



To: All Headteachers

**Children, Young People and
Education Directorate**

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Dear Colleague

We recognise the current situation continues to evolve with guidance coming out from Government on a regular basis which updates or amends that previously issued. We appreciate this is frustrating, time consuming and at times exhausting to keep on top of. I hope that our bringing information to your attention and on occasions summarising this is helpful.

On that note Government have announced that Aldi have joined the FSM voucher scheme for parents to use.

Today we changed the questions in the school returns and tried to capture the issues with FSM. Some schools have advised they had difficulty answering the original questions and we apologise for the confusion. This will be revisited to capture the correct information tomorrow. We are trying to understand what access to FSM there has been for eligible pupils since lockdown began, and more recently if schools and parents are now able to access the National scheme.

Government Guidance on Paying Contractors

The Department of Education has recently updated its guidance on its expectation of schools in continuing to pay their suppliers during the Coronavirus outbreak. We strongly recommend you refer to this guidance when discussing payment arrangements with your various suppliers. We are aware suppliers may be referring to the various guidance being issued and invoicing in a different way than normal to ensure they continue to be paid.

As the Government advice is evolving please ensure you familiarise yourself with the latest position so that you are continuing to make payments in line with the latest guidance.

The following document provides a summary of the financial support available to suppliers along with sector specific guidance for state-funded schools in

paying supply staff or other contingent workers (employed directly or indirectly by the school):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care>

The [Procurement Policy Note \(PPN\) 20/20](#) provides an overview of the approach all public sector organisations should be taking in dealing with suppliers. The DFE has again updated its guidance on how schools should pay their free school meal contractors in the event they are not providing a service.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools#school-food-contracts>

We have updated our advice in relation to agreeing payments to school meals contractors in light of these changes. We have also summarised the PPN 20/20 note.

https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/106892/How-to-manage-your-suppliers-during-COVID-19.pdf

Advice on claiming furloughed school staff costs from the HMRC Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

The HMRC portal went live yesterday for organisations to apply for funding through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for up to 80% of the cost of furloughed staff. The DFE also issued its guidance on when a school may consider furloughing staff and could then seek support through this scheme. This information can also be found under the heading Sector Specific guidance: state-funded schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care>

A step-by -step guide for employers on the information needed to claim for employee's wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme can also be found [here](#).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Dunkley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Matt Dunkley CBE
Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education