

Education Maintenance Allowance Pupil Handbook



2016-17

Introduction

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a payment made every 2 weeks to eligible 16-19 year olds to help with the costs of further education.

If you have been awarded EMA please refer to this handbook. If you have any queries regarding the terms and conditions of your Education Maintenance Allowance you should be able to find answers here.

The handbook includes payment dates for the year and EMA procedures, including what to do if you are absent from school. Please follow instructions as required. If you need any further information please don't hesitate to contact the school.

Address:

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Omagh
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Tel: 028 8224 3567
Email: info@cbs.omagh.ni.sch.uk



What are the key features of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)?

EMA is a fortnightly payment of up to £60 for students who are aged 16 to 19 years.

Payments will be made directly to your bank account so if you haven't got one you will need to open an account before applying for EMA. If you need help or advice on setting up a bank account talk to your parent or carer, or visit your local bank. Please note that it may take a few weeks to set up a bank account, so you should allow for this before you send in your application.

If you require further information or advice please contact the EMA Customer Services Team on:
0300 200 7089

Application Packs are available from Reception.

Student Eligibility

Household income thresholds

Annual Household income	Weekly EMA entitlement
£20,500 or less	£30
Between £20,501 and £22,500 and there's at least 1 other dependant eligible for child benefit in your household, other than you	£30
Between £20,501 and £22,500 and there are no other dependants eligible for child benefit in your household, other than you	£0
£22,501 or more	£0

EMA Agreement

An EMA Agreement is a contract between you and the school. The conditions cover the school's aims and standards of conduct, and the need to meet all elements of your study programme – such as submitting homework and coursework on time.

There are two parts to an EMA Agreement: (*Appendix A*)

- Part 1: this sets the responsibilities of the student and the school with regard to the pupil's attendance at school.
- Part 2: this sets the performance and behaviour objectives and goals that a student must achieve to be entitled to receive bonus payments.

If you fail to meet any of the conditions of your EMA Agreement, your EMA weekly and/or bonus payment may be withheld.

The EMA Agreement should be discussed, completed and signed by you and the Form Teacher. This should be done as soon as possible after receipt. You cannot receive payment until the EMA Team have received a copy of your completed EMA Agreement from your school. Your EMA Agreement must be returned within two weeks from the date your EMA Award has been made.

The EMA Agreement is a "living" document, it should be referred to throughout the academic year and it may change as your circumstances vary.

Please remember that you will need to complete a new EMA Agreement for each academic year.

Absence

EMA is paid for 100% attendance in every timetabled class and payment can be withheld for any absence during that week. In general, if you are absent from school, your EMA may be withheld.

Guidelines for sickness absence follow:

1. Responsibility

- a. YOU are responsible for:-
 - i. Reporting your sickness to your school via your parent/guardian.
 - ii. Obtaining, completing and returning to school any documentation required to support sickness absences, appointments, work experience etc
 - iii. The original documentation should, in the first instance, be handed to your form teacher to update the rolls.
- b. Your school is responsible for:-
 - i. The recording of daily attendance for pupils.
 - ii. Retaining pupil attendance and absence data records.
 - iii. Retaining other relevant documentation and information (e.g. letters, medical and self-certification forms).

2. Sickness Absence Reporting Procedure

- a. EMA absence procedures are in addition to normal absence guidelines at school. A telephone call or letter from your parent/guardian is not enough to authorise EMA payment. If you miss school due to illness you should follow the following procedures:-
 - i. On your first day of sickness absence – your parent/guardian must contact the school office as soon as possible and advise the reasons for and estimated length of absence. The first school day of sickness is regarded as the first day of sickness absence.

- ii. If sickness absence continues for five school days or more – by no later than the sixth school day, you must request a medical certificate or letter from your doctor and send this to the school office. You must submit further medical certificates to cover any continued absence. If you have an on-going medical condition which may affect attendance, please contact the school for further information.

Recording Attendance

In order to meet the attendance requirement students must register each registration class and attend all lessons. The information below gives a broad guide as to what is considered to be an acceptable absence and what is not.

Absences which can be foreseen in advance

1. In situations where you anticipate being absent your parent/guardian will need to notify the school with a written explanation in your Personal Organiser.
 - a. Examples of legitimate reasons for absence include:
 - i. a medical appointment which cannot be arranged outside school hours
 - ii. a particular need to look after a family member or another person for whom the pupil has caring responsibilities.
 - iii. a religious holiday
 - iv. a visit to a University either to attend an open day or for interview, or a career related interview
 - v. a work experience placement which is an integral part of a learning programme, and for which the pupil does not receive a wage.
 - vi. participating in a significant extra-curricular activity, such as drama, music, sport or volunteering. Authorised absence should only be granted where the activity reflects a significant level of personal achievement (for example, taking part in a regional or national event), or for some other one-off event.
 - vii. attendance at a funeral
 - viii. severe transport disruption (for example, severe inclement weather)
 - ix. a driving test
 - x. study leave at the end of the academic year
 - b. The following reasons for absence would not generally be acceptable:
 - i. holidays
 - ii. part or full-time work
 - iii. leisure activities
 - iv. birthdays or similar celebrations
 - v. babysitting younger siblings
 - vi. shopping
 - vii. driving lessons

Payment Authorisation

EMA is authorised and processed on a weekly basis for payment to be made fortnightly. Therefore at 3.40pm each Friday the school look at the registers for the current week and withhold payment if a pupil:

- is not registered present for each timetabled period in the school day unless there is a legitimate reason for absence which has been authorised and an appropriate code entered into SIMS;

Once a pupil has accumulated four or more episodes of absence he shall not receive his EMA payment for any week in which he has a recorded absence.

Non-payment Notification

Pupils will be advised by their Form Teacher at Registration on the Tuesday of the following week if payment has been withheld for the previous week. Pupils have until Friday of the following week to provide a reason for any unauthorised absence. Payment will not be back dated if a reason has not been provided within 5 school days.

Bonus Payments

If learners meet the goals in the EMA Agreement, they will be entitled to a Bonus payment worth £100 in January and July of each year of study providing that their attendance has also reached the required level. The Contract Part 2 document sets out the learning goals to be met. This must be signed by all students if they are to be granted a bonus payment.

Standards of Behaviour

In order to receive weekly and bonus payments students are expected to behave in an appropriate manner and treat others with respect. Where behaviour is deemed to be unacceptable students will not receive their weekly payment and this also applies where a student has been suspended for any reason, either internally or externally.

Appeals

Payments are generally withheld due to attendance, lack of progress and/or conduct. If you have a question about a withheld weekly payment you must ask the school in the first instance. Relevant supporting evidence should also be provided at the time of appeal. The appeal must be made in writing within 1 calendar month of the stoppage.

Grounds for Appeal

An appeal can only be lodged if the applicant can demonstrate unfairness in the decision made.

Procedure

An appeal must be made in writing and should be addressed to EMA Appeals Team and submitted to the main office. Students may present their case accompanied by a parent, or someone of their choosing, who may state the case on the student's behalf. In the event that you are dissatisfied with the way your appeal has been dealt with, you may report this to the Vice Principal, Mr A White, who has responsibility for the school's attendance procedures.

Key Dates

- **30th September 2016** – To be eligible for backdated payments, to the start of term, you must apply before this date.
- **31st March 2017**– we must receive your application before this date for you to be eligible for EMA in academic year 2016/17.
- **31st August 2017**- You must have completed your application, sending all information and evidence, before this date for you to be eligible for EMA in academic year 2016/17.

Key Contacts



Form Teacher

Your Form Teacher processes any planned absences on the rolls.

Class Teacher

Your class teacher records the roll at the start of each class. It is important that if you are late to class that you get yourself signed in by your class teacher. You must always report to the class that you are timetabled. For example, when timetabled to study, don't assume the Study Supervisor knows where you are, you must get signed in at the Study venue and gain permission to leave via the teacher you will be meeting. If you feel as though you have been marked absent in error, please contact your class teacher immediately.

Miss Z Mallon

Miss Mallon advises the EMA authorities of the names of those who meet the criteria for eligibility for weekly attendance by processing what is on the roll. You can query with Miss Mallon why EMA was withheld to allow you to follow up with notes to your form teacher or to follow up with your class teacher. Miss Mallon is not able to change your attendance, she simply reports to EMA what is on your attendance record.

Payment Schedule

You will be paid the amount shown on your Award Letter on the dates below. EMA state that 'These payment dates are based on courses starting on 1 September 2016. If your course starts after this date, your payment dates may be different.' You can be confident you will still get your EMA payments every 2 weeks.

Payments are only made if you have signed your EMA Agreements and you are in attendance. You will not be paid if you are on holiday.

EMA Payment schedule

Expected payment date	Attendance for weeks:	No of payments (weeks)
19 th September 2016	5 th September	1
3 rd October 2016	12 th September - 23 rd September	2
17 th October 2016	26 th September - 7 th October	2
31 st October 2016	10 th October - 21 st October	2
14 th November 2016	24 th October - 28 th October	1
	31 st October - 4 th November	1 week holiday
28 th November 2016	7 th November - 18 th November	2
12 th December 2016	21 st November - 2 nd December	2
28 th December 2016	5 th December - 16 th December	2
9 th January 2017	19 th December - 23 rd December	1
	26 th December - 30 th December	1 week holiday
23 rd January 2017	2 nd January - 13 th January	2
6 th February 2017	16 th January - 27 th January	2
20 th February 2017	30 th January - 10 th February	2
6 th March 2017	13 th February - 24 th February	2
20 th March 2017	27 th February - 10 th March	2
3 rd April 2017	13 th March - 24 th March	2
18 th April 2017	27 th March - 7 th April	2
2 nd May 2017	10 th April - 14 th April	1
	17 th April - 21 st April	1 week holiday
15 th May 2017	24 th April - 5 th May	2
30 th May 2017	8 th May - 19 th May	2
12 th June 2017	22 nd May - 2 nd June	2
26 th June 2017	5 th June - 16 th June	2
10 th July 2017	19 th June - 30 th June	2
		Summer break

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) EMA Agreement Form 2016/17

This form is your Learning Agreement

Part 1

School/College name	<input type="text"/>
Student name	<input type="text"/>
Customer reference number	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Additional information	<input type="text"/>

Student Agreement

PLEASE READ THIS AGREEMENT CAREFULLY

We can only progress your application for EMA if your school or college has confirmed that you have signed and dated this agreement.

- I confirm that the information I have previously submitted is still correct and that I have notified any changes thereto in accordance with my original application terms.
- I understand that any attempt to dishonestly obtain EMA shall be treated as fraud and may result in criminal and/or civil proceedings against me.
- I understand that as part of the EMA the information which I have provided maybe subject to review as part of a sample check.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the Data Protection Statement available at www.nidirect.gov.uk/ema-returning-students

Consent to share

Tick this box to confirm that you consent to your school or college sharing your information with your parent(s) or guardian(s)

Course Details

Attendance Criteria

School/College checklist

This must be completed by the school/college to confirm that:

You have explained to the student how the EMA scheme works, including attendance and achievement monitoring.

You have explained to the student that they'll start getting their EMA payments when you confirm to EMA Customer Services that they've signed their EMA Agreement.

You will confirm that the student has signed their EMA Agreement to EMA Customer Services.

You will confirm the student's weekly attendance on their course to EMA Customer Services.

Student

Your full name
(in BLOCK CAPITALS)

Your signature Today's date

DAY	MONTH	YEAR
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

School/College

Your full name
(in BLOCK CAPITALS)

Your signature

Job Title Today's date

DAY	MONTH	YEAR
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

