

# Education Maintenance Allowance

## Pupil Handbook for Session 2025 to 2026



This handbook has been produced to provide you with a handy source of reference for any Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) issues/questions you may have. Please refer to the handbook and if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the EMA team via the details below.

Address: EMA Team, Finance Support Team, Finance and Business Support, Perth and Kinross Council, 2 High Street, Perth, PH1 5PH

Telephone: 01738 476356

Email: [EMA@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:EMA@pkc.gov.uk)

Please note: Scottish Ministers reserve the right to amend the terms of the scheme at any time.

### Helpful links

[Education Maintenance Allowance – Perth and Kinross Council](#)

[Apply for or renew an Education Maintenance Allowance \(EMA\) – mygov.scot](#)

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## **1 Eligibility**

An EMA may be granted to any eligible young person who:

- was born on or between 1 March 2006 and 28 February 2010 and either
- remains in full-time education within the Perth and Kinross Council boundary beyond the statutory leaving age, or
- is on a Learning Agreement (YP)

If you are aged 16 years on or before 30 September 2025, you may be eligible for an EMA from August 2025. If the application is received after 30 September 2025 the award will commence from the date of receipt of the application.

If the young person is aged 16 years on or between 1 October 2025 and 28 February 2026, they can submit their application prior to their 16th birthday, however if their application is successful, they will not receive payment until January 2026. If the application is received after 28 February 2026 the award will commence from the date of receipt of the application.

For College students, EMA information and application forms will be available direct from the college. Perth and Kinross Council only deals with EMAs for students staying on at school or have a Next Step Coach and are attending a base.

The cut-off date for receiving new applications from students for session 2025 to 2026 is 31 March 2026. If the documents have not been received within the three-week timescale, the applicant may be required to re-apply and this may result in the loss of EMA payments.

### **1.1 Household income**

EMA awards will be payable according to the total taxable income of your household.

There are 2 categories:

- for households with one dependent child (the applicant), the income threshold is £24,421
- for households with more than one dependent child, the income threshold is £26,884

We require evidence of your household income, along with some other evidence to support your application. Please see section 2 for a list of documentation we may ask for.

## **1.2 Residency**

There are different arrangements in place for different immigration statuses. Please contact us to confirm you are eligible with your current residency status.

## **2 Evidence**

Please see below a list of documentation we may ask you for and why.

- A copy of your birth certificate or passport – if you are attending an independent secondary school, base, or are home schooled.
- A copy of your learning agreement (only required if you are attending a base, for example, Scott Street).
- A copy of your latest Council Tax bill – if you are living in a lone parent household.
- If there are other dependent children within the household attending college/university, a copy of their acceptance letter/SAAS letter to confirm their place.
- Tax Credit Award Notice – if you are in receipt of tax credits.
- Universal Credit Journal x 3 months – if you are in receipt of universal credits.
- P60 or month 12/week 52 payslip – if you are in employment. If both are unavailable, please ask us for a Part D1/2 form.
- Tax Return/SA302 – if you are self-employed. If these are unavailable, please ask us for a Part B1/2 form (the part B1/2 form will only allow a Provisional Award to be made until Christmas 2024. An SA302 is required to finalise the award – you may need to request your SA302 from HMRC).
- If you are not in employment and don't receive tax credit or universal credit, we require a P60U or correspondence from your local benefits office confirming which benefits you receive(d), how much you receive and when the payments started. If these are unavailable, please ask us for a part C1/2 form.
- Child Benefit Letter - if you have more than one dependent child in the household and they are not in further education. If you have submitted a TCAN, this information will be detailed.
- Evidence of any other taxable income such as: UK Pensions (including occupational and private), savings interest, property income, capital treated as income, trust income or foreign interest.

### 3 Applying for EMA

You can [apply for EMA online](#).

You will be asked to sign up for a mygovscot account. For troubleshooting/forgotten passwords please [refer to the mygovscot website](#) for assistance.

The application will go through all the questions and ask for relevant evidence as required, if you do not have the evidence to hand when applying, please tick the 'Tick this box to indicate you will provide evidence at a later date' box.

**Please note we require all evidence to be sent into us within 3 weeks of your application, failure to do so may result in loss of your EMA award.**

You can send your evidence by replying to the email that we sent you or you can email it directly to [EMA@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:EMA@pkc.gov.uk).

Once you have submitted your application, your case reference number will pop up on the screen. Please keep note of this and use in any correspondence with the EMA Team, this allows us to source your application.

If you are having issues with the application or require assistance, please contact us via the details provided on page 1.

Once your application is submitted, please note you may not receive any communication from the EMA team immediately. We will work our way through the applications in date order and contact you in due course.

### 4 Learning Agreement or Learning Agreement (for Young Person)

Learning Agreements are for school/home-educated students.

- For your EMA payment to commence, your school must complete and sign a Learning Agreement. This details the courses and number of hours that you have agreed to attend education.

Learning Agreement (for Young Person) is for a young person with a Next Step Coach at a base/centre.

- Learning Agreement (for Young Person) must be completed by your next step coach. This details a description of your activities. You must also sign this document to indicate that you understand what is expected.

**Failure to adhere to the terms and conditions of the Learning Agreement may result in non-payment of the award.**

The Learning Agreement or Learning Agreement (for Young Person) is a “living document” and should be referred to throughout the year. You must discuss any changes in your course or the course content with your guidance teacher/Next Step Coach. A new Agreement must be completed for every change that takes place.

You will need to complete a new Learning Agreement or Learning Agreement (for Young Person) for each academic year.

## **5 Absence**

EMA is paid when 100% attendance is achieved of the agreed timetable. Payment can be withheld for an unauthorised absence during that week. In general, if you are absent, your EMA may be withheld. Guidelines for sickness absence are as follows.

### **5.1 Responsibility**

You are responsible for:

- reporting your sickness absence to your school/base EMA contact
- completing and returning your sickness self-certification form within a week of your return
- providing medical certificates where applicable (see section 5.3)

Your school/base is responsible for:

- the recording of daily attendance
- authorising or stopping payments
- retaining attendance and absence data records
- retaining other relevant documents and information (such as letters, medical and self-cert forms)

### **5.2 Authorised/Unauthorised absences**

Reasons for absence are based on the Perth and Kinross Council Attendance/Absence Guidelines (see Section 2.8, i.e. code, description, and category). The EMA Payment/Non-Payment column defines where payment will or will not be paid.

### **5.3 Medical certificates and absence due to ill health**

You are required to produce documentary evidence that you are unfit to attend your school/ placement due to ill health. You can use sickness self-certification forms for the first five days’ absence (but no more than three sickness absence periods) per

term/placement. Fourth and subsequent sickness absence periods during the term/placement will require a medical certificate from your doctor, or a letter from a parent confirming the absence, as will any sickness absence which continues for five consecutive school/working days or more. Fourth and subsequent sickness absences may not receive payment, even if evidence is handed in. This is at the discretion of school/base. The academic year is defined as three terms per year (normally August to December, January to March and April to June).

#### **5.4 Sickness absence reporting**

In the event of sickness absence, you must report your inability to attend in accordance with the following procedure:

- On your first day of sickness absence – you must notify your school office/base as soon as practicable but in any event, by no later than lunchtime and advise of reasons for, and the estimated length of, absence. If you do not give an estimated length of absence, you must notify the school office/base before lunchtime every day of your absence. The first school day or working day of sickness is regarded as the first day of sickness absence.
- On your return to school/work – you must obtain and complete a sickness self-certification form and return it to the school office/base within one week. You and your parent/carer (if appropriate) must sign the form.
- If sickness absence continues for more than five school/working days – by no later than the sixth school/working day, you must obtain a medical certificate from the doctor or a letter from your parents and send to the school office/base. You must submit further medical certificates/letters to cover any continued absence. The medical certificate may have to be provided at your own expense.
- If the doctor's surgery will not issue a medical certificate – your parent/carer should write to the school/base confirming that you attended the surgery but that they would not issue a medical certificate. Also, if appropriate, the tear-off page of any prescription issued should be enclosed with the letter. This will then be treated as an appeal by Education and Learning (see Appeals 3.3).

A periodic medical absence that extends over a period of three weeks will be the subject of review. Individual circumstances will be considered.

Your failure to comply with the requirements for reporting sickness may result in the EMA being suspended without notice.

## 5.5 Late attendance for school students

Late attendance is defined as late or very late.

**Late** is if you arrive after the start of registration but before 10.30am for morning attendance. You will be allowed one late attendance per week. Your payment will not be issued for any week when you are late more than once.

**Very late** is if you arrive after 10.30am for morning attendance. Your payment will not be issued for any week when you have a very late attendance.

EMA payments may be considered where the pupil is late due to transport problems. Persistent lateness will be dealt with via the disciplinary procedure.

## 5.6 Late attendance for Learning Agreement (for Young Person)

Late attendance is defined as late or very late.

**Late** is if you arrive after the agreed start time but within one and a half hours of the start time. You will be allowed one late attendance per week. Your payment will not be issued for any week when you are late more than once.

**Very late** is if you arrive one and a half hours or more after the agreed start time. Your payment will not be issued for any week when you have a very late attendance.

EMA payments may be considered where the pupil is late due to transport problems.

## 5.7 Study leave (school students only)

Your school will decide study leave during exam times. Official study leave will not affect EMA payments, but you must ensure you are not absent outwith these dates – for example if study leave is confirmed as starting on a Wednesday and ending on a Thursday, you must have full attendance for the Monday, Tuesday preceding and the Friday following. Absence outwith official study leave dates will result in nonpayment for the relevant week. Should you not attend your exams during the period, payment will be withheld.

If you are in S6 you will have completed your course after your exam period therefore your EMA payments will stop.

Study leave is not applicable to Learning Agreement (for Young Person) applicants.

## **5.8 Criteria for attendance/absence – EMA Payment/Non-Payment**

View the [criteria for attendance/absence](#) on our website.

Note: These are primarily for school students however they will be used for assessment of young people on Learning Agreement (for Young Person) where applicable. Holidays taken by school students within term time will not be considered as authorised absence.

## **6 Appeals**

### **6.1 Appeals – Applications**

If you are refused EMA support and you disagree with the decision, you may lodge an appeal using the following process:

- You must lodge an appeal within 1 calendar month of the date of the email notifying you of the decision.
- You must lodge an appeal in writing and send it to the Finance Support Team, Education and Learning, who will consider any additional evidence provided by you. You must state the reason for the appeal and include any relevant additional evidence or information, such as clarification of household income, written confirmation from employers if available, or a benefits statement if not already provided.

All such evidence will be considered confidential under the terms of the Data Protection Act and treated accordingly.

Where the Council considers there are circumstances on which they need advice, they will refer to the EMA Unit at the Scottish Government.

The Appeals Process will take no longer than 14 days including any Scottish Government input/involvement. However, it is possible that some appeals may raise issues of government policy which may require more time to resolve. If this is the case, you will be advised of the delay in writing.

You will be notified of the result in writing, and the Council will record the decision.

Additional evidence or copies of documents provided by you will be stored with the original application information in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act. Where your appeal is successful, you will receive an email of award, and a Learning Agreement will be sent to your school. Where you are successful with an appeal, you will be notified of the date that back payments will be paid from.

Where an appeal is not successful you will be notified of the decision in writing.



## **6.2 Appeals – Stoppage of weekly allowance**

Where the issue cannot be resolved within the school/base, you should lodge an appeal and send it to the Finance Support Team, Education and Learning, in writing within 1 calendar month of the stoppage.

## **6.3 Appeals – General**

Appeals against any decision must be lodged in writing to the EMA Team at Perth and Kinross Council within one calendar month of that decision.

Perth and Kinross Council maintain an Appeals Register which details information surrounding EMA appeals, the date of their resolution, and their outcome.

This information will be made available to the EMA Unit at the Scottish Government on an annual basis to enable monitoring of the effectiveness of the programme.

All details are to be considered confidential under the terms of the Data Protection Act and treated accordingly.

## **6.4 Complaints**

Formal complaints about the EMA programme or EMA policies (such as reasons other than EMA applications, support and stoppage of awards) will be dealt with in accordance with Perth and Kinross Council formal complaints procedures. Please contact us if you require details.

The information will be recorded in a Complaints Register and forwarded to the EMA Unit at the Scottish Government on an annual basis to enable monitoring of the effectiveness of the national programme.

## **6.5 Change in circumstances**

You should notify the EMA Team immediately by emailing [EMA@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:EMA@pkc.gov.uk) or in writing (via post) of any change in you or your family's circumstances, for example:

- you change address
- your bank account details change
- you leave or change school/base
- you change your course or course content
- your household income changes

**Failure to notify us of any changes may result in the non-payment of the award.**

## **7 How we use your personal information**

The information provided by you will be used by Perth and Kinross Council to establish entitlement to Educational Maintenance Allowance. The information may be shared for the same purposes with public bodies, including neighbouring Councils or other organisations which handle public funds.

The Council may check information provided by you, or information about you provided by a third party, with other information held by us. We may also get information from certain third parties or share your information with them to verify its accuracy, prevent or detect crime, protect public funds or where required by law.

For further information, please visit our website [www.pkc.gov.uk/dataprotection](http://www.pkc.gov.uk/dataprotection) or email [DataProtection@pkc.gov.uk](mailto:DataProtection@pkc.gov.uk) or telephone 01738 477933.

## **8 Disciplinary Policy**

In certain circumstances, disciplinary action may be taken, such as misconduct, persistent lateness, abuse of sickness absence regulations.

There are two possible ultimate penalties:

- stopping weekly payment
- stopping total award

Your weekly payment may be stopped when an oral warning has been issued to you.

Your award can only be stopped completely after an oral warning, written warning and final warning have been issued to you.

## **9 Payment between Summer exams and holidays (school students only)**

If you intend to return to school after the summer holidays, fortnightly payments will be made up to the end of the academic year provided you attend school and adhere to the EMA terms and conditions.

If you leave school on completion of your exams, you will only be eligible to receive an EMA until the week of the last SQA exam.

## 10 Terms and conditions

The terms and conditions to which you agreed when applying and signing for EMA are set out below.

Applications can only be accepted where the applicant has reached the statutory school leaving age:

- if the applicant is legally allowed to leave school after Summer (full award, they should apply from the preceding June)
- if the applicant is legally allowed to leave school after Christmas (part award), they should apply from the preceding December

If an application is received with documentation missing, correspondence will be sent requesting said documents. These documents must then be returned within three weeks. If the documents have not been received within the three-week timescale the applicant will be required to reapply, and this may result in the loss of EMA payments.

In extreme circumstances, such as parental redundancy, awards can be based on current incomes and a provisional award can be made.

Successful applicants must have a Learning Agreement completed by their school or Learning Agreement (for Young Person) and adhere to the terms of the Agreement or EMA payments will be stopped immediately without notice.

Successful applicants must attend 100% of the agreed timetable with the learning centre or their placement for an agreed number of hours.

Successful applicants will only receive payment for the weeks where the agreed timetable with the learning centre is 100% attendance (and/or authorised absence) has been maintained.

Successful applicants may be allowed up to five days sickness self-certification (but no more than three sickness absence periods) within an academic term and must adhere to the absence policy. Any other absences must be covered by a medical certificate, or a letter for a parent confirming the absence, and authorised by the school on the appropriate adjustment form. A medical certificate may have to be provided at the applicant's own expense.

- If the doctor's surgery will not issue a medical certificate, a letter from the successful applicant's parent/carer confirming a medical certificate was requested but refused, should be submitted. Also, if appropriate, the tear-off page of any prescription issued

should be enclosed with the letter. This will then be treated as an appeal by Perth and Kinross Council (see Terms and conditions number 16).

Successful applicants must notify the school office/base as soon as practicable of sickness absence but in any event, by no later than lunchtime on each day of absence and advise of reasons for and estimated length of absence. If it is a long-term absence, the school/base must be notified on the first day of absence of the reason for and estimated length of absence. On return to school/base, the applicant should obtain and fill in a sickness self-certification form and return it to the school/base within 3 working days or payment may be suspended.

Payment may be stopped for late attendance. Late attendance for school students is defined as late or very late:

- Late is arriving after start time but before 10.30am for morning attendance – weekly payment will not be issued for that week if 2 or more late arrivals are incurred.
- Very late is arriving at school after 10.30am for morning attendance – weekly payment will not be issued for that week if any “very late” arrivals are incurred.

Late attendance for young people on Learning Agreement (for Young Person) is defined as late or very late:

- Late is arriving after start time but within one and a half hours of the start time – weekly payment will not be issued for that week if 2 or more late arrivals are incurred.
- Very late is arriving more than one and a half hours after the agreed start time – weekly payment will not be issued for that week if any “very late” arrivals are incurred.

Payment may be stopped for poor conduct. The school/base can contact Education and Learning, and request that the EMA payments be stopped for that young person.

Payment may be stopped for poor progress. EMA payments can be stopped if the school/base advises that the applicant has not made progress with their studies/placement.

Payments to successful applicants will be made on a 2-weekly basis (unless notified otherwise) and will be paid directly into the applicant’s bank account. EMA awards will not be paid into the bank account of any other person.

Successful applicants should check with their own bank in the first instance to ascertain when/what EMA payments have been paid into their bank account for the relevant period.

Successful applicants who call to make enquiries must provide their EMA number and/or date of birth before information can be provided.

Successful applicants agree that any EMA overpayment can be recouped in full or in part from subsequent EMA payments.

Appeals against any decision must be lodged in writing to Education and Learning within 1 calendar month of that decision.

A new application will have to be submitted at the appropriate time for each year of academic study.

Scottish Ministers reserve the right to amend the terms of the scheme at any time.

## 11 EMA payment timetable 2025 to 2026 – Perth and Kinross Council schools/bases and centres

Payment date for ALL students	Payment week 1 (w/b)	Payment week 2 (w/b)	Number of weeks payable	Comment
5 Sep 2025		18 Aug 2025	1	
19 Sep 2025	25 Aug 25	1 Sep 2025	2	
3 Oct 2025	8 Sep 2025	15 Sep 2025	2	
17 Oct 2025	22 Sep 2025	29 Sep 2025	2	
31 Oct 2025	6 Oct 2025	13 Oct 2025	1	October holidays – <b>only one week due</b>
14 Nov 2025	20 Oct 2025	27 Oct 2025	1	October holidays – <b>only one week due</b>
28 Nov 2025	3 Nov 2025	10 Nov 2025	2	
12 Dec 2025	17 Nov 2025	24 Nov 2025	2	
26 Dec 2025	1 Dec 2025	8 Dec 2025	2	
9 Jan 2026	15 Dec 2025	22 Dec 2025	1	Christmas holidays – <b>only one week due</b>
23 Jan 2026	29 Dec 25	05 Jan 26	1	Christmas holidays – <b>only one week due</b>

<b>Payment date for ALL students</b>	<b>Payment week 1 (w/b)</b>	<b>Payment week 2 (w/b)</b>	<b>Number of weeks payable</b>	<b>Comment</b>
06 Feb 2026	12 Jan 26	19 Jan 26	2	
20 Feb 2026	26 Jan 26	02 Feb 26	2	
06 Mar 2026	09 Feb 26	16 Feb 26	2	
20 Mar 2026	23-Feb-26	02 Mar 26	2	
03 Apr 2026	09 Mar 26	16 Mar 26	2	
17 Apr 2026	23 Mar 26	30 Mar 26	2	
01 May 2026	06 Apr 26	13 Apr 26	0	Easter holidays – <b>no entitlement</b>
15 May 2026	20 Apr 26	27 Apr 26	2	
29 May 2025	04 May 26	11 May 26	2	
12 Jun 2025	18 May 26	25 May 26	2	
26 Jun 2026	01 Jun 26	08 Jun 26	2	
10 Jul 2026	15 Jun 26	22 Jun 26	2	
24 Jul 2026	29 Jun 26		1	Summer holidays – <b>only one week due</b>

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

BSL users can contact us via Contact Scotland BSL, the online British Sign Language video relay interpreting service. Find out more on the [Contact Scotland BSL website](#).