



Northern Ireland Assembly

Education (Holiday Meal Payments) Bill

Notice of Amendments tabled on 7 October 2026 for Further Consideration Stage

New Clause

Leave out clause 1 and insert—

‘Arrangements for payments during holidays

- 1.—(1) The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 is amended as follows.
- (2) In the title of Article 59, for “Article 58” substitute “Articles 58 and 58A”.
- (3) In Article 59, in paragraph (1), after “Article 58” insert “, or under Article 58A(1) to (9),”.
- (4) After Article 58 insert—

“Payments over holidays in lieu of school meals

58A.—(1) The Authority must, in accordance with arrangements approved by the Department, make financial payments due to parents or guardians of qualifying pupils with respect to weekdays during periods of school holidays.

(2) The arrangements are to contain provision—

- (a) stating that payments due are payments determined according to the daily sum of the amount specified by the Authority to apply in lieu of free school meals, and
 - (b) defining qualifying pupils as such pupils of schools as are entitled to free school meals outside periods of school holidays.
- (3) The arrangements are to ensure that the daily sum applies irrespective of whether qualifying pupils are (or are ever) offered free school meals during periods of school holidays.
- (4) The arrangements are to depend on—
- (a) what free school meals outside periods of school holidays are generally understood to be, and
 - (b) the rules or processes through which pupils acquire or retain entitlement to free school meals.

- (5) The arrangements are to cover school holidays by reference to—
- (a) Summer (at least eight weeks in July and August),
 - (b) Halloween (one week),
 - (c) Christmas (two weeks),
 - (d) February mid-term (one week), and
 - (e) Easter (two weeks).
- (6) The arrangements are to require payments by the Authority to be in favour of nominated bank accounts or completed by alternative means for recipients with no bank accounts.
- (7) The arrangements are to require the Authority to—
- (a) keep records of payments made under the arrangements, and
 - (b) share the records with the Department.
- (8) The arrangements are to require the Authority to publish on the Authority’s website the amount of the daily sum as specified by the Authority.
- (9) The arrangements are to require the Authority to specify the amount of the daily sum as equal to either of these as selected by the Authority as appropriate for whichever category of case is under consideration—
- (a) the unit price of school meals (as known to the Authority), or
 - (b) the daily allowance for free school meals (as implemented by the Authority),
- and the arrangements are to enable the Authority to specify the daily sum as different amounts for different categories of case accordingly (including by reference in particular to nursery, primary or secondary education).”.’

Minister of Education

Clause 1, Page 1, Line 23

At end insert—

‘(1FA) The daily allowance specified under paragraph (1F) shall be equal to either of these as selected by the Authority as appropriate for whichever category of case is under consideration—

- (a) the unit price of school meals (as known to the Authority), or
- (b) the daily allowance for free school meals (as implemented by the Authority),

and the daily allowance may be specified under paragraph (1F) as different amounts for different categories of case accordingly (including by reference in particular to nursery, primary or secondary education).’

Minister of Education

New Clause

After clause 1 insert—

‘Updating of list of relevant holidays

1A.—(1) The list (including the lengths of time mentioned) in Article 58A(5) of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 may, for consistency with changes to school terms or the school calendar, be altered by regulations made by the Department of Education.

(2) Regulations under this section are subject to negative resolution.’

Minister of Education

New Clause

After clause 1 insert—

‘First holidays to count for payments

1B.—(1) The first period to count in the operation of Article 58(1A) of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 is as described (along with the start date) by regulations made by the Department of Education.

(2) Regulations under this section may not be made unless a draft of them has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, the Assembly.’

Minister of Education

As an amendment to the amendment inserting a new clause entitled First holidays to count for payments, tabled by the Minister of Education on 7 October 2026.

In subsection (1), leave out ‘58(1A)’ and insert ‘58A(1)’

Minister of Education

New Clause

After clause 1 insert—

‘Power to make ancillary provision

1C.—(1) The Department of Education may by regulations make such provision (of any kind) as the Department considers necessary or expedient for the purpose of or in connection with Article 58A(1) to (9) of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.

(2) Regulations under this section may—

- (a) include provision to which that Article is (to any extent) subject, or
- (b) modify (in any way) any Northern Ireland legislation or Act of Parliament.

(3) Regulations under this section may not be made unless a draft of them has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, the Assembly.’

Minister of Education

Clause 2

Leave out clause 2

Minister of Education

Clause 3

Leave out clause 3

Minister of Education

Clause 4, Page 3, Line 4

Leave out ‘section comes into operation on the day after the Act receives’ and insert ‘Act comes into operation on the day after the day of’

Minister of Education

Clause 4, Page 3, Line 6

Leave out subsection (3)

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Clause 4, Page 3, Line 9

Leave out subsection (4)

Minister of Education

Clause 4, Page 3, Line 12

Leave out subsection (5)

Minister of Education