

Warwickshire Virtual School

Pupil Premium Plus Policy for Children in Care (CiC)

September 2024

The DfE term used is Looked After Children (LAC), Children in Care (CiC) is the preferred term used by Warwickshire. Children in Care are one of the groups of pupils that attract Pupil Premium funding with the aim of:

'Raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities to reach their potential.'

Disadvantaged pupils by definition include:

'Looked-after children (LAC) defined in the Children Act 1989 as one who is in the care of, or provided with accommodation by, an English local authority.'

For Children in Care, a higher band of funding called Pupil Premium Plus is allocated to an authority's Virtual School Head for decisions over allocation arrangements.

'The LAC premium must be managed by the designated virtual school head (VSH) in the local authority that looks after the child, and used without delay for the benefit of the looked-after child's educational needs as described in their personal education plan.'

The VSH should ensure there are arrangements in place to discuss how the child will benefit from pupil premium funding with the designated teacher or another member of staff in the child's education setting who best understands their needs. Processes for allocating funds to a child's education setting should be as simple as possible to avoid delay.'

Pupil Premium: Conditions of Grant

Principles

Pupil Premium Plus is allocated to maintained schools and academies only, for statutory school age children in the care of Warwickshire.

Warwickshire's Virtual School recognises that schools are in the best position to make use of resources in order to raise the attainment of individual Children in Care in their setting. We understand and acknowledge that a child's needs may change over time and, therefore, ask that schools request a termly amount depending on the additional support being provided in that particular school term.

Individual Allocation

When completing Personal Education Plan reviews on the designated web-based platform, schools request £0, £400, £800 or £1500 for that term. The school is responsible for measuring the impact of the funding and reporting this to the Virtual School and associated professionals via the next termly Personal Education Plan review.

Money will be paid to schools termly in arrears when Virtual School Education Advisers are satisfied that it is appropriately targeted and focussed on raising attainment for the individual Child/Children in Care.

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As outlined in the DfE guidance, Pupil Premium Plus is based on a per pupil calculation but is not a per pupil entitlement. Schools will determine whether Pupil Premium Plus funding is required each term and what amount. There is no requirement that allocated funding be used exclusively for the benefit of one individual Child in Care. Where group or paired interventions are more successful, Pupil Premium Plus will be used accordingly by schools.

Wider Allocation

Warwickshire's Virtual School will spend the remainder of Pupil Premium Plus receipts on initiatives to improve understanding, support school improvement and develop support networks in order to improve outcomes for Children in Care and reduce the attainment gap between them and their peers. This includes training for designated teachers, developing Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed schools across Warwickshire and commissioning support from external professionals.

Early Years' Pupil Premium Plus

Children in Care from age 3 years are entitled to Early Years Pupil Premium Plus, which is currently 68 pence per eligible child per hour (up to £388 per year) when in attendance at a pre-school, nursery class or day care provision. This funding is allocated by the respective Local Authority where the setting is based.

Appropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus funding

Pupil Premium Plus funds must be used to close the gap in attainment and progress between Children in Care and their peers. Warwickshire's Virtual School believes that for many Children in Care, the social, emotional and mental health needs of the child are the most significant barrier to learning. Interventions designed to address these needs should be considered first, in order to enable children to better access learning.

We must remain ambitious and have high expectations of our Children in Care. With possible gaps in learning their prior attainment should not be seen as a ceiling to future attainment. Interventions in English and mathematics to close the gap should be used to allow children to 'catch up and keep up'.

The Virtual School has identified examples of how the funding can be used effectively. Suggested uses include:

- Staff development, e.g. training on attachment needs, trauma, resilience, emotion coaching and restorative practice
- Expert assessment and/or advice, e.g. from an Educational Psychologist
- Extra activities designed to motivate and re-engage young people
- Counselling or mentoring
- Therapeutic support e.g. play therapy, LEGO therapy
- Additional learning opportunities in school holidays, e.g. revision days
- Enrichment experiences focused on developing emotional wellbeing
- Contributions towards residential trips
- Evidence based interventions such as those from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) website

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- One-to-one tuition, e.g. in mathematics and English
- Evidence based interventions from the Education Endowment Foundation / What works in education for children who have had social workers - <https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/research-report/what-works-in-education-for-children-who-have-had-social-workers/>

Inappropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus funding

Pupil Premium Plus funds should be used to close the gap in attainment. The money should **not** be used to replace funds which would otherwise be provided from the main school budget or by the foster carer. Hence, the Virtual School will not typically support the use of Pupil Premium Plus on the following:

- Giving young people access to existing arrangements, e.g. homework club
- School trips, which are effectively part of the curriculum
- School equipment e.g. stationery, DT food ingredients, laptops
- Contributing to the salaries of substantive staff (as interventions should be time-limited)
- Reduced class sizes
- School uniform
- School meals

Evaluation

The DT is responsible for evaluating the impact of interventions funded by the Pupil Premium Plus. Where interventions are not leading to 'sufficient' improvement, the professionals involved should consider what changes should be made to the support plan.

Whilst the Virtual School has the discretion to reallocate funding where it is not leading to the achievement gap being closed, it is hoped that this can be done in partnership with all colleagues supporting the child, including school staff, social worker and foster carer.

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