Education Portal – Eligibility Codes

Contents

Introduction

This guide explains how to understand a Working Parent Entitlement Eligibility Code, how to check the validity of a code and how to audit codes.

Working Parent Entitlement

3&4 Year Olds

All children are eligible for 15 hours the term after their 3rd birthday. Some families are eligible for an additional 15 hours (this is the Working Parent Entitlement), to make up a 30 hours place. The 30 hours are made up of:

Universal Hours	The first 15 hours all children are entitled to
Extended Hours	Additional 15 hours, eligible families are entitled to

Children under 3

The Working Parent Entitlement is being expanded to children under 3. Eligible children will be able to access up to 15 hours per week from the term after they turn 2 from April 2024 and the term after they turn 9 months from September 2024. **There is no universal offer for children under 3.**

Claiming funding - important information

Children should not be allowed to start in a Working Parent Entitlement place without a valid code. It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure children have a valid code before they start a. There are no exceptions to code validity, **you will not be able to claim funding for these hours if a child does not have a valid code.**

The Education Portal is designed to:

- check codes are valid before children start attending
- keep track of the status of codes (the code audit).

It is important that:

1. Codes are checked to make sure they are valid before a child starts to access any Working Parent Entitlement Hours
2. Codes are monitored to ensure you know which ones are valid for future terms.

If you are delivering 15 hours or less to a 3&4 year old it is very important that you establish the type of hours the parent wants to claim at your setting, Universal or Working Parent Entitlement

If you are delivering universal hours only, no code is required. If you are delivering Working Parent Entitlement hours the parent will need to give you their eligibility code for validation before they take up the place. For example; if a child is having 15 universal hours at school nursery you will need a code to make a claim for the additional 15 Working Parent Entitlement hours at your setting.

The Parent Contract can be used to collect this information and you should ensure all parents accessing any part of the early education entitlements at your setting have signed the contract.

Type of hours	Code required?
Universal	No
Universal & Working Parent	Yes
Working Parent	Yes

Understanding an eligibility code

Families that meet the criteria for Working Parent Entitlement Hours are issued with an 11 digit code. This is called the 'eligibility code.' Eligibility is assessed by HMRC, who also issue the codes. Families apply for this through the Childcare Choices Service, which is part of HMRC.

Codes must be validated by providers on The Education Portal **before** a child starts their place.

To validate a code, 3 pieces of information are required:

1. Eligibility 2. Child Date of Birth 3. Parent National Insurance Number	It is important this information is correct; this will determine the outcome of the check. Use the Parent Contract to collect all the information you need to check eligibility codes, including written permission from the parent / carer.

There are 3 dates attached to a code, these dates are important as they determine **when** the code is valid **from and to**. The Portal will identify if the code is valid based on these dates.

1. Validity Start Date	This is the date the code was issued to the parent by HMRC.
2. Validity End Date	This is the date by which the parent must reconfirm their eligibility with HMRC. If no action is taken the parent will fall out of eligibility.
3. Grace Period End Date	This is the date to which the child will be guaranteed a 30 hours place, even if the parent falls out of eligibility.

There are 2 checks required on the dates attached to the code to see when it is valid **from and to:**

1. What is the Validity Start Date?

Between	Valid from
1 April – 31 August	1 September (Autumn)
1 September- 31 December	1 January (Spring)
1 January - 31 March	1 April (Summer)

2. What is the Grace Period End Date?

	NOT Valid From
31-August	1 September (Autumn)
31-December	1 January (Spring)
31-March	1 April (Summer)

Eligibility

Families are issued with codes when they meet the eligibility criteria. For the code to be used to claim Working Parent Entitlement Hours, it must be valid for the term. The Education Portal enables providers to check the validity of a code. Families can apply for a code up to 16 weeks prior to the child's eligible birthday.

A code can be used to claim funding from the point it becomes valid which is the 1 January, 1 April, 1 September after the child's 3rd birthday **and** the family receives the eligibility code.

Example: A child turning 3 in summer term with a code issued on 1 August would be eligible for Working Parent Entitlement hours from 1 September (autumn term). A child turning 3 in summer term with a code issued on 1 September would be eligible from 1 January (spring term).
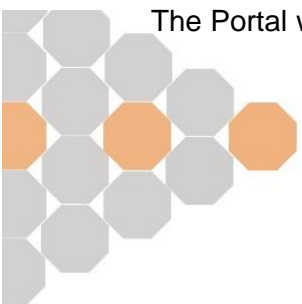
Grace Period

The Grace Period is the date to which a code will remain valid, even if no action is taken to reconfirm eligibility. This is in place to support changes of circumstances and where parents / carers forget to reconfirm. Children are unable to start a Working Parent Entitlement place in the Grace Period, so it is important that if a code is applied for very early the parent reconfirms as instructed by HMRC, otherwise the code will fall into it's Grace Period.

Example: A child is accessing Working Parent Entitlement hours in summer term. Their code has the start date 23 March, end date 14 June and grace period end date 31 August. The code will fall into the Grace Period on 14 June if the parent / carer does not reconfirm. The code will remain valid but action must be taken by 31 August for the code to be valid for the next term. It cannot be used to claim extended hours after 31 August if not reconfirmed.

Provider Responsibilities:

The Education Portal is available for providers to check codes and ensure that funding can be claimed for any extended hours parents / carers are intending to use. Providers check codes prior to the child starting the place and then use the code to make a claim for hours on the headcount. The Portal will then audit all valid codes saved in the live register. The Portal should be checked to

see which codes (if any) are in the Grace Period. It is good practice to remind parents / carers to reconfirm with HMRC.

It the provider responsibility to; check codes to ensure children do not start in a Working Parent Entitlement place without a valid code and use the code to claim extended hours on the termly headcount.

Parent Responsibilities

Parent / Carers apply for the Working Parent Entitlement via the Childcare Choices Service which is part of HMRC. Their eligibility is checked and if the criteria is met they will be issued with an eligibilty code. To maintain eligibility parents / carers must reconfirm their eligibility with HMRC approximately every 3 months. Specific dates and information about this are given to families directly, the reconfirmation process is between the family and HMRC. Providers are unable to do this on behalf of the family.

It is the parent responsibility to: Apply for the code; give the code to their provider for validation; reconfirm eligibility.

Checking the validity of an eligibility code

To validate a code on The Education Portal you will need:

- Written consent from child's parent / guardian confirming that you have permission to use their details. This can be obtained by using the Parent Contract.

- The eligibility code. The code is 11 digits long and usually start with 50, but occasionally may start with 11 or 400

- The child date of birth

- The parent National Insurance Number

There are 2 ways to check a code in The Education Portal:

1. Using the Ad-Hoc code checker on the Dashboard Page

2. In the child record on the Live Register

Code checking works by The Portal contacting the Eligibility Checking System provided by The Department for Education. The check uses the child's date of birth, parent national insurance number and eligibility code to identify the status of the code and the dates attached to it. The dates are then used to determine validity.

Dashboard Ad-Hoc Check

Use this function to quickly check a code at any time. For Example: prior to the start of term if the child is not yet age eligible for funding.

Step 1: Go to the 'Dashboard' page (click on the Early Years Tab at the top of the page and select 'Dashboard')

Step 2: Go to the 'online eligibility checks' section at the bottom of the page

Step 3: 3. Click the ' age/ eligibility' checks button

Step 4: Follow the steps to complete the check. Insert thee child date of birth and then select the 'Working Parent Eligibility Check' option to check the code.

Insert the code details and click the blue 'check eligibility' button.

A valid check will be displayed as a green message, you will see the dates attached to the code. The below example confirms the child is eligible to claim the Working Parent Entitlement from 1 April, because their code is valid from 25 January. I.e. They are eligible from the term after the code was issued.

✔ This child will be eligible to claim working parent entitlement. The Eligibility Code is valid from 25-Jan-2024 to 13-May-2024. Their grace period ends on 31-Aug-2024.
They will be eligible to start claiming from the beginning of the term following them becoming 2 years old on 21-Apr-2023 (which begins on 01-Apr-2024).

Child's Date Of Birth *	21-04-2021
Parent/Guardian's NI number *	
Eligibility code *	
Do you hold signed authorisation from the parent to perform this check? *	● Yes ○ No

If the check fails you will receive an error message displayed in red. Read the message carefully. Check you have entered the correct details. If the child date of birth, national insurance number or eligibility code are incorrect, the result will be invalid.

✗ Eligibility could not be determined using the details provided

|	
Child's Date Of Birth *	21-04-2021
Parent/Guardian's NI number *	
Eligibility code *	
Do you hold signed authorisation from the parent to perform this check? *	● Yes ○ No

Live Register Check

Every child you want to claim Working Parent Entitlement Hours for must have a valid code attached to their record on the Live Register you will not be able to claim any hours without this. It is recommended codes are checked as soon as you set the child record up on your register. However, this is not always possible (for example if you have not yet been given the code) so you can save the details you enter into the Live Register and update them at a later date.

To complete a code check you must input the eligibility code and the parent's national insurance number into the Parent /Guardian Details section. You should also ensure the child date of birth is correct. The code cannot be validated without this information.

Step 1: Go to the 'Dashboard' page, click on the Early Years tab at the top of the page and select 'Live Register' from the drop down menu. You will come to the register view, either add a new child or select a child from the list.
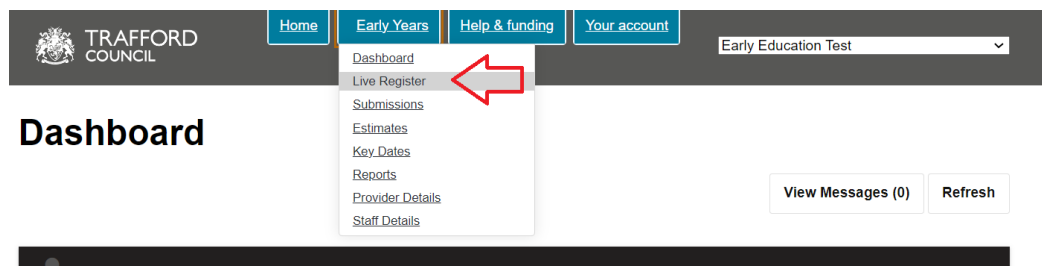
Step 2: Scroll down to the Parent/Guardian section, click 'Add Guardian' and complete the pop up form. Parent forename, surname and contact number are mandatory.

Step 3: Enter the details into the form and click 'OK' to save and 'Cancel' to close the form. The saved details can be edited at any time.

Step 4: Scroll down to the Funding Eligibility Checks section& click the 'Check eligibility for Working Parent Entitlement' button.

Step 5: A pop up screen will appear. You will be asked to confirm if you have consent to check and then click the 'perform check' button.

The pop up window will close and the results of the check appear on screen

'30 Hour Funded Childcare' Check

This child is eligible to claim extended entitlement from 23-Nov-2022 until 19-Jun-2023. Their grace period ends on 31-Dec-2023.

['30 Hour Funded Childcare' Check] [View Check History]

Details of all your code checks are saved on The Portal. You can view the history of your checks for each child by clicking the 'view check history' button. The results of the checks will appear on screen.

If the check fails you will receive a 'not eligible' message. In this case check you have entered the correct details. If the child date of birth, national insurance number or eligibility code are incorrect - you will receive an invalid result. If all the details are correct and the check result is 'not eligible' this means the code is not valid for the term. Parents / Carers with queries about their eligibility can contact HMRC: 0300 123 4097

Funding Eligibility Checks

Funding Age: 3 year old

Working Parent Entitlement

This child is not eligible to claim working parent entitlement.

[Check Eligibility for Working Parent Entitlement]

Auditing Eligibility Codes

All codes that are checked as valid and saved in the Live Register are audited twice per term:

1. Start of term: To identify codes that are no longer eligible

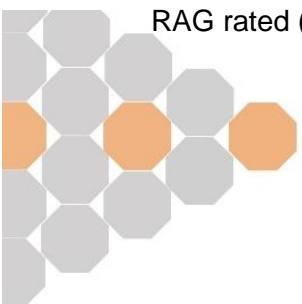2. Half term: To identify codes that are due to fall out of eligibility

The portal carries out this audit and the results are available on the Live Register. Providers can also re-check a code at any time by clicking the 'Check Eligibility for Working Parent Entitlement' button.

> The Live Register must be checked at least at the start of and at half term to identify the status of codes. The portal audit process is designed to support providers with encouraging parents to reconfirm eligibility and to limit the administrative burden (because there is no need to re-check eligibility for every child).

Parents should be advised to reconfirm eligibility and must be advised if their code is in the Grace Period so that they have the opportunity to resolve this. An example of how to do this would be; sending 1 generic reconfirmation reminder email per term to all parents accessing extended hours or intending to access them in the next term. Advising parents identified as being in the Grace Period at the half term check to reconfirm their eligibility.

Code Flags

The status of a code is identified by the 'flag' in the 'info' column on the Live Register. Codes are RAG rated (red, amber, green) to easily identify the current state of eligibility.

E (green)	A child who is currently eligible and not approaching the start of their grace period
D (amber)	A child who is within 21 days or less of entering their grace period. Parents should take action to reconfirm their eligibility with HMRC
GP (red)	A child who has entered their grace period. Parents should be notified of this and take immediate action to reconfirm eligibility before the end of their grace period. A grey ! Icon will appear next to children who display this flag, hover over this to see the date they entered their grace period and when it ends.

If the red grace period flag shows, the parent should be advised to reconfirm their eligibility immediately. When they have done this, you should re-check the validity of the code in the child record to make sure this has been done - in which case the green E flag will return.
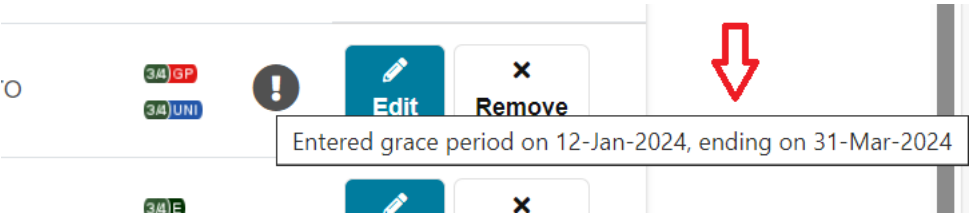
There is no need to manually re-check all the codes prior to the start of each new term. If you have validated a code in a child's record for the initial set up, the system will audit the code at the start of term and at half term. If parents keep on track with reconfirmations, code flags should always remain green. Parents are invited to reconfirm by HMRC before they enter the grace period.

In addition to the Live Register you are also notified when a child enters their Grace Period in the messages section of the Dashboard and the Key Dates calendar.
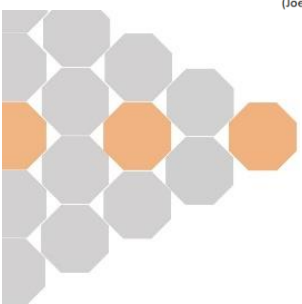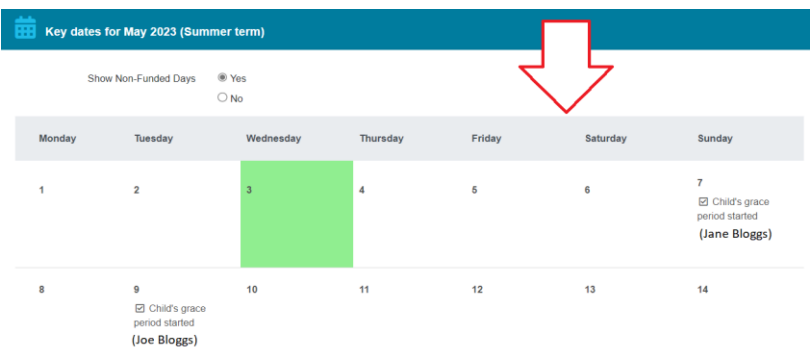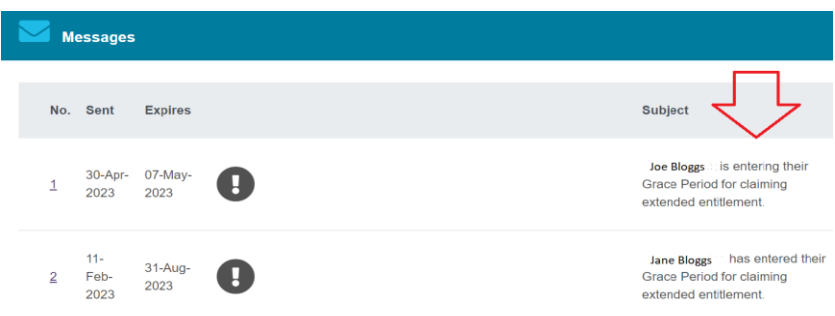
Example

The below example shows why it is important to review the status of codes on the live register.

A child turns 3 and is issued a code in December (autumn term). The code is checked as eligible, and the provider claims Working Parent Entitlement hours in spring. No action is taken to reconfirm the code by the parent and the provider does not review the audit information on The Portal. The code falls into the Grace Period which ends on 31 March. Provider then tries to claim the same hours in summer term but the code is not valid, by this point the child has been accessing Working Parent Entitlement hours up to the summer headcount submission. The provider cannot claim for the extended hours. The child should not have been allowed to start accessing the hours in summer term without a valid code.
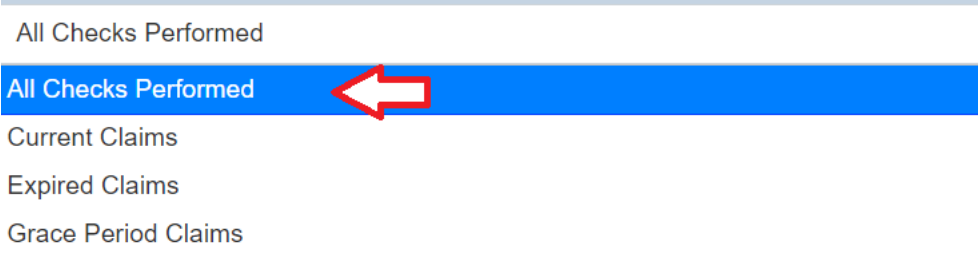
Reporting

Reporting is available on all eligibility code checks you do in. This is in the 'reports' section of The Education Portal. The reports are available for your information and offer a different way of viewing the information available in the Live Register.

Step 1: From the Dashboard Page click on the 'Early Years' tab and then from the drop down menu, select 'Reports.'
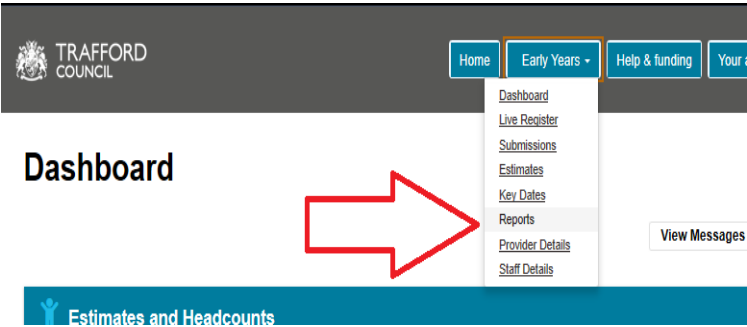
Step 2: You will come to the reports page. There are a number of different reporting options. Scroll down to the bottom of the page to the 30 hour code check section. Click the drop down menu to see the different report options.

All Checks Performed	Report of every 30 hour code check completed
Current Claims	Report of 30 hour code checks on current children on the Live Register
Expired Claims	Report of 30 hour code checks showing only expired claims
Grace Period Claims	Report of 30 hour code checks where the code is in the grace period.

Select 'All checks performed' to see a list of all the eligibility codes you have checked.

Step 3: Click the 'All Checks Perfomed' button to download the report in spreadsheet format.

Get a report of all previous 30 hour checks.

All Checks Performed

⬇ Extended Entitlement Report

Understanding reports

The reports will show the check date, code information and the dates attached to the code (see above section for details on how to understand the code dates). You will also be able to see if the code was eligible at the point of checking and any errors attached to the code, for example: if the code was invalid.

The report is useful if you ever need to review what date a code was checked and what the result was.

<u>Help & Support</u>

All Education Portal user guides are available on our website .

If you have any queries or would like to arrange some training, please contact The Early Education Team by email so that the correct person can be assigned to support you: early.education@trafford.gov.uk