

Terms and Conditions of EMA Award

This document outlines what happens once you have been awarded EMA, your responsibilities and those of your school/activity coach and the Schools Transactions team. It explains what is expected of you in order to receive EMA payments and tells you why payments may be stopped.

Section 1: Learning Agreement

When you submit your application form you agree to these terms and conditions. If your application is successful, you are expected to meet these conditions in order to start receiving EMA payments.

Next steps:

School students: We will contact the school to advise of your award and ask them to confirm you are undertaking at least 21 guided learning hours. This will be confirmed by the member of staff at school responsible for EMA (normally your guidance teacher). Only when we receive confirmation from your school will you be entitled to receive your first payment.

Home Education students: If you are eligible, we'll send your parent/carer time sheets which must be returned every fortnight detailing the studies you've undertaken. If your studies total 21 hours or more in any given week you are eligible to receive a payment for that week.

NOLB Activity Agreements: Your activity coach will confirm the date you started your activity and will authorise your payments every fortnight.

Section 2: Receiving payments

Payments are normally made every two weeks on a Friday, for a two-week period in arrears. Visit www.edinburgh.gov.uk/ema to download the 'payment schedule' showing when each payment day is.

Your school or activity coach will confirm which weeks you are eligible for payment to the Schools Transactions team. The money will then be paid into your account. If your award is backdated your first payment will be made in one lump sum.

EMA payments are based on attendance. If you are at school, you won't be paid for the summer, Christmas or Easter breaks, or the October and February mid-term breaks.

Section 3: Attendance requirements

In order to receive your EMA payments you must:

- ensure that you arrive on time for all timetabled classes and/or courses;
- ensure that all requirements of your programme of study/agreements are met;
- ensure that your behaviour is of an acceptable standard and observe the code of conduct if one is in place;
- inform your school/coach **in advance or on the day** of any absences;

Certain absences count as attendance for EMA purposes:

- **Sickness:** You must notify your school/coach on the first day of illness. If you are ill for over a week, your school/coach may ask you to provide a medical certificate from your GP.
- **Family/Personal reasons:** This includes bereavement, religious holidays, court appearance, childcare review and wedding of immediate family. Normally the absence allowance is one day however individual circumstances will be considered.
- **Other authorised absences:** Medical/Dental appointments, Study leave, unpaid work experience, excursions or field work.

Schools/coaches can use discretion for absences not covered above depending upon individual circumstances.

Section 4: Stoppage of payments

The following absence reasons will normally result in your payment being stopped for the week in which the absence occurs:

- **Lateness:** School students – you should arrive for school on time every day. If you arrive late 5 times during one term payment will be allowed, however if you are late again in a future week you will not be paid for that week.
- **Failure to notify of absence:** If you do not notify your school/coach of an absence covered in Section 3 on time, your absence will be recorded as unauthorised and you will not be paid for that week (see notes below);
- **Holiday during term time:** EMA is paid based on your attendance, so if you take a holiday during term time, even for one day, your payment will be stopped for that week. For activity agreement this includes any holidays taken during the term of your agreement.
- **Truancy:** Any day you are truant will result in your weekly payment being stopped for the whole week. Your award may be reviewed or stopped if this happens regularly;
- **Exclusion:** Your weekly payments will stop from the week you are excluded and will not resume until the first full week after you are readmitted to your school.

Notes:

- a) If you advise of a previous absence within one month of the date it occurred, your school/coach can use discretion to authorise a back-payment.
- b) Any absence covered in Section 3 which exceeds 10 consecutive days may also result in payment being stopped and your attendance may be monitored.

If you receive a lower payment or no payment at all it is likely your payments may have been stopped for one of the reasons above. Contact your school/coach in the first instance to find out if this has happened, although normally you will be told in advance of any stoppages. **Your school is responsible for authorising your payments, so don't contact the Schools Transactions team about this.**

If your bank account details are incorrect resulting in your payments being rejected, the Schools Transactions team will contact you and ask you to confirm the correct details in writing to enable us to reissue your payment.

If you disagree with reasons given by your school/coach for stoppage of payment, please tell them why you should be paid. You may be asked for evidence. The school/coach will then decide if their decision is to be changed and payment made. If the school do not change the decision and you still think it is wrong, you may write to/email the Schools Transactions team to request a review of the decision. You must do this within one month of the decision to stop payment. You should give your reasons and include any relevant additional evidence or information. This will be considered by a senior officer, and you will normally be notified of the decision within 2 weeks. It is possible that some more complex cases may take more time to resolve. This decision will be final.

Section 5: Provisional awards

Some applicants will receive a **provisional** award. This means we have estimated your household income in order to assess your application. This is normally done if parent(s)/carer(s) are self-employed and the household income is not known at the time of application, or in cases where the household income has dropped which means it is not suitable to use income for the previous financial year. In all cases the Schools Transactions team will write to you by 31 March to request evidence to finalise your award. If no information is received by the deadline given, we will stop making payments.

Section 6: Award validity

Your award is valid until the end of the school year (normally end of June), or until you leave school or disengage from your activity agreement, whichever comes first. You will receive payment for the last **full week** you attend. If you plan to continue for another year you will need to re-apply as we assess your entitlement annually.

School summer leavers are normally recorded as leaving on **31 May** each year and no further payment will be made for the remainder of the term.

If you have any questions regarding any of the information contained in this document, please contact us – visit www.edinburgh.gov.uk/ema to find out how.