

Thurrock Virtual School

**Pupil Premium Plus Policy for
Thurrock Children Looked After**

April 2018 - March 2019

1. Introduction

This policy is informed by the four key Department of Education (DfE) documents announcing significant national changes in the arrangements for Pupil Premium for Children Looked After [CLA]. These being:

- Pupil Premium Grant 2018 to 2019 Conditions of Grant (Published December 2017)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2018-to-2019/pupil-premium-2018-to-2019-conditions-of-grant>
- Pupil Premium and the role of the Virtual School Headteacher - Frequently Asked Questions (Published March 2014 and Updated March 2015)
- Early Years Pupil Premium: Guide for Local Authorities
<https://www.gov.uk/earlyyears-pupil-premium-guide-for-local-authorities>
- Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children [February 2018]
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

Throughout this policy, the Pupil Premium for Children Looked After will be referred to as **Pupil Premium Plus** to distinguish it from other forms of Pupil Premium allocations. The Virtual School Headteacher does not hold responsibility for all Pupil Premium allocations, just those for Children Looked After in receipt of Pupil Premium Plus.

The key changes are:

- Children and young people between the ages of four to sixteen years will be eligible as soon as they enter care.
- Although Local Authorities continue to be responsible for distributing the Pupil Premium Plus payments for CLA to schools and academies, the Virtual School Headteachers are now directly responsible for making sure there are effective arrangements in place for allocating Pupil Premium Plus funding to benefit CLA to their authority.
- The overall grant allocated to each Local Authority will be calculated on a per capita basis, however it does not have to be distributed on a per capita basis, given that children and young people in care have differing levels of need at different stages of being in care
- The grant must be managed by the Virtual School and used to improve attainment, narrow the gap and accelerate progress as identified in the young person's Personal Education Plan (PEP) in consultation with the Designated Teacher.

- In April 2015 further development introduced the Early Years Pupil Premium paid to children looked after aged 3 and 4.

The Pupil Premium Plus and Early Years Pupil Premium funding will be allocated according to the following principles:

- Children and young people will be eligible from the first day of the care episode
- The Local Authority that looks after the child is responsible for distributing the Pupil Premium Plus payments to schools, settings and academies
- The Virtual School Head is responsible for making sure that there are effective arrangements in place for allocating Pupil Premium Plus and Early Years Pupil Premium funding to benefit children looked after by their Authority
- The grant must be managed by the Virtual School and used to improve outcomes and “narrow the achievement gap” as identified for individual children and young people in the targets set within their Personal Education Plan (PEP) in consultation with the Designated Teacher or Designated Person in the setting
- The PEP must be monitored and reviewed closely by the Designated Teacher, the Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer for effectiveness
- The PEP must be reviewed on a termly basis by the Designated Teacher
- The ePEP will be used for all Thurrock CLA irrespective of where placed in the country
- The ePEP, once fully completed each term, will trigger the payment of the Pupil Premium grant to the school or setting
- All PEPs and ePEPs will be monitored for SMART targets that have a positive impact on the improvement of educational outcomes
- As a result of the above changes, our allocation of Pupil Premium Plus needs to move to a model driven by a child’s needs, managed through high quality PEPs
- As a result PEPs will need to be monitored even more closely by Designated Teachers, Headteachers/Principles, the Virtual School, Social Workers and Independent Reviewing Officers.

NB: In addition and through a separate process, children adopted from care will be entitled to £2,300 passed directly to the school. This grant is outside the remit of this policy and the role of the Virtual School.

2. Pupil Premium Plus Policy

2.1. Overall principles underpinning our child's needs driven model

The Virtual School Headteacher is responsible for the use of Pupil Premium Plus to close the learning gap and realise the potential for all children in our care, irrespective of where the pupil lives.

A total of £1,800 will be allocated per Child Looked After which will be paid in three £600 termly instalments.

In rare cases, additional funding could be provided according to the needs of the child/young person and this would be up to a maximum of £600.

Thurrock Council and the Virtual School Headteacher are Corporate Parents, so the question 'would this be good enough for my child?' is a central one in making decisions and evaluating the effectiveness of the use of Pupil Premium Plus.

Key Points to Note:

- **£1,800** will be allocated to the schools or settings for all Thurrock CLA (both in and out of the Local Authority) at **£600** per term
- Allocation of the funding will be linked to clear Personal Education Plan targets for progress and improving outcomes
- The Virtual School Head is responsible for the allocation of the Pupil Premium Plus to schools and settings but will hold the schools and settings that receive the funding accountable for evidence of the effective and efficient use for the purpose it has been provided
- Schools remain accountable for the educational attainment and progress of all disadvantaged pupils
- Schools should ensure that the funding is used to narrow the gap between the outcomes for children looked after and all other children within the school as well as all children nationally
- In some cases, schools may be able to apply for additional funding in response to the changing needs of the child discussed during the Personal Education Planning meeting and for an agreed intervention to raise educational outcomes
- None of the grant will be used to pay for Virtual School management or grant administration

- The grant will not be used to pay for transport to and from school
- The Local Authority is not permitted to carry forward funding held centrally into the financial year 2018-2019. Grant held centrally that has not been spent by 31 March 2019 will be recovered.

In line with all allocations of grant it is expected that the following actions are taken by schools/settings applying for funding:

- High quality PEPs are completed by the school through ensuring that Section B of ePEP is completed every term
- A full PEP meeting is held at the minimum of 6 monthly intervals with social care, carers and the pupil in attendance and that all sections of ePEP are completed
- Section B of ePEP includes ensuring that termly progress and current attainment data are shared with the Virtual School by uploading this data regularly onto ePEP – completed every term
- Impact of interventions funded through Pupil Premium Plus are evidenced and SMART targets linked to funding are detailed – completed every term
- Pupil Premium Plus allocation must be spent in line with the Terms and Conditions of Grant as dictated by the DfE.

2.2. How and why is a personalised approach to using Pupil Premium Plus applicable?

Children's/Young Person's needs may vary over time and therefore a personalised approach is needed. For some children/young people a significant amount will be needed to fund the cost of support, for example:

- Children who come into care in an emergency with a fragmented home and education history who are behind academically
- Children who move into or out of Thurrock who may require additional support
- Children with significant and often delayed reaction to abuse and neglect, which may present as complex emotional, social and/or challenging behaviour impacting on progress.

In view of this, there may be variations in the amount of Pupil Premium Plus distributed and as such the Virtual School uses the pool of money from the £500 top slice per pupil for this additional support.

Proposals to pool Pupil Premium Plus in a school or group of schools to enhance services, providing its use is directly linked to the needs of the CLA pupil via the PEP, are acceptable.

2.3. Circumstances in which Pupil Premium Plus will not be agreed

Pupil Premium Plus will not be used to double fund or replace funding which should have or has already been allocated to the school to support the child. Specifically it cannot be used to:

- Fund services that should be provided via a statement or EHC plan
- Provide other statutory work e.g. statutory assessment or support from health

Pupil Premium Plus will not be paid if:

- The interventions put in place do not require any funding
- The school's own funding covers the cost of the interventions
- The PEP targets do not meet requirements (see Appendix 1)

Whereas in the past, some schools have used the Pupil Premium Grant to fund interventions for other learners, or to provide interventions which had no link to the individual CLAs needs, this practice will no longer be permitted.

3. Management and Accountability

The Headteacher of Thurrock Virtual School will be accountable to Thurrock Council's Corporate Parenting Panel and the Governing Body for the Virtual School for setting up a transparent and rigorous allocation process and ensuring maximised impact of the grant.

The Virtual School Headteacher [VSHT] has responsibility that Pupil Premium Plus is used in-line with the conditions of grant 2018/2019.

The VSHT will be responsible for initial agreement of the spending plan and subsequent monitoring of the spending plan via the ePEP.

The Designated Teacher in a school is responsible for proposing an appropriate child's needs driven spending plan. The Designated Teacher is accountable via the PEP meeting for monitoring and measuring the impact of the actions and interventions agreed. These will be reviewed in terms of narrowing the gap for impact.

The Designated Teacher is responsible for completing the relevant ePEP sections every term as detailed in the PEP Protocol Document for Thurrock and ensuring that this information is shared with relevant teaching staff across the school to maximise impact.

The Social Worker and Foster Carer have a key role in supporting and informing the discussions at the PEP meeting for a proposal of how Pupil Premium Plus could be used. They also have a key role in supporting the young person in achieving their targets.

4. Pupil Premium Plus for Children and Young People from other Local Authorities

Each Local Authority has its own policy and therefore there will be variations. Schools who have Children and Young People in care from other Local Authorities on their roll should contact the Headteacher of the relevant Virtual School to request their Pupil Premium Plus policy. The name and contact details of other Virtual School Headteachers can be requested from the Thurrock Virtual School team.

5. Appeals Process

It is anticipated that if the guidance outlined above is understood and followed; there will be agreement in respect of the applications submitted for Pupil Premium Plus. If however, there is a dispute which cannot be resolved between the school and VSHT, the appeal process can be activated.

Appeals will be heard by the Strategic Lead for School Improvement and independent representatives from the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Decisions of this panel are final.

Appeals should be submitted to kpullen@thurrock.gov.uk by the Designated Teacher of the school, addressed to the Headteacher of Thurrock Virtual School, marked Pupil Premium Plus Appeal, and include the name of the child, their date of birth, and the grounds for the appeal.

6. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the VSHT and the Governing Body of the Virtual School in March 2019. Changes will be applied and circulated in line with the new financial year and as appropriate.

APPENDIX 1

Applying for Pupil Premium Plus

Please refer to separate guidance 'EPEP and Targets' for detailed explanation.

The Pupil Premium Plus will only be provided to meet the needs identified in a high quality plan in the PEP meeting with clear quantitative (and exceptionally qualitative) targets for improvement, underpinned by well-targeted support.

The Pupil Premium Plus must be used to close the gap and for realising potential for children/young people.

All applications should be made online via the Target Section of the ePEP (SMART TARGETS in Section B)

Targets should fall within one of the following six areas of focus:

- Academic achievement and progress
- Attendance
- Emotional Health
- Transition
- Wider Achievement
- Inclusion (by reducing internal and external exclusion)

Underpinning the main 'Area of Focus', targeted interventions need to be identified and reflect the 'Sutton Trust' recommendations. Both the 'Area of Focus' and 'Intervention Type' are available as drop-down options in the 'Target' section of ePEP.

Schools will need to provide details of the target in all of the boxes provided to be eligible for the funding. Targets should be reviewed every term by the Designated Teacher.

Applications should be made every term, irrespective of if there has been a PEP meeting. These targets can then inform future PEPs.

Targets should be reviewed and updated by the Designated Teacher every term and shared with colleagues to ensure consistency of approach and maximum opportunities to achieve success.

Additional targets may be agreed and discussed as part of a PEP meeting and may or may not require funding, these should also be included in Section B.

Targets should be SMART, with at least one academic target related to core subjects and one additional curriculum target, additional non-academic targets are also permitted.

Schools should select one of the three funding options below for each target.

1. One-off funding (e.g.: for a piece of equipment)

2. Regular funding (e.g.: 6 weeks tuition at £ per week) if schools are unsure of start date please put proposed start date. Schools are expected to source their own tutoring.

3. Yearly funding (e.g.: closing the gap writing intervention: 1:4 small group with HLTA, 30 minute sessions 3 x week, focusing on personalised writing targets and aiming to achieve expected levels in the programme of study by end of academic year.

There is a drop down menu which allows you to allocate which term relates to each target that is set. E.G Autumn Term £600, Spring Term £600 etc.

An application for funding for a plan for the whole academic year can be made. Progress for this target should always be reviewed termly. This does not mean that an application for additional funding if required later in the year cannot be made for the pupil concerned. In all cases a decision will be made by the VSHT.

Please note: if a pupil subject to a yearly agreement for funding of a target leaves your school/academy before the end of the academic year, the next payment will not be made. The funding will follow the pupil and a new agreement will be made between Virtual School and the new school/academy.

Schools are accountable for the educational attainment and progress of all children and the new guidance from Ofsted means that schools will need to be able to demonstrate how the pupil premium is being used and the positive difference it makes. Schools will need to evidence for each child in care how he/she is supported by Pupil Premium Plus.

Allocation of funding to in and out of borough schools

The Pupil Premium Plus Grant will be transferred three times a year in the July, December and March following a review of the quality of the PEP and targets.

The Thurrock finance team will be instructed by the VSHT to release the payments to the schools and every school must provide banking details to the finance office if requested in order to receive the funding.

If a school has not completed Section B before the above dates, funding may not be released and may be allocated to other pupils.

Please note that Section B should be completed irrespective of whether a PEP meeting has occurred or not prior to submission. The targets that are set can inform the next PEP meeting.

Payments will be based on an agreed spending plan in line with the child's needs. Where there is a need to clarify what funding a school is providing from its own resources, the school may need to provide evidence before Pupil Premium Plus can be allocated. We reserve the right to recoup the funding if there is evidence that the funding is not being used to address the needs of the pupil.