?

The school census is the department's primary source of administrative data about pupils attending schools in England. The data collected is vital in supporting a number of the department's strategic objectives and is widely used for the purpose of improving, and promoting, the education or well-being of children in England. For example, the data collected helps us to make sure we are allocating funds where they are needed and that no groups of children are missing out on the education they deserve. The autumn school census will be used to fund the schools block of the dedicated schools grant, 16-19 funding allocations, universal infant free school meals and the pupil premium.

Data collection timetable and key dates

The census date for the 2023 autumn school census is Thursday 5 October with the deadline for approved submissions being Wednesday 1 November. The database will be closed to amendments from schools and local authorities on Wednesday 29 November.

Autumn census COLLECT familiarisation

A 'beta' release of the 2023 autumn school census live COLLECT blade will be available to you week commencing 11 September. This will remain available until 4pm on Friday 29 September at which point the blade will be removed and cleared out in advance of the start of the live collection on Thursday 5 October. The department would strongly recommend that, if possible, all schools take the chance to load a file output from their 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 autumn 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 autumn school census for the first time. COLLECT familiarisation will take place on the same system as the live collection and, therefore, can be accessed by logging into COLLECT via [DfE Sign in](#) in the same manner as you would for the live collection. You must submit your data using COLLECT, our centralised data collection and management system.

School census guide

A guide for the 2023-24 academic year is now available [here](#).

Autumn census LA MS Access database

An MS Access database for the 2023 autumn census is available to local authorities. If you require a copy of the Access database, please complete a [service request form](#)

Notepad entries

Where validation queries are raised in COLLECT, an explanation will be required for these queries in the return level notes field within COLLECT. Please note that the department will require sufficient detail in these explanations to allow the queries to be accepted and returns authorised. A guide is available on the [school census website](#) providing examples of what would be regarded as an acceptable notepad entry for queries on the spring census. Within this workbook there are separate tables for school level queries, pupil level queries and term on

term queries. Please note that the examples within this document are only provided for illustrative purposes and should not be used as a simple 'copy and paste' into COLLECT – a relevant explanation for an individual school's circumstances should be provided. When providing notepad entries please include the query number along with the explanation as this will help us to process/ok them in a timely manner.

services.signin.education.gov.uk
DfE Sign-in
Use DfE Sign-in to login to services including Analyse School Performance, COLLECT, Key to Success and other services previously accessed through Secure Access.

GOV.UK
Complete the school census
Guidance for schools and local authorities on what data we need and how to submit it.

gov.uk
Complete the school census - Check your data - Guidance - GOV.UK

Information on validating your data, resolving errors and checking any funding reports that use your school census return. (15 kB)