



# Autumn 2026 School Census

## Quick Guide – Secondary Phase

START HERE. This guide covers the Autumn 2026 census timetable, preparation, validation and submission process for secondary schools. Use the Supporting Guide for detailed data-item rules and the Checklist for final sign-off.

### QUICK GUIDE

Process, dates & submission

### SUPPORTING GUIDE

Detailed rules & definitions

### CHECKLIST

Final completion checks

**KEY DATES:** Census Day: Thursday 1 October 2026. Maintained secondary schools should submit their return to Hackney Education by Friday 2 October 2026.

## 1. Prepare the return

- Use the latest Autumn 2026 census version supplied by your MIS provider and read the provider guidance.
- Review and update pupil, school and Post-16 records before generating the return.
- Use the Supporting Guide for the detailed 2026/27 changes, funding-sensitive fields and collection periods.
- Generate a test return early and investigate errors, queries and unexpected changes.
- Compare the School Summary Report with your MIS and previous census figures.

## 2. 2026/27 – areas to review

These are signposts only; the detailed recording rules are in the Supporting Guide.

- Free School Meals – Targeted and Expanded FSM, annual verification and compulsory UK country/category fields.
- Kinship Care – new Autumn-only indicator for on-roll pupils.
- Managed Moves – new managed move information.
- Suspensions and permanent exclusions – new/revised cancellation and review information, plus updated code sets.
- Post-16 – check learning aims, qualification numbers, subject classification codes, ULNs and Learner Funding and Monitoring (FAM) data.

## 3. Validate and authorise

- Resolve errors and investigate all queries; add explanations where the data is correct.
- Review pupil numbers, FSM, SEN, attendance, exclusions, Post-16 and other funding-sensitive data for unexpected changes.
- Use the School Summary Report as the final data-quality check.
- The Headteacher must review and approve the return before submission.

## 4. Submit

**MAINTAINED SECONDARY SCHOOLS:** Census Day is Thursday 1 October 2026. Submit the census return to Hackney Education by Friday 2 October 2026 using the local submission route. Follow the submission instructions issued with the census communication.

Academies should follow their usual DfE submission arrangements.

## 5. Support

For MIS-specific issues, contact your software provider. Hackney Education cannot advise on the operation of individual MIS products.

[DfE – Complete the school census](#)

[DfE – School census data items 2026 to 2027](#)

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