

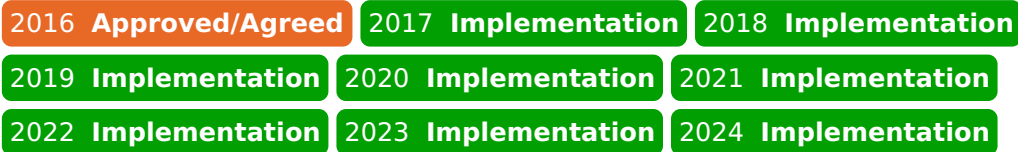
# Additional funding for teaching special education needs learners

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 CZECHIA

## Timeline



ID number 28805

## Description

An amendment to the School Act came into force in September 2016, which legally guarantees targeted support for children with special needs. Schools (including VET schools) are now legally entitled to additional funding for the necessary measures for teaching children with special needs. This amendment covers all children with special educational needs, based on their health as well as on their cultural and social environment (i.e. also Roma children). The amendment also covers talented children.

### 2016 Approved/Agreed

### 2017 Implementation

### 2018 Implementation

### 2019 Implementation

In the framework of Operational programme Science, research, innovation (OP VVV), jointly financed by the European Social Fund, both secondary and tertiary professional schools can apply for two-year simple grant schemes that minimise administrative requirements. The second round of calls for proposals to apply for funding ran until November 2019 (options included funding to cover the posts of special education teachers in schools).

### 2020 Implementation

The third round of the call for proposals to apply for funding was not published separately for secondary and tertiary professional schools; it became part of call No 02\_19\_078 Implementation of regional action plans II published at the end October 2019 (open until the end of May 2021) designed specifically for regional authorities. Schools apply for unit costs at their regional authorities. Among obligatory activities are equal opportunities (mainly for schools with higher number of special education needs students) and prevention of early leaving from education.

All regions prepared their two-year plans to describe how they will contribute to the fulfilment of fair and adequate support for children during their educational path. Part

of the so-called School inclusive concepts of regions must be measures to increase the share of pupils who achieve at least lower secondary VET (EQF 2), as well as a clear concept of the number and justification of classes established for pupils with special educational needs at lower secondary level, or ways how to involve individual actors who participate or should participate in quality education in the respective region.

### **2021 Implementation**

Since 2021, thanks to the Amendment to the Decree No 27/2016 Coll., students who were not clients of school counselling facilities - i.e., they had not been diagnosed with special educational needs yet but still need support (e.g. students from disadvantaged social environment, or with some kind of disability or impairment) - are now able to get support through pedagogical intervention. The amendment reduced the administrative burden, as this type of support can now also be provided by the school itself. Therefore, even pupils who are not currently clients of a school guidance and counselling facility, have not yet been diagnosed as having special education needs and yet need support (e.g. pupils from a socially disadvantaged environment, with the health impairment/disability) should now also be able to access support through pedagogical intervention. Until 2021, pedagogical intervention had been recommended by counselling facilities as a support measure to students of Grades 2-5 and schools received funding in the form of entitlements from the State Budget. The change aims to reduce the administrative burden placed on schools and, conversely, to increase their ability to respond in a flexible manner to the existing needs of students. Teachers are reimbursed for pedagogical intervention in the framework of their remuneration; this can be carried out by a member of the pedagogical staff with appropriate qualifications related to the content and goal of the intervention: teachers, teaching assistants or special pedagogues. The Decree does not specify the minimum or maximum duration of the intervention, nor limits the number of students in the group. In 2021, the measure was financed by an increase in funds allocated for the remuneration of pedagogical staff.

Government Regulation No 75/2005 Coll. on the Specification of the scope of direct pedagogical, educational, special pedagogical and pedagogical-psychological activities carried out by pedagogical staff was also amended. The aim of the amendment was to ensure that the provision of pedagogical intervention becomes a standard part of the set weekly scope of direct pedagogical activities with 1 hour per week as a maximum and only for the duration of the provision of pedagogical intervention. While a member of the pedagogical staff provides pedagogical intervention, the defined time left for their work related to direct pedagogical activities will be reduced by the time dedicated to the pedagogical intervention (1 hour per week).

The change also reflects the reform of funding effective from January 2020, when the support measure of pedagogical intervention is no longer financed by normative funding from the State Budget. The funds that school headmasters can use to reward the members of pedagogical staff providing pedagogical intervention are included in the school budget. For basic and upper secondary schools governed by the State, municipalities or Regional Authorities, the normative for the average annual amount for extra pay, remuneration and target remuneration of pedagogical staff was increased. For basic and upper secondary schools governed by other founders, the normative amount of salary standards was increased.

### **2022 Implementation**

The Czech Government's Policy Statement of January 2022 promised to legislatively anchor supporting positions (such as school psychologist, social pedagogue or special education teacher, etc.) in schools and make them more accessible by the end of 2024. The Government also declared to support personalised teaching, work with diverse groups of children and students, develop the potential of students with social and other disadvantages and to pay a special attention to the development of talent and work with exceptionally gifted students. Support is promised for working with families of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and children with different mother tongues.

Until the end of 2024, the supporting positions will be financed in a non-systemic manner, e.g. through projects with simplified reporting and a call under the new operational programme Jan Amos Komenský. From 2025 onwards, funding from the state budget is foreseen.

In 2022, the MŠMT created a methodological material for the institutionalisation of pedagogical supporting positions, i.e. school psychologists and school social pedagogues solely for basic schools. However, the upper-secondary schools show strong interest and call for legislative anchoring of such positions for themselves.

One of the strategic objectives of the Czech Republic's education policy under the Strategy 2030+ is to reduce inequalities in access to quality education and to enable the maximum development of all students' potential. In order to achieve this goal, it is essential to strengthen the role of social work within the regional education system. One way to ensure these activities is to strengthen the position of social pedagogues. Their role is being discussed in the context of the long-awaited Amendment to the Act on Teaching Staff. However, the version of the Amendment which was, after some modifications, passed by the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament in January 2023, does not include this role or other supporting positions in the list of pedagogical staff.

The situation is rather vague, the research focused on specialised activities, which was commissioned by the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic, should help to clarify it. On the basis of this research, the MŠMT wants to thoroughly rethink the schools' support team system and possibly modify it by means of a decree. One of the options would be to identify and specify the activities that should be performed by social pedagogues. The aim of the survey is, among other things, to find out how the set-up of the current Czech system and its funding (i.e. the provision of non-teaching activities, specialised activities of teaching staff or other potential activities) differs in comparison to at least 5 other countries; and to propose adjustments to the system in the areas of: provision of specialised and other positions and non-teaching activities in Czech schools. The aim is also to obtain a differentiated view according to the size, location, and type of schools and educational facilities.

### **2023 Implementation**

The education ministry prioritises the retention of school psychologists and special educators, and at the same time it has declared that it will prepare systemic national financing for these positions (from the state budget).

The 2023 amendment to the Education Act added a new school logopedist category, although social pedagogue positions remain unaddressed in teaching staff legislation.

The project, Support of Equal Opportunities (2022 - 2026), implemented by the National Institute of Education focuses, among other things, on strengthening the competences of pedagogical staff in working with socially disadvantaged pupils. Participating schools can access support from 9 different positions, such as social pedagogue or teaching assistant. One of the objectives of the project is to test the role of the social pedagogue in schools. Within the framework of the project, at least 400 schools across the Czech Republic (including 26 secondary schools) will receive long-term methodological support.

The National Pedagogical Institute (NPI), under the National Recovery Plan (NRP), is assessing how schools utilise social pedagogue positions (from the Support of Equal Opportunities Project, PROP) and what types of issues these pedagogical staff actually solve. The NPI evidence will serve to better target curricula and as methodological support for schools. Currently, this position is also being tested through the Operational Programme Jan Amos Komenský (OP JAK) templates and about 250 schools (kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools) have utilised the position of social pedagogue. Within the PROP project, 107 schools (primary and secondary schools) have introduced this position. A sub-objective of the project is to design and test a school funding system based on a socio-economic disadvantage index (combining several indicators). These objectives are fully in line with the priority of the

Czech Education Policy Strategy 2030+ (Strategic Line 2.2.3).

The education ministry submitted a draft amendment to the Education Act to modify the funding model for regional education, which in its current form does not allow for a targeted and flexible response to changing needs. The amendment aims to better target financial support to schools that play a specific role in the education system and to secure funding for the work of school psychologists and special educators in primary schools.

The amendment to the Act on Pedagogical staff, effective from 1 September 2023, allows the obtainment of special educator qualification through a master's degree in special education and primary or secondary teacher preparation.

### **2024 Implementation**

In October 2024, the Government approved an amendment to the Education Act reforming the system of regional school funding and establishing systemic rules for supporting pedagogical positions (school psychologists and special educators) in mainstream primary schools to create a more inclusive environment, improve counselling, and ensure school counselling system coherence. The Amendment makes it compulsory for nursery schools, primary and secondary schools to provide counselling services. These services include support for the education of children and pupils with special educational needs, prevention of risky behaviour, cooperation with school counselling centres and other entities, methodological support for teaching staff in identifying and educating children and pupils with special educational needs, and coordination of career counselling in primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, the amendment introduces a catchment area for pedagogical-psychological counselling centres of public founders, which will have the task of methodologically guiding kindergartens, primary and secondary schools of mainstream education. This will contribute to better coherence of the guidance system and support for guidance staff in schools.

However, as the funding of school psychologists and school special educators through the OP JAK will cease at the end of the calendar year 2024, a system of funding them from national sources is also prepared, starting immediately from 1 January 2025. For 2025, these specialised positions will be financed through an "ad hoc" normative in the case of public schools and through a subsidy procedure in the case of private and church schools. At the same time, new schools with up to 180 pupils will receive funding directly in 2025, i.e. not through the pedagogical-psychological counselling centre. The amount of full-time teaching support positions will be the same as schools have been receiving from the OP JAK.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
- National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices  
Learners with migrant background, including refugees  
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers  
Learners with disabilities

### **Education professionals**

Teachers

## Thematic categories

### Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Optimising VET funding

### Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

## Subsystem

IVET

## Further reading

[Website of the Ministry of Education - related laws and regulations](#)

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[Website of the National Pedagogical Institute, methodical support for schools](#)

## Related policy developments

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**2024 Implementation**

### VET-related measures in the Czech National recovery and resilience plan

Section 3 of the plan, Education and labour market, proposes the following reforms and measures in education and training:

Transforming HE institutions to adapt to new forms of learning and changing the labour market needs by 2026:

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#### Type of development

Strategy/Action  
plan

#### Subsystem

IVET CVET

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**2024 Implementation**

### Reform of regional school funding

On 1 January 2020, the Czech Republic introduced long-expected changes into its system of regional education funding. The main modification the new system has brought about is that the school funding is no longer based on the number of students (per capita approach).

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#### Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

**Subsystem**

IVET

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**2021 Completed**

**Methodology for school action plans**

The National Institute for Education developed a methodology for school action plans based on needs analysis.



**Type of development**

Practical  
measure/Initiative

**Subsystem**

IVET

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“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28805>