COMPENDIUM OF CIRCULARS

Issued by the Free Childcare Scheme Unit

Abstract

A collection of circulars issued by the Free Childcare Scheme Unit to all childcare centres across Malta and Gozo participating in the Free Childcare Scheme, sorted by latest issued.

16/11/2026

freechildcare@gov.mt

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26TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 16TH NOVEMBER 2026

Transitional Measures related to the 2027 Budget rules regarding the Free Childcare Scheme

Dear Childcare Centres,

Good morning,

As announced in the 2027 Budget Speech, the revised Free Childcare Scheme rules for children of third-country national parents will take effect on 1st January 2027. The proposed transitional arrangements give effect to that announcement while safeguarding children's welfare and helping families caught by the change. They are intended particularly for women who are already pregnant when the new rules take effect, and for families already living in Malta whose children are awaiting registration or have yet to start childcare.

From 1st January 2027, a child who was born abroad and is brought to Malta to live here for the first time will be ineligible under these transitional arrangements, even if one parent was already living in Malta and held a valid residence permit at the end of 2026.

1. Children already registered and eligible.

A child who is registered and eligible on 31st December 2026 can continue to benefit, even if they start attending childcare in 2027 or later.

2. First time Registrations.

A child shall be eligible under these transitional arrangements, subject to meeting the other applicable eligibility requirements of the Free Childcare Scheme, if the parent(s) was living in Malta and held a valid residence permit on 31st December 2026, and either of the following applies:

- The child was already born and living in Malta on 31st December 2026.
- The child is born in Malta between 1st January and 31st August 2027, inclusive.

Celia Falzon
CEO
Jobsplus

25TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 9TH NOVEMBER 2026

Audit of Maltese Language Proficiency Allowance Refunds

Dear Childcare Centre,

Good morning. Jobsplus would like to inform all childcare centres receiving the reimbursement of the Maltese Language Proficiency Allowance, that an audit exercise is currently being carried out in relation to the Scheme. The audit is being conducted by GCS Assurance Malta Ltd, the external auditors appointed by Jobsplus to perform audit and assurance services.

The purpose of this audit is to verify the accuracy of reimbursements claimed and paid under the Scheme, as well as compliance with the applicable eligibility and payment requirements. As part of the audit process, a sample of childcare centres and employees may be selected for review. Centres selected as part of the audit sample may be contacted directly by GCS Assurance Malta Ltd and requested to provide supporting documentation relating to specific claims submitted under the Scheme.

Please note that, due to data protection requirements, employee names will not be shared with the auditors. Any selected employees will be identified solely by their ID card number. Childcare centres are therefore requested to ensure that they are able to identify the relevant employee from the ID card number provided and to make available any supporting documentation that may be requested by the auditors. This may include employment records, engagement forms, employment history, payslips, proof of payment and any other documentation relevant to the employee's claim under the Scheme.

We kindly ask all centres to cooperate fully with any requests made by the auditors to facilitate the timely completion of the audit exercise. Should you have any questions regarding this communication, please feel free to contact us. Thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards,

Jobsplus

24TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 5TH OCTOBER 2026

Annual Maintenance Checks of Fob Machines

Dear Childcare Centres,

Good afternoon,

Please be informed that starting from next week until the end of this year, AIS, the Free Childcare Scheme's service provider, will be carrying out the annual maintenance checks of the fob machines installed at participating Childcare Centres.

AIS personnel may therefore call at your Centre during this time to carry out the necessary checks and maintenance on the fob machine.

In this regard, Centres are kindly requested to inform the Free Childcare Scheme Unit (FCSU) of any planned closure of the Centre during this time, as soon as possible. This will enable FCSU to advise AIS accordingly and avoid an unnecessary visit when the Centre is closed.

Centres are also requested to ensure that the relevant person is available to provide access to the fob machine when the maintenance visit takes place.

Your cooperation is appreciated.

Kind regards,

Free Childcare Scheme Unit
Jobsplus

23RD CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 1ST SEPTEMBER 2026

Friendly Reminder: October 2026 Requests and Submission Requirements

Dear Childcare Centres,

Good morning

This is a courteous reminder that the deadline for submitting the following requests relating to **October 2026** is ***15 September 2026:***

Change Requests – including changes to booked hours or employment status.
New Applications – all new requests and applications.
Transfers – all transfer requests and supporting documentation.

Submission requirements
We appreciate that this is one of the busiest periods of the Scheme. To help us process applications efficiently and provide feedback as quickly as possible, please ensure that:
All applications are completed correctly.
All information provided is accurate.
All required supporting documentation is included when the application is submitted.
Documents are clear, complete and of a high standard.
Complete submissions will help minimise the need for further correspondence and avoid delays or disappointments.

Entering personal details
When entering the details of a child or parent, please use the **Get Details** function whenever possible. This retrieves the information directly from the Person Register (Identità).
If the person is not registered in the Person Register and **Get Details** cannot be used, all information must be entered manually as follows:
Enter all details in **BLOCK CAPITALS**, including the person's name, surname and home address.
Enter the ID card number in the correct **eight-character format**, consisting of seven digits followed by a letter.
Include any necessary leading zeros.

Examples:
Correct: **0123456M** | Incorrect: **123456M**
Correct: **0005678M** | Incorrect: **5678M**
The ID card number must be entered continuously, **without any spaces**.
Please also ensure that no unnecessary spaces are left before or after the ID card number, name, surname or country of nationality.

Country of nationality

In the **Country of Nationality** field, enter the name of the **country**, rather than the corresponding nationality or adjective. This must also be entered in **BLOCK CAPITALS**.

Examples:
Correct: **MALTA** | Incorrect: **MALTESE**
Correct: **TURKEY** | Incorrect: **TURKISH**
Correct: **ITALY** | Incorrect: **ITALIAN**
Please refer to the uniform country list circulated last year, which is also available on our website.
Should you have any questions or require assistance, please contact us at FREECHILDCARE@GOV.MT.

Thank you for your cooperation and prompt attention to this matter.

Yours faithfully,
Free Childcare Scheme Office

22ND CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 30TH JULY 2026

Final Submission Deadline for Reimbursement Claims – Maltese Language Allowance for Child Carers

Dear Childcare Providers,

Good morning

Reference is made to the reimbursement of the Maltese Language Allowance paid by childcare centres to eligible Child Carers and Centre Managers.

As previously communicated, the first set of reimbursement requests covering payments made between January and June 2026 was required to reach Jobsplus by **15 July 2026** at the very latest.

Notwithstanding this extension, several Centres have still not submitted their reimbursement claims within the established timeframe.

In view of the above, it has been decided to provide Centres with one final opportunity to submit reimbursement requests relating to the Maltese Language Allowance payments made for the period **January to June 2026**.

Centres are hereby informed that these claims must be submitted to Jobsplus by **15 October 2026**. This deadline will coincide with the submission deadline for reimbursement requests relating to payments made for the period **July to September 2026**.

Centres are reminded that applications for January to June 2026 received after the above-mentioned deadline will not be considered.

Centres are therefore encouraged to ensure that all outstanding claims are submitted within the stipulated timeframe to avoid forfeiting the reimbursement.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards,
Jobsplus

21ST CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 16TH JULY 2026

Closed days in August and revision of booked hours

Dear all

Good morning

We invite Centres that still need to enter closed days for August in the CIS to do so by the end of July. Not inputting this data will adversely affect the children's absence entitlement.

Additionally, for those Centres that will have closed days, it is most important that the number of booked hours is reduced to reflect the reduced hours of service. Changes in booked hours are to be submitted in the CIS by the deadline, that is 20th of July.

Thanks for your kind attention

Regards

FCSU Team

20TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 22ND JUNE 2026

Updates to the Free Childcare Information System (FCIS)

Dear Childcare Centres,

Good morning

Jobsplus would like to inform you of several forthcoming updates to the Free Childcare Information System (FCIS). These enhancements are scheduled to be introduced on the 7th of July and are intended to improve data accuracy, strengthen governance, and support more efficient operational processes across all participating Centres.

1 Viewing Rights

Centre viewing rights will be revised so that access will be limited to active applications and inactive applications up to one year old.
This upcoming change forms part of a formal Jobsplus requirement to improve data governance, minimize unnecessary exposure to older records, and ensure Centres retain access only to relevant and recent information.

2 SMS Notification to Parents Triggered Upon Fob Scan

A new feature will be rolled out to enable automated SMS notifications to parents/guardians for every child fob-in and fob-out event, whether recorded through fob readers or manually by Centres. This update aims to enhance transparency, strengthen parental engagement, and support child safety.
Ahead of implementation, an initial communication will be sent to parents—via both email and SMS—to inform them of this upcoming change, as per the attached notice.

3 Manual Reason Entry (Fob Scan)

The manual fob scan "reason" field will be changed from an optional free-text entry to a mandatory drop-down selection of predefined reasons.

Childcare Centre activity outside of the Centre
Parent/Guardian Forgot to Fob
Fob not working
Fob Machine not working (this can be due to internet problem, weather etc).
Missing/ lost Fob
Child collected by third party and didn't have fob

This enhancement will ensure standardised data entry, improve auditability, support consistent reporting, and better align processes with Jobsplus governance requirements.

Historical manual fob scan entries containing free-text will remain unchanged for integrity and compliance. All new manual entries, once the change goes live, must be selected from the available drop-down menu options.

Should you have any queries regarding these forthcoming updates, please contact the Scheme Support Team on FREECHILDCARE@GOV.MT
Thank you for your cooperation.

Regards
FCSU Team

ATTACHMENT:

BY EMAIL

Subject: New SMS Notifications for Attendance

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We would like to inform you that, as from **7th July,** the Free Childcare Scheme will introduce SMS notifications for all fobbing events. You will receive a message each time your child is fobbed in or out of their childcare centre, whether through the physical fob or manual fobbing carried out by the Centre. This update is being introduced to strengthen accuracy, increase transparency, and ensure that all attendance records are made with your full knowledge.

To make sure you receive these messages, please keep your mobile number updated. If your number changes, kindly inform us by emailing freechildcare@gov.mt so that we may update your details.

If you receive an SMS that appears incorrect or was not authorised by you, please contact us immediately on the same email address so that we can review and address the matter promptly.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards,
Free Childcare Scheme Office

By SMS

Dear Parent, from **7th July** you will get an SMS when your child is fobbed in/out. If your number changes or a message seems wrong, email freechildcare@gov.mt.

19TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 4TH JUNE 2026

Revised Form - Maltese Language Allowance

Dear all

Good afternoon,

Please find attached the revised form.

The revision relates to the decimal places and the name of the LRP. Previously, the LRP name was populated automatically; however, it must now be entered manually.

This change was introduced to allow for the recording of changes to the LRP when they occur, without the need to update the form each time. This version of the form can also be found on the Jobsplus website under the Free Childcare Scheme page.

Centres are kindly requested to discard any previous versions of the form and use this Version 1.3 going forward, as only applications submitted using this version of the form will be accepted for payment purposes.

However, Centres that have either

- already started collecting signatures using a previous version of the form, or
- already submitted forms for payment using a previous version

do not need to resubmit the form(s).

Regards

FCSU Team



18TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 20TH MAY 2026

Update and Clarifications - Maltese Language Allowance

Dear LRPs

Good afternoon

Further to the circular issued last week regarding the Maltese Language Allowance, kindly note the following updates and points of clarification.

Eligibility

Eligibility applies exclusively to Childcare Educators and Centre Managers authorised by DQSE who are either:
Maltese nationals holding a School Leaving Certificate or an Ordinary Level pass in Maltese; or
Persons holding a certificate in Maltese equivalent to or higher than MQF Level 2.
Childcare Educators and Centre Managers who are Maltese nationals, do not possess the above-mentioned certificates but hold an MQF Level 4 or MQF Level 5 qualification in childcare shall also be eligible for the allowance, provided that the childcare centre employing them formally declares that the employee is fluent in Maltese.
The person signing the form shall be responsible for ensuring and certifying the employee's Maltese language proficiency.
Childcare Educators and Centre Managers who are on unpaid leave shall not be eligible for the allowance for the duration of such leave.

Forms
Copies of the updated forms are attached. These forms are also available for download from the Free Childcare Scheme page on the Jobsplus website.
Centres are only required to submit one of the two prescribed forms. The choice of which form to use is at the discretion of the respective Centre.
Certain fields within the forms will populate automatically once data entry begins.
The first field to be completed is the Centre name, which must be selected from the drop-down menu. Once this field is selected, the application number and date will be generated automatically.
Once completed, the forms are to be printed, signed, and submitted to Jobsplus within the prescribed deadlines indicated below.
Taxability

As with all earnings, this allowance is taxable. For further guidance, Centres are encouraged to consult their financial advisor.

Submission of Claims

Claims are to be submitted at CARERALLOWANCE.JOBSPLUS@GOV.MT by the following deadlines

January to May 2026 – to reach Jobsplus by **15th June**. Payment will be made in July 2026
June 2026 - to reach Jobsplus by **15th July**. Payment will be made in August 2026
July to September 2026 – to reach Jobsplus by **October 15th**. Payment will be made in November 2026
Oct to December 2026– to reach Jobsplus by **15th January**. Payment will be made in February 2027
Jan to March 2027 – to reach Jobsplus by **15th April**. Payment will be made in March 2027
April to June 2027 – to reach Jobsplus by **15th July**. Payment will be made in August 2027

July to September 2027 – to reach Jobsplus by **15th October**. Payment will be made in November 2027
Oct to December 2027 – to reach Jobsplus by **15th January**. Payment will be made in February 2028

Any subsequent deadlines will be communicated at a later stage.

Late applications for refund

Late applications will be considered for refund only if received by the deadline for the following pay period (Following quarter).

As an Example: if the application for reimbursement should have reached Jobsplus by the 15th October (Covering Jul-Sep), in this case, a late application will only be accepted for processing if received by 15th January - the following pay period (covering Oct - Dec).

To this effect by Friday 29th May, you are kindly requested to send us an email confirming that you have read and understood the circular issued last week and this clarification note and that you understand the parameters within which late applications will be considered for payment.

Duration of Incentive

This incentive is part of the new four-year public agreement between Government and Childcare Centres registered under the Free Childcare Scheme and shall remain applicable until the end of 2028.

Should you require any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Jobsplus on CARERALLOWANCE.JOBSPLUS@GOV.MT

Regards

FCS Unit

17TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 14TH MAY 2026

Maltese Language Allowance for Childcarers

Dear LRPs,

Regarding the implementation of the Maltese Language Allowance, kindly note the following procedures and guidelines which shall apply in relation to the payment and reimbursement of the allowance.

Please also find attached the relevant forms to be used when submitting claims and invoices to Jobsplus. These forms may also be downloaded from the Free Childcare Scheme page on the Jobsplus website.

1. Childcare centres shall pay the allowance to eligible employees at a rate of €0.25 per hour worked, up to a maximum of €10 a week
2. The first payment, covering the period January 2026 to April 2026, shall be issued in May 2026. Eligibility applies to:
    - Maltese nationals holding a School Leaving Certificate or an Ordinary Level pass in Maltese; or
    - Persons holding a certificate in Maltese equivalent to or higher than MQF Level 2.

Jobsplus may be consulted where clarification is required regarding the acceptance of qualifications by sending an email to ceojobsplus@gov.mt.

3. Payments covering the period January to April 2026 are to be included in the May 2026 salary. Centres are then required to send the attached forms/ duly filled and signed, to Jobsplus at carerallowance.jobsplus@gov.mt by no later than 15 June 2026 in order for reimbursement to be processed in July 2026. Centres are reminded to keep the original documentation at the Centres for spot check auditing purposes
4. Thereafter, childcare centres shall continue paying the allowance as part of employees' regular salaries and submit the forms to Jobsplus on a quarterly basis, according to the following schedule:
    - By 15 April
    - By 15 July
    - By 15 October
    - By 15 January
5. The second set of forms shall therefore cover the period May to June 2026. These forms must reach Jobsplus by 15 July 2026, with reimbursements expected to be processed, as close as possible to the payment period associated with the scheme.
6. Jobsplus is currently working towards integrating the refund of the allowance within the existing remittance process associated with the scheme. Future remittance advice slips will include a detailed breakdown distinguishing:
    - Hours paid at different rates; and
    - Any additional payments, including the allowance.
7. In cases where carers changed employer between January and April 2026, the allowance shall be paid by the childcare centre with which the employee is currently engaged and included in the form.

In such cases, employees must provide payslips from previous employment clearly indicating hours worked so that the allowance may be calculated and paid correctly. Copies of these payslips are to be retained by the paying Centre for auditing purposes.

8. When claiming from Jobsplus for reimbursement of the allowance, Centres are required to submit **one** of the prescribed claim forms. This form must either:
    - Be countersigned as a single document by a warranted accountant; or

- Be individually countersigned by each employee confirming that payment has been received.

If the selected form does not have sufficient rows to include all eligible employees, Centre are to submit a second form.

9. Jobsplus shall conduct spot checks to ensure the accuracy of claims submitted. In addition, an independent auditor shall be engaged to audit the payment and administration of the allowance.

Should you require any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Jobsplus on ceojobsplus@gov.mt.

Kind regards,

FCSU Team



16TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 20TH MARCH 2026

Terms and Conditions of Participation (Parents/Guardians)

Dear Childcare Centres,

Good morning.

Attached please find the Terms and Conditions of Participation that parents/guardians are required to sign when applying for the Scheme.

This requirement will become applicable to all applications concerning children joining the Scheme from May 2026 onwards, and the signed document will need to be uploaded with the application as a supporting document.

Parents must provide their full signature on the last page.

A copy of the attached document is also available on the Free Childcare Scheme page on the Jobsplus website.

Regards,
FCSU Team



15TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 9TH MARCH 2026

Verification of Child's Date of Birth – New Applications from May 2026

Dear all,

Good morning,

To ensure that a child's date of birth is recorded accurately in the CIS, please be advised that for all applications concerning children joining the Scheme from May 2026 onwards, the following process must be followed:

- **Children born in Malta -**
  Data **must** be populated from the Person Register by pressing the "Get Details" tab after the Identity Card Number of the Child and the Parents is keyed in.
- **Children born abroad -**
  TCNs - A copy of their residence document.
  EUs - identification document that contains date of birth (e.g., residence document, passport, or birth certificate).

Kindly note that failure to submit the required document to Jobsplus as described above, at the initial submission stage, will result in the application being rejected. In such cases, the Centre will need to resubmit the application from scratch.

We invite you to exercise caution in the manual inputting of dates of birth, as once a date is inputted, it cannot be amended by the Centre. It can only be amended by staff within the FCSU.

We would also like to remind you that, to be eligible under the Scheme, children must be at least three months old. While parents may apply before the child reaches this age, and Centres may forward the application to Jobsplus on their behalf, approval and acceptance into the Scheme will only be granted once the child reaches three months of age.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Kind regards,
FCSU Team

14TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 13TH DECEMBER 2025

Temporary Shutdown of the Childcare Information System (CIS)

Dear Childcare Centres,

Good morning.

Please be informed that owing to a technical update that the Childcare Information System (CIS) needs to undergo to be able to continue supporting the administration of the Scheme, the **System will be offline from Tuesday, 16th December at 3 pm until Wednesday, 17th December at 4 pm.**

During this time, children may still be fobbed in and out of the Centre, but you will not be able to use the System to enter new data. In view of this, we are extending the deadline from the 19th of December to the 20th of December. Any inconvenience is regretted. When the system comes back online, all the fob scans recorded during the outage will be automatically synchronised and uploaded onto the system.

After this technical update, you will notice that when inputting applications, it will become compulsory for you to record the Nationality and Gender of the child; and in situations where a child is registered with two centres, we have introduced a safeguard so that the cumulative hours booked by both Centres cannot go over the entitled hours of Parent 1 of the child.

Finally, following a request by Centres, when you print the End of Month Payment Report, you will note that the report will now include a breakdown of the payment rates used per child at your Centre.

Thanks for your kind attention.

Kind regards,
FCSU Team

13TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 12TH DECEMBER 2025

FCS New Centre Manual

Dear all,

Good morning.

Attached please find the latest version of the FCS User Centre Manual for your perusal. This document is designed to aid Child Care Centre staff in navigating and using the CIS – the database that supports the Free Childcare Scheme. All the system's features and functions are explained in this document, including the provision of step-by-step instructions for accessing and managing information efficiently.

You are thus invited to find the time to read through it to either update your knowledge on the use of the System or acquaint yourself with features that perhaps you had not been aware of previously.

Kind regards,
FCSU Team



12TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 04TH NOVEMBER 2025

Work Declaration Template - ID Numbers and Registration of Employment with Jobsplus

Dear Childcare Centres,

The October intake is now over, and from Jobsplus' end, note was taken of the most common issues encountered. Jobsplus would like to take the opportunity to offer further guidance on the matter.

Work Declaration

For those parents eligible for the Free Childcare Scheme based on their employment, a work declaration is requested. Jobsplus acknowledges that some employers may encounter difficulties in preparing a declaration from scratch with the required information. To this effect, a template was drawn up to assist them in this process. Employers who have previously used accepted templates may continue to do so. Still, those facing difficulties are encouraged to use the attached template, which is also available for download on the Jobsplus website under the Free Childcare Scheme tab: HTTPS://JOBSPLUS.GOV.MT/FUNDING/FREE-CHILDCARE-SCHEME#.

ID Numbers

In cases where issues to input in the CIS, ID numbers of TCNs who do not have a Maltese ID number, are still encountered, you are requested to input the first 8 digits (including the letter if applicable) of the person's passport. The number is to be updated when the Maltese ID number is available.
In case of difficulty, you are invited to reach out to Jobsplus.

Registration of Employment with Jobsplus

Jobsplus reiterates its invitation to parents to check their Employment History to ensure that their employer registered their employment with Jobsplus, before submitting the FCS application.
Several instances were noted, where registration was not completed, causing significant delays in processing applications. Parents can access their Employment History by logging on to the Jobsplus website HTTPS://JOBSPLUS.GOV.MT/ through their e-ID; or by calling 153 ext. 18 and asking for the Employment History to be sent to them via email.

Regards,
Free Childcare Scheme Unit

11TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 17TH SEPTEMBER 2025

Centre Details Circulars and Fobbing

Dear all,

Good afternoon,

As summer comes to an end and the new scholastic year approaches, some of you may soon be welcoming new children into your centres. We'd like to therefore share a few important updates:

✅ **Check your Centre Details**
Attached is the latest list of centres participating in the Free Childcare Scheme (also available on our website). Since this list is used by parents to find your contact information, kindly review your entry and let us know right away if any details need updating.

📑 **Circulars in One Place**
We've created a *Compendium of Circulars* (attached for your reference), which is also available on the Free Childcare page on the Jobsplus website. The circulars are listed with the latest on top, and each title is hyperlinked to their correct page – so you can access older circulars quickly without endless scrolling.

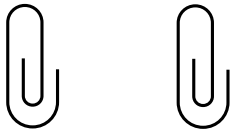
📘 **Upcoming Guidelines**
To make the Scheme easier for everyone, we are preparing two new documents:
Guidelines for Parents
Guidelines for Centres

These will cover FAQs, common situations, and give you clear information to guide parents properly. Both documents will be updated regularly. If you have suggestions or specific topics you'd like included, please let us know soon.

⏰ **Fobbing Reminder**
We've noticed that in some cases, carers are fobbing children in and out instead of parents. **This practice must stop immediately.** Parents have the responsibility to fob their children in and out themselves. To make this process easier ensure the fob machine is placed in a comfortable, accessible spot. Please note that we take fobbing by carers very seriously, so we ask for your full cooperation in reinforcing this with parents.

Thank you for your attention and support as we work together to make the Scheme as clear, transparent, and parent friendly as possible.

Best regards,
Free Childcare Scheme Unit



10TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 11TH AUGUST 2025

Supporting Documentation for Application into the Free Childcare Scheme - EHs and Documents in a Foreign Language AND eligibility of TCN Students

Dear all,

Good morning.

Reference is made to the above subject matter and the communication sent to you some time ago re incomplete applications.

Following feedback received may we suggest that most especially in respect of TCNs, before you send us applications you invite them to check their employment history (EH) to make sure that their employer has registered their employment with Jobsplus. Employment histories can be downloaded by the parents themselves from our website, using their e-ID. If the parents do not have an e-ID account yet, they can call 153 ext. 18 and ask for their EH to be sent to them by email – this is a free of charge service. If their EH is not found on their identity card number, the parents are to ask the call centre agent to try and find their EH from their passport number.

In respect of non-Maltese nationals, we note that we are being sent supporting documents in foreign languages. Please note that we only accept documents that are in Maltese or English as these are the official languages. Documents in any other language MUST be translated in Maltese or English by an official translator. If the translation is done in Malta and the document being translated is an original document there is no need for the translation to be apostilled, but it needs to have the stamp of the translator. If the document being translated is a copy of the original it needs to be apostilled and translated (stamp of translator needed), even if translated in Malta. If the document is translated abroad, the document needs to be apostilled in Malta.

If you are asked for a list of translators you can refer them to either the list of translators registered with the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade via the MFT portal: HTTPS://CONSULARPLUS.GOV.MT/LEGALISATION/REGISTER?LANG=EN, or with the Malta Courts as listed in the Expert Interpreters and Translators section available at: HTTPS://COURTS.GOV.MT/ (search under *Resources*).

Another query that often comes our way is in relation to TCNs who come to Malta to study under the Students Directive. Please note that such persons are not eligible for the Free Childcare Scheme unless they are in employment – and this employment is duly registered with Jobsplus.

Please be guided accordingly.

Regards,
Maria Bartolo Galea
Department Manager – Free Childcare Scheme

9TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 28TH JULY 2025

Request for support services from AIS in respect of the Fob Machines and Manual Fobbing

Dear all,

Good morning.

The above subject matter refers.

Please note that going forward whenever you experience issues with the Fob Machines you are to immediately alert the Free Childcare Scheme Unit and from our end, we will ask AIS (the Fob Machine Supplier) to investigate.

Childcare Centres that bypass Jobsplus and proceed to directly contact AIS may be asked to pay for AIS's intervention themselves and thus a recoupment of funds will be made from the monthly payment. In such instances the Centre will be duly informed of this action.

Childcare Centres will be asked to pay the cost of the AIS call out and subsequent work in instances when the fault is not related to the equipment itself but stems from third-party sources—such as the centres' own configurations or internet problems.

Additionally going forward and with effect from August 1st, Jobsplus reserves the right not to pay for childcare hours that are manually fobbed and for which there is no reason listed in the system.

Please be guided accordingly.

Maria Bartolo Galea
Department Manager – Free Childcare Scheme

8TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 22ND JULY 2025

Incomplete FCS Applications

Dear all,

Good morning.

Reference is made to the above subject matter.

We note that even though the Scheme has been in operation for over 10 years, and some of the Centres have been operating just as long, regrettably we are still receiving incomplete applications for enrolment in the FCS. This incompleteness relates mostly to missing supporting documentation – payslips and employment declarations, and unsigned employment declarations and unsigned or half-filled application forms. There is also the matter of parents claiming to be in employment but not having their working status registered with Jobsplus.

All this is resulting in a lot of extra work for staff within the FCS that must communicate with the Centres back and forth until all the Ts are crossed and the Is are dotted. It is within this context that I invite you to investigate why this is happening.

The entry requirements are publicly known and feature prominently on our brochure which in turn is available on our website. If you think that the person responsible for administrative work within your Centre requires refresher training, we will accommodate. However, we cannot keep receiving incomplete applications. We do not exclude that going forward for Centres that repeatedly send incomplete applications our way, rather than advising them what is missing in the application, we completely reject it – resulting in the Centre having to reinput the application from scratch.

The other issue relates to the inputting into the CIS stage. Here we note that information although provided by the parents is either not being inputted or improperly inputted, resulting in the Unit having to conduct data cleaning exercises. In this regard two areas of massive concern to us are the mix up of children's ID numbers – as this takes a lot of our time to resolve; and the improper inputting of mobile numbers and email address. The latter is leading to third parties receiving information that technically they have no right to, thus resulting in a data breach. If you are presented with handwritten applications that are perhaps not very clear to read, you are invited to verify with the parents before inputting the information onto the CIS.

Thanks for your kind attention.

Regards,
Maria Bartolo Galea
Department Manager – Free Childcare Scheme

7TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 16TH JULY 2025

Closed days in August and revision of booked hours

Dear all,

Good afternoon.

We note that from over 200 childcare centres only 37 have inputted information in the CIS re their closed days for August. We are thus inviting those centres that still need to enter this information to do so by the end of July. Not inputting this data will adversely affect the children's absence entitlement.

Additionally for those centres that will have closed days it is most important that the number of booked hours are reduced to reflect the reduced hours of service. Changes in booked hours are to be submitted in the CIS by the deadline, that is 24th of July.

Thanks for your kind attention.

Regards,
Maria Bartolo Galea
Department Manager – Free Childcare Scheme

6TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 2ND JULY 2025

Amendment to National Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care Services (0-3)

Dear all,

Good afternoon.

Reference is made to the above subject matter.

Kindly be informed that as outlined in the Free Childcare Scheme guidelines, free childcare is applicable to children who are from three months up to three years of age. Free Childcare is terminated once the child is eligible to enrol into kindergarten 1 provided by the state. To this effect, if a child is eligible to enrol in state Kindergarten in the February intake, the parent/legal guardian of the child can no longer apply for the Free Childcare Scheme.

These guidelines did not change with the recent amendment to national standards for early childhood education and care services (0-3).

Please be guided accordingly. For more information, you are kindly requested to contact us on FREECHILDCARE@GOV.MT .

Regards,
Maria Bartolo Galea
Department Manager – Free Childcare Scheme

5TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 25TH JUNE 2025

UPDATE - Proper recording of identification numbers of parents and children benefitting from the FCS

Dear all,

Reference is made to the communication issued this morning in respect of the inputting of Identity Card numbers.

Please disregard the instruction given in the first bullet point re the "0" in front of the identity card number. It seems that the "0" in front is mandatory after all, as it is automatically generated from the CDR. A matter that has come to our attention only now; The CDR being the Common Database Register hosting ID numbers in Malta.

We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

Regards,
Maria Bartolo Galea

4TH CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 25TH JUNE 2025

Proper recording of identification numbers of parents and children benefitting from the FCS

Dear all,

Good morning.

Following a check of the identification card numbers of all the parents and children benefitting from the Free Childcare Scheme with an active application, we note that there are several data entry errors. You are cordially invited to recheck all this data against the physical identification document of the parents and the children (if applicable).

In instances when at point of entry the passport number had been recorded but now the identity card number is available, the data is to be updated. In the case of identity card numbers when the information is keyed in in the system, please follow the below format:
The "0" in front must not feature. So, the number is to look like this **123456M** and not **0123456M**. No space is to be left between the numbers and the letter. So, the number is to look like this **123456M** and not **123456 M**.

In the instance that a child or a parent still does not have an identity card number and the passport number is being inputted, at the end of the number please put the letter P. So, passport numbers need to look like this – **9876543P** and not **9876543** or **9876543 P**.

This check is to be concluded by the **16th of July 2025** after which Jobsplus will be running another check of all the data. Centres found to be in default may have their participation in the Scheme suspended until all the data for their clients is clean.

Regards,
Maria Bartolo Galea

3RD CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 17TH JUNE 2025

Summer Hours - Free Childcare Scheme Unit

Dear all,

Good morning.

A note to remind you that come Tuesday July 1st, the Free Childcare Scheme Office will be operating on the following summer hours:

Monday to Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Whilst we will endeavour to reply to your emails in a timely manner, emails received after 1.30pm in all probability will be addressed on the next working day.

Kind regards,

Maria Bartolo Galea
Department Manager i/c Free Childcare Scheme
Policy and Planning Division

2ND CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 21ST MAY 2025

Declaration from Employers and Educational Institutions

Good afternoon,

Reference is made to the above subject matter.

We are noticing that the declarations being provided by the parents re their work patterns are not providing sufficient information to assist in determining the eligible dates and days for the use of childcare facilities under the Free Childcare Scheme.

Therefore, going forward and for applications that will come into effect from July, all employer declarations need to include clearer information.

This means that for fixed schedules we require the start and end time of the working day, which day in the week the parents work and if they can be asked to perform overtime.
If parents work on shift basis, a description of the shift needs to be provided including the start and end time e.g. day-night-rest-off OR day in, day out.
If parents work in an environment, whereby the shift changes constantly, the average number of monthly working hours and the number of days of work per month needs to be provided.

The same goes for declarations drawn up by educational institutions. These declarations need to contain clear information on the days and times that the parent would need to attend at the educational institution.

Declarations not containing and adhering to these guidelines will be rejected.

The application form is being updated to reflect these guidelines. Changes have been made in red in the attached form so that you can easily identify them. The updated form is available for download from our website at:
https://jobsplus.gov.mt/funding/free-childcare-scheme?id=4129.

Regards,
Maria Bartolo Galea
Department Manager i/c Free Childcare Scheme

1ST CIRCULAR ISSUED ON 23RD JANUARY 2025

Update on Nationality Field on the CIS (uniformity)

Dear Childcare Centres,

We hope this email finds you well.

Firstly, we would like to thank you for your adherence to the requirement in respect of filling in the nationality field in your submissions. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and essential for maintaining accurate and standardized records across all childcare centres.

Following some queries received on the subject matter and to ensure uniformity in the way the nationality field is filled, we kindly ask you to refer to the attached list, which provides the standardized format and naming conventions to be used. Adhering to this format will help streamline data collection and reduce inconsistencies.

Key Points to Remember:

- Please ensure that all entries match the format and spelling provided in the attached list. So, we suggest that you keep this list handy so that you can copy and paste the name of the nationality from the list on to the system
- Do not enter two nationalities e.g. MALTA / PHILIPPINES. It needs to be either MALTA or PHILIPPINES.

Thanking you once again for your support.
If we can be of any help let us know.
Wishing you a pleasant day ahead.

Best regards,
Free Childcare Scheme