



Spring 2024 School Census – General Error Guidance

In this document we will focus on errors and queries, the DfE’s expected responses, dates ranges for some of the DfE validations, and general guidance.

The DfE’s guidance on errors and queries is clear, they want all errors corrected and queries must be addressed either by entering a Return Level Note or by changing the data. The DfE will not authorise a census return where errors are corrected, and queries addressed. It is a waste of time for us to Approve your returns if these are not addressed, the DfE will reject them. Please see the DfE webpage explaining their approach: [Complete the school census - Check your data - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census-check-your-data). Although we the Local Authority can Approve your census return, this data is about your pupils and your school, and hence your funding and special needs. We do not know your school data better than you and it is your responsibility to address your errors and queries. If course, we are willing to work with to resolve but you must drive this.

Before going into detail about some of the errors experience by the maintained schools.

Dates: The TonT series of errors/queries compares values/counts from this census to the previous. For example: TonT14B checks the number of suspensions reported in this census compared to the previous return. This is what the DfE guidance states, but it is not quite so straightforward. If you take this return, it reports on suspensions for the period 2023-04-10 until 2023—12-31 and the Autumn Census reports on suspensions for the period 2023-01-01 to 2023-07-31.

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Termly suspensions and permanent exclusions	Termly suspensions and permanent exclusions	Termly suspensions and permanent exclusions
2023-01-01 to 2023-07-31	Easter Monday 2023-04-10 to 2023-12-31	2023-08-01 to Easter Sunday 2024-03-31

As you can see suspensions between the dates 2023-04-10 and 2023-07-31 are entered into both the Autumn and Spring returns. COLLECT uses this date range to validate the number of suspensions – it expects them to be the same. If they are not, then TonT14B is reported and either a correction of note is expected. It is possible for suspensions to be appealed and so that could be the source of the difference. If there is an error and the suspension should not have been recorded, then a simple note explaining this is acceptable to the DfE.

It is recommended that you research in the “school census 2023-24 acceptable notepad entries.xlsx” spreadsheet which will advise when a “TonT99A – Confirmed as correct” note is acceptable as compared to a full explanation.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for a full list of the dates.

Queries 4007Q and 4015Q – most schools are still encountering these queries. If you do not have any NTP or AP placements, then enter return level notes as appropriate:

- 4007Q – Confirmed as correct
- 4015Q – Confirmed as correct



are acceptable. These will be identified by the DfE software and automatically accepted. Responses in other formats such as “Q4007 – Confirmed as correct” will not be automatically accepted.

Queries – 564Q, 565Q, and 566Q. Quite a few schools are encountering the 564, 565, and 566 queries. These are because the number of place appeals are either blank or zero, the DfE expects that every school will have some level of appeals. If zero/blank is correct, then please enter one of the following notes as relevant:

- 564Q – School did not have any primary admission appeals.
- 565Q – School did not have any secondary admission appeals, and
- 566Q – School did not have any infant admission appeals.

2983Q – School Time

All schools except nurseries are asked to submit this information in the **spring census**.

Schools should provide the total compulsory time pupils spend in school, in a typical 5-day week. The number of hours must be recorded to 2 decimal places to the nearest 15 minutes (that is, 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). See [converting minutes to decimal minutes](#) for help converting hours to decimals.

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

This figure will be inclusive of breaks, 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 to 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. For all other schools such as all-through schools or middle schools, you should use a middle year group or age group, which represents an average week in your school.

Appendix 1

The following is copied from the DfE “2023-24_school_census_annexes_v1.0.xlsx” spreadsheet available on the DfE website.

Annex A Census collection dates and data periods

Autumn	Spring	Summer
Census day <ReferenceDate> 2023-10-05	Census day <ReferenceDate> 2024-01-18	Census day <ReferenceDate> 2024-05-16
Start of the autumn term (from 2023-08-01) to 2023-12-31	2024-01-01 to Easter Sunday 2024-03-31	Easter Monday 2024-04-01 to 2024-07-31
Free school meal eligibility	Free school meal eligibility	Free school meal eligibility
Periods of eligibility for free school meals with:	Periods of eligibility for free school meals with:	Periods of eligibility for free school meals with:
(a) An FSM eligibility start date and no FSM eligibility end date; or,	An FSM eligibility Start Date and no FSM Eligibility end date; or,	(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 2023-05-19 and up to and including the autumn census day (2023-10-05)	An FSM eligibility end date since the previous census, that is, on or after 2023-10-06 and up to including the spring census day (2024-01-18)	(b) An FSM eligibility end date since the previous census, which is on or after 2024-01-19 and up to including the summer census day (2024-05-16)
Learner support (bursary funding for 16- to 19-year-olds)	Learner support (bursary funding for 16- to 19-year-olds)	Learner support (bursary funding for 16- to 19-year-olds)
-	Any 16 to 19 bursaries awarded since the beginning of the 2023 to 2024 academic year (from 2023-08-01) to students who are either on roll or off roll on census day of 2024-01-18	Any 16 to 19 bursaries awarded since the beginning of the 2023 to 2024 academic year (from 2023-08-01) to students who are either on roll or off roll on census day of 2024-05-16
Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM) entity	Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM) entity	Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM) entity
Any Learner FAM assigned and hours, where applicable since the beginning of the 2023 to 2024 academic year (from 2023-08-01) to students who are either on roll or off roll on census day (2023-10-05)	Any Learner FAM assigned and hours, where applicable since the beginning of the 2023 to 2024 academic year (from 2023-08-01) to students who are either on roll or off roll on census day (2024-01-18)	Any Learner FAM assigned and hours where applicable, since the beginning of the 2023 to 2024 academic year (from 2023-08-01) to students who are either on roll or off roll on census day (2024-05-16)
Termly suspensions and permanent exclusions	Termly suspensions and permanent exclusions	Termly suspensions and permanent exclusions
2023-01-01 to 2023-07-31	Easter Monday 2023-04-10 to 2023-12-31	2023-08-01 to Easter Sunday 2024-03-31
Termly attendance	Termly attendance	Termly attendance
First half of the summer term	Start of the autumn term (from 2023-08-01) to 2023-12-31	2024-01-01 to Easter Sunday 2024-03-31
From Easter Monday 2023-04-10 to the Sunday 2023-05-28 before spring bank holiday	-	-
Summer second half term attendance	-	-
From spring bank holiday Monday 2023-05-29 to 2023-07-31	-	-
Alternative provision (AP) placement module	Alternative provision (AP) placement module	Alternative provision (AP) placement module
any current (open) AP placements and	any current (open) AP placements and	any current (open) AP placements and

any previous placements where the pupil has already left an AP placement between: 2023-05-18 to 2023-10-04 inclusive	any previous placements where the pupil has already left an AP placement between: 2023-10-05 to 2024-01-17 inclusive	any previous placements where the pupil has already left an AP placement between: 2024-01-18 to 2024-05-15 inclusive
Post-16 learning aims	-	-
For the current academic year covering the period from 2023-08-01 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 2022-08-01 to 2023-07-31 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	-	-



Appendix 2

Full list of the Errors/Queries in the current census returns as at 2024-02-01

Error / Query No	Error/Query Message	Error	Query	Total	DfE Guidance
1000	Pupil reconciliation does not match number of Pupils on Roll (SCHOOL – Part Time Not In = 9, CLASSES – Total of Home Pupils = 428; PUPILS – Total Number of Pupils = 428, Total Number of Pupils with Enrolment Status of C, M or S = 428)	1		1	Error - Data must be corrected
1010	Please check 10%+ of pupils not in class at selected time		1	1	Confirmation that the information has been confirmed by the school as being correct. Acceptable note entry 'confirmed as correct'.
1230	Please check: KS1 or Reception class with pupil/teacher ratio greater than 30		1	1	Confirmation is not acceptable. If the teacher is on PPA then it is important that this is recorded in the PPA field. If the class/es has pupil 'exceptions' please record under the relevant exception category. Failure to action this will result in the class/es being published as unlawful classes. If the large class/es do not have any exceptions or any teachers on PPA then a reasonable explanation must be provided. For example, the school maybe going through the process of employing an additional

					member of staff. Failure to comply will result in the school/LA being contacted by the DfE.
1270	Please check: no classes shown for an expected year group		1	1	Confirmation that the information has been confirmed by the school as being correct. Acceptable note entry 'confirmed as correct'.
1280	Please check classes shown for an unexpected year group		1	1	Confirmation is not acceptable. A reason must be provided why there are classes outside the year groups for the school.
1330	Please check: Free School Meals taken equals zero. Your school has one or more pupils who are eligible for free school meals.		1	1	Confirmation is not acceptable. Schools will be required to specifically confirm that the FSM information. Acceptable notepad entry 'No FSM eligible pupils had a school meal on census day'
1750	Please check: Percentage of pupils with periods of free school meal eligibility is high (greater than 45%)		1	1	Confirmation is not acceptable. Schools will be required to specifically confirm that the FSM information is correct. Acceptable note entry "The school has confirmed that they do have more than 45% of pupils who are entitled to a FSM".
1760	Please check: No pupils in the school eligible for free school meals during the period since the last Census		1	1	Confirmation is not acceptable. Acceptable note entry 'No pupils qualify for FSM'.
1853	Please check: A pupil aged 3 or 4 eligible for FSM would be expected to be in receipt of early years pupil premium with a basis for funding of 'RE' or 'RB'.		2	2	Confirmation is not acceptable. A reason must be provided why the basis for funding is not recorded as RE or RB if the pupil is recorded as FSM eligible.
1877	Please Check: 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.		5	5	Confirmation is acceptable. Acceptable notepad entry 'confirmed as correct'.
1881	Please check entry date Sessions possible indicate the pupil attended school during the term prior to this date. If the pupil left & was subsequently readmitted, the		2	2	Confirmation is not acceptable. Acceptable note entry should provide details that the pupil left in x term and then returned in x term.

	query will be accepted by DFE on condition a suitable explanatory notepad entry is provided				
1990	Please check: Pupil is in receipt of top-up funding but is not classed as having an EHC Plan?		6	6	Confirmation that the information has been confirmed by the school as being correct. Acceptable note entry 'confirmed as correct'.
2100	Please check: More FT nursery pupils on roll than number on nursery class records		1	1	Confirmation is not acceptable. A reason must be provided as to why there are more FT nursery pupils on roll than there are recorded in a nursery class.
2355	Please check: Pupil record with no address details		1	1	Confirmation is not acceptable. A reason must be provided as why no address details have been recorded.
2397	Company number is invalid for a school arranged alternative provision (AP) placement	2		2	Error - Data must be corrected
2485	Pupil attendance indicates they are excluded but no exclusion is recorded.		2	2	Confirmation is not acceptable. Acceptable notepad entry 'pupil has been excluded which is going to appeal, in the meantime they are not receiving any education provision'. Or alternatively the pupil received a suspension at the end of the previous term which extended into the next term and no education provision was provided'.
2491	Attendance code 'X' must only be used for non-compulsory school age children	5		5	Error - Data must be corrected
2983	School time missing		11	11	Error - Data must be corrected
3132	Where AP Setting Type is provided, Company number should also be provided		2	2	Confirmation that the AP setting does not have a company number.

4007	Please check: no pupils on roll are in receipt of National Tutoring Programme (NTP)		21	21	Confirmation that the information has been confirmed by the school as being correct. Acceptable note entry 'confirmed as correct'. If the information recorded is incorrect, please do not record aggregated pupil numbers in the notepad as these will not be actioned. Either resubmit your return with the correct data or amend the relevant pupils' records in COLLECT.
4008	Please check: no students on roll are in receipt of 16-19 Learner Funding and Monitoring		1	1	Confirmation that the information has been confirmed by the school as being correct. Acceptable note entry 'confirmed as correct'. If the information recorded is incorrect, please do not record aggregated pupil numbers in the notepad as these will not be actioned. Either resubmit your return with the correct data or amend the relevant pupils' records in COLLECT.
4015	Please check: no School Arranged Alternative Provision (AP) placements have been provided		41	41	Confirmation that the information has been confirmed by the school as being correct. Acceptable note entry 'confirmed as correct'.
5240	Please check: The number of hours at setting indicates that the pupil may be attending the school full time. However, they have been recorded as part-time		4	4	Confirmation will not be acceptable. A reason must be provided as it is expected that a pupil attending school for 25 hours a week would be full time. Acceptable note entry though the pupil attends school for 25 hours or more, they do not attend the school for 10 sessions a week'.
5540	There is at least one pupil with a SENUnitIndicator of true, but GIAS does not show your school as having a SEN Unit.	1		1	Error - Data must be corrected

564	Please check: Primary admission appeals figures should be provided and are expected to be greater than zero		14	14	Confirmation that your school did not have any primary admission appeals. Acceptable note entry 'school did not have any primary admission appeals'
565	Please check: Secondary admission appeals figures should be provided and are expected to be greater than zero		2	2	Confirmation that your school did not have any secondary admission appeals. Acceptable note entry 'school did not have any secondary admission appeals'
566	Please check: Infant admissions appeals figures should be provided and are expected to be greater than zero		12	12	Confirmation that your school did not have any primary admission appeals. Acceptable note entry 'school did not have any infant admission appeals'
TonT14C	Fewer suspensions have been reported in this census than the previous census for the same period Apr 10, 2023, to Jul 31, 2023 (Last collection = 1, current collection = 0)		1	1	Confirmation is not acceptable. Either a reason must be provided why less suspensions have been reported than was previously reported for the same period, or the data is incorrect and therefore must be amended
TonT1B	There are significantly more pupils than last collection. A reason must be provided for this increase. (Last collection = 623.00, current collection = 669.00)		2	2	Confirmation is not acceptable. A reason must be provided for the increase.
Grand Total		9	137	146	