



Policy paper

Pupil premium

Updated 1 February 2021

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[Pupil premium: effective use and accountability](#) contains separate guidance for school leaders and governing boards. This includes the [Education Endowment Foundation's \(EEF\) pupil premium guide](#).

Purpose

Publicly-funded schools in England get extra funding from the government to help them improve the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils.

Evidence shows that children from disadvantaged backgrounds:

- generally face extra challenges in reaching their potential at school
- often do not perform as well as their peers

The pupil premium grant is designed to allow schools to help disadvantaged pupils by improving their progress and the exam results they achieve.

Eligibility and funding

The government has announced that pupil premium and service premium rates will remain unchanged for the financial year 2021 to 2022.

From April 2021, pupil premium allocations for mainstream and special schools will be calculated based on the number of eligible pupils recorded by schools in their census in October 2020.

Schools get pupil premium funding based on the number of pupils they have from the following groups.

Free school meals

Schools get £1,345 for every primary age pupil, or £955 for every secondary age pupil, who claims free school meals, or who has claimed free school meals in the last 6 years.

Looked-after and previously looked-after children

Schools get £2,345 for every pupil who has left local authority care through adoption, a special guardianship order or child arrangements order.

Local authorities get the same amount for each child they are looking after: they must work with the school to decide how the money is used to support the child's personal education plan.

Service premium

The service premium is not part of the pupil premium as the rules to attract the [service premium](#) are different.

Schools get £310 for every pupil with a parent who:

- is serving in HM Forces
- has retired on a pension from the Ministry of Defence

This funding is to help with pastoral support.

Academically able pupils

The pupil premium is not based on ability.

Research shows that the most academically able pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are most at risk of under-performing. Schools should focus on these pupils just as much as pupils with low results.

Eligible schools

Local authority-maintained schools

This includes:

- all mainstream infant, primary, middle, junior, secondary and all-through schools serving children aged 5 to 16
- schools for children with special educational needs or disabilities
- pupil referral units (PRUs), for children who do not go to a mainstream school

Academies and free schools

This includes:

- all mainstream academies serving pupils aged 5 to 16
- academies for children with special educational needs or disabilities
- alternative provision (AP) academies, for children who do not go to a mainstream school

Voluntary-aided-schools

This includes voluntary-sector alternative provision schools with local authority agreement.

Non-maintained special schools

This includes schools for children with special educational needs.

Use of the pupil premium

It's up to school leaders to decide how to spend the pupil premium. This is because school leaders are best-placed to assess their pupils' needs and use funding to improve attainment.

Tiered approach

Evidence suggests that pupil premium spending is most effective when schools use a tiered approach, targeting spending across the following 3 areas below but focusing on teaching quality - investing in learning and development for teachers.

Read the [Education Endowment Foundation's \(EEF\) pupil premium guide](#) for information about the tiered approach to spending.

Teaching

Schools arrange training and professional development for all their staff to improve the impact of teaching and learning for pupils.

Academic support

Schools should decide on the main issues stopping their pupils from succeeding at school and use the pupil premium to buy extra help.

Wider approaches

This may include non-academic use of the pupil premium such as:

- school breakfast clubs
- music lessons for disadvantaged pupils
- help with the cost of educational trips or visits
- speech and language therapy

Schools may find using the pupil premium in this way helps to:

- increase pupils' confidence and resilience
- encourage pupils to be more aspirational
- benefit non-eligible pupils

Non-eligible pupils

Schools can spend their pupil premium on pupils who do not meet the eligibility criteria but need extra support.

Example

Schools can use the pupil premium to support other pupils, for example, if they:

- are in contact with a social worker
- used to be in contact with a social worker
- are acting as a carer

Accountability

Schools must show how they're using their pupil premium effectively:

- by publishing an [online statement](#)
- through [inspections by Ofsted](#)
- through published performance tables

[Pupil premium: effective use and accountability](#) contains information on how schools are held to account.

[Pupil premium conditions of grant](#) explains which pupils are eligible to attract the pupil premium to their school.

Allocation changes from 2021 to 2022

From 2021 to 2022 onwards, we will be basing pupil premium funding on the October census for mainstream and special schools. Pupil premium funding for the financial year starting on 1 April 2021 will therefore be based on the October 2020 census instead of the January census as would have previously been the case.

This change brings the pupil premium in line with how the rest of the core schools' budget is calculated and will provide both schools and DfE with greater certainty around future funding levels earlier in the year.

Per pupil funding rates will be the same as in 2020 to 2021. Total pupil premium funding is expected to increase to more than £2.5 billion in 2021 to 2022 as more children have become eligible for free school meals as a result of the impact of the pandemic.

Eligibility

Ever 6 free school meals

Pupil premium will continue to be based on ever 6 free school meals, whereby pupils recorded as eligible for free school meals at the time of the October census, or at any point in the previous 6 years, will attract pupil premium funding.

For 2021 to 2022, this means pupils having been recorded as eligible for free school meals at any point between January 2015 and October 2020.

Children adopted from care or who have left care

Allocations for previously looked after (past looked-after children) will be based on the October census for mainstream and special schools.

Looked-after children

There will be no change to the methodology for calculating allocations for looked-after children.

As before, ESFA will allocate a provisional amount per child looked after in June. That allocation will then be updated and finalised based on the children looked-after data return SSDA903.

Ever 6 service children

Service children are not disadvantaged but share the pupil premium payment process. Service child premium allocations will be based on the October census for mainstream and special schools.

For 2021 to 2022, that means pupils recorded as eligible for the service child premium since the January 2015 census as well as those recorded as a service child for the first time on the October 2020 school census.

Alternative provision, pupil referral units and hospital schools

There will be no change to the allocations process for alternative provision, pupil referral units and hospital schools.

These institutions will continue to be funded based on the January census as before. There is no census for alternative provision or hospital schools in October, and the October census is not representative of the number of pupils in pupil referral units across a full academic year.

Implications for school census returns

The move to using the October census for the pupil premium has no impact on the information schools are asked to submit to DfE.

Schools should continue to record free school meals eligibility, Service Child indicator and post looked after arrangements data as they normally do for each termly census.

Allocation and payment arrangements

Using the October census for the pupil premium will give schools early certainty about the additional funding they will receive the following year, helping them to plan the support that they will give to pupil premium pupils.

In this transitional year, pupil premium allocations will be confirmed to the usual timeline in June 2021. As from next year, allocations for mainstream and special schools will be published earlier in the year, giving these schools greater certainty around future funding levels earlier in the year.

Allocations for alternative provision, pupil referral units and hospital schools will continue to be published to the usual timeline as these will continue to be based on the January census.

There will be no change in the payment arrangements for the pupil premium. The pupil premium grant will continue to be paid in quarterly instalments.

The conditions of grant for the 2021 to 2022 pupil premium will be published before the start of the 2021 to 2022 financial year.

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