



UPDATED

Factsheet: A return to classroom based learning

On 28 April 2020, the Australian Government Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan MP, approved the option to allow non-government schools to bring forward their July 2020 recurrent school funding payments if they have a plan to fully re-open their schools by Monday, 1 June 2020.

This is in recognition that current expert health advice is that attendance at a school campus for education represents a very low risk to students, and that education is best delivered by professional teachers to students in the classroom.

For approved authorities that choose to access this option, the July 2020 payment will occur in two stages:

Schedule	Requirement	Payment
<p>Schedule 1</p> <p>Paid to state treasuries on 21 May 2020.</p>	<p>1. Approved authorities for non-government school(s) confirm they are providing a physical classroom learning environment from Term 2, 2020.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>2. All non-government schools have a plan to fully re-open all schools by 1 June 2020.</p>	<p>Half of the July 2020 payment.</p> <p>[62.5 per cent of the 2020 estimated school entitlement, less funds already paid for the year]</p>
<p>Schedule 2</p> <p>Paid to state treasuries on 9 June 2020.</p>	<p>1. All non-government schools commit to a target of at least 50 per cent of students attending classroom-based learning by 1 June 2020.</p>	<p>Half of the July 2020 payment.</p> <p>[75 per cent of the 2020 estimated school entitlement, less funds already paid for the year]</p>

Please note: Special consideration and exemptions may be provided for boarding schools, Indigenous schools, special schools or special assistance schools. Approved authorities should contact the Department of Education, Skills and Employment at schoolsassurance@dese.gov.au if they would like to discuss arrangements for these schools.

IMPORTANT

Due date extension

The due date to submit declarations has been extended from 5pm Friday, 1 May 2020 to midday Saturday, 2 May 2020.

Please note: A declaration must be received from the approved authority representative of each independent approved authority confirming compliance with a physical learning environment (Question 1) per the condition on approval imposed by the Minister for Education on 9 April 2020.

Checklist

To assist with expediting payments, please check the following frequent errors before submitting the declaration:

1. Please answer each question, even if you do not want funding brought forward, or you are not intending to fully re-open your school.
2. Your declaration has the AGEID number for your approved authority, not the school ID. You can check the approved authority AGEID can by logging into SchoolsHUB and it is the 'organisation AGEID' on the Manage Organisation screen.
3. The person signing the form is the '**approved authority representative**' for your organisation. The approved authority representative is generally your finance or business manager, or school principal. If you are unsure who your approved authority representative is please email schoolsassurance@dese.gov.au .

What does 'fully re-opened' mean?

For a school to be 'fully re-opened' it means that the physical classroom environment must be open and able to support education delivery for its students in a standard classroom setting. To 'fully re-open' a school does not mean full attendance by your student population.

Some adjustments may need to be made to the classroom to ensure current specific Australian Health Protection Principal Committee advice regarding schools and personal hygiene requirements are being met, as well as any other relevant arrangements for your particular school.

What should be in my plan?

The plan would outline how you intend to resume a normal classroom-based learning environment and, as such, is likely to be unique to your particular school.

You may want your plan to be scalable, allowing for an increase in the number of students attending each week until you are operating as you would have before COVID-19.

Some of the things that you might include in a plan are:

- outlining practices that adhere to good personal hygiene and other recommendations from your health or education authorities
- identifying resources to support personal hygiene between children, staff and parents/guardians
- updating staffing rosters based on new classroom set-ups
- considering curriculum plans that may involve both classroom-based learning and online learning
- communications with parents/guardians on return to class arrangements and any precautions that may be needed.

Do I need to submit my plan with the signed form?

No. The plan should be developed for your school and your particular situation and it does not need to be provided to the department for review or approval. The department may request to see a copy of the plan as part of routine assurance activities; however, this would only be discussed with you if it's required.

How can I commit to a 50 per cent attendance by 1 June 2020?

The plan is a roadmap for how your school will return to standard classroom-based learning, with any health or hygiene adjustments reflected.

To be eligible for the Schedule 2 advance payment, you should approach your plan with a target for half of your students to return on or by 1 June 2020. You may want to consider what this would look like, for example – how would you accommodate them, what would your teaching roster be, or what other arrangements would need to be in place?

If your plan is designed for that purpose, then you will be meeting the commitment to 50 per cent of students attending classroom-based learning by 1 June 2020.

If I can meet the requirements for Schedule 1, but not Schedule 2, can I still have that payment brought forward?

Yes. If you meet the requirements for Schedule 1 you will be able to bring forward the payment for that Schedule only.

What if I need extra time to fully re-open my school?

Payments are being brought forward to assist schools who are able to plan to fully re-open by 1 June 2020. If you are not able to plan to fully re-open by 1 June 2020 then you will receive your July 2020 recurrent funding payment in the usual payment run.

All non-government schools, at a minimum, must provide a physical classroom learning environment.

I operate more than one school, does this requirement apply to all of them?

Yes. To be eligible for Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 payments each of your schools will need to meet the requirements.

Special consideration and exemptions may be made for boarding schools, Indigenous schools, special schools or special assistance schools. Approved authorities should contact the Department of Education, Skills and Employment at schoolsassurance@dese.gov.au if they would like to discuss arrangements for these schools, or any other extenuating circumstances.

Where can I find more information?

Department of Education, Skills and Employment

You can call the Department's schools hotline on 1800 677 027, or send us an email at schoolsassurance@dese.gov.au.

Department of Health

For the latest health advice, information and resources, go to www.health.gov.au.

Services Australia

For information on Centrelink payments to support those affected by COVID-19, go to <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/affected-coronavirus-covid-19>.

The Treasury

For information on the economic response to COVID-19, including support for affected workers, businesses and the broader community, go to <https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus>.

National Coronavirus Helpline

Call the National Coronavirus Help Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

National Mental Health Commission

The Commission provides mental health information and support for individuals that are feeling concerned, anxious or uncertain due to the COVID-19 pandemic, go to <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au>.

24 hour, 7 day support lines

- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
- MensLine 1300 78 99 78
- Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467

For more information including mental health tips, online resources and programs, go to <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/>.