



Walsall Council

Walsall Children's Services

Better Together for Children

Report to: Schools Forum

Date: 8 July 2014

Subject: Pupil Premium in Respect of Looked After Children

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Purpose of the report: To inform Schools Forum of Changes to Pupil Premium in Respect of Looked after Children

Recommendation: To note the report

Summary

In March 2014 the Department for Education announced changes to the Pupil Premium for looked after children. There are three principal changes:

- looked after children attract a pupil premium of £1900, more than double the amount they attracted in 2013-14.
- the cohort of looked after children who attract the pupil premium is bigger and includes children looked after from the first day of care rather than, as previously, only those who had been looked after for six months or more.
- for 2014-15 the pupil premium for looked after children must be managed by the Virtual School head in the authority that looks after them. Unlike in previous years, there is no requirement for an authority to pass the funding onto the school where the child is on roll to contribute towards meeting the needs identified in their Personal Education Plan. The presumption, however, is funding is passed to the school and this is strongly encouraged.

Background

- 1.1 In March 2014 the Department for Education (DfE) announced changes to the Pupil Premium for looked after children.

The conditions of grant for the pupil premium arrangements in 2014-15 are published on the Department's website and can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283193/Pupil_Premium_CoG_2014-15.pdf

The guidance has been previously circulated to all designated teachers for looked after children.

- 1.2 The DfE has changed the conditions of grant regarding how the pupil premium is managed for looked after children to reflect more effectively the particular challenges of supporting their education.
- 1.3 The role of Virtual School head teacher is now a statutory role and the DfE envisage that as part of that role they will be responsible as part of the corporate parent role for promoting the educational achievement of the children looked after by their local authority. The DfE want them to have a greater role in working with schools to ensure that duty is fulfilled and see giving the Virtual School head teacher management of the looked after pupil premium as administratively less bureaucratic.

- 1.4 The conditions of grant for 2014-15 states that the pupil premium grant allocation must be managed by the designated Virtual School head teacher for the children looked after by the authority rather than the local authority finance team as in the past. This has statutory force.
- 1.5 The DfE expects Virtual School head teachers to manage the pupil premium to ensure that it promotes the educational achievement of all the children looked after by the authority. Pupil premium is additional funding provided to raise the achievement of looked after pupils and close the achievement gap and the Virtual School head teacher is responsible for managing the efficient use of pupil premium funding for the purpose it has been provided. As such, Virtual School head teachers will therefore need to demonstrate a direct link between spending the pupil premium and raising standards of achievement for the children looked after by their authority, wherever they are placed.
- 1.4 Virtual School head teachers are responsible for making sure there are effective arrangements in place for allocating pupil premium funding to benefit children looked after by their authority. That means:
- making sure that pupil premium funding for looked after children is spent effectively and fully, given that any under spend needs to be returned to the DfE at the end of the financial year;
 - being able to demonstrate how pupil premium funding managed by the Virtual School head is linked to raising achievement for looked after children and closing the gap between their achievement and that of their peers; and
 - having arrangements in place to engage with the looked after child's school (usually with the designated teacher) about how pupil premium funding allocated to the school is contributing to meet the needs identified in his or her Personal Education Plan.
- 1.5 Schools are accountable for the educational attainment and progress of all disadvantaged pupils who attract pupil premium on their roll, through Ofsted inspections and KS2/KS4 school performance tables.
- 1.6 The Ofsted framework for the inspection of children looked after and care leavers states that, as part of the performance information required, the inspector will ask for the annual report of the Virtual School head. Ofsted will expect that annual report to include information about how the pupil premium has been managed and the impact it has made both for individual children and the looked after cohort as a whole.
- 1.7 £1900 is allocated for each looked after child, irrespective of how long they have been in care; however, this does not necessarily mean that Virtual School head teachers are expected to simply passport this amount of funding on to schools and schools cannot insist that they receive this amount of money for each looked after child. Virtual School head teachers can therefore manage the funding to take account of the length of time in care, as well as other factors, if they wish. The funding, however, should always be

to support the educational achievement of the looked after child, as described in their Personal Education Plan and overseen by the designated teacher in the school.

- 1.8 As permitted within the guidance, the Virtual School will withhold £200 per looked after pupil to support the provision of a variety of centrally required services to looked after children, for example training for Designated Teachers across the authority. However, given that unspent Premium must be returned to the DfE, in the event of any underspend being forecast the Virtual School will negotiate with individual schools to ensure that if additional funding could be used to make an impact on the individual looked after child's progress and attainment the appropriate proportion of the Premium will be made available to the school.
- 1.9 Pupil premium will follow the child if they move school mid-term.
- 1.10 Any pupil premium funding that has not been passed to schools or spent by 31 March 2015 must be returned to the DfE.

2. Local Process

- 2.1 All children who become looked after are eligible for Pupil Premium from the first day that they become looked after. In Walsall this means the child's school will initially receive £500.
- 2.2 The meeting to agree the Personal Education Plan will normally take place within 10 days of the child becoming looked after. At this meeting any specific support required to enable the child to make progress, or accelerated progress will be discussed. Designated teachers for looked after children are encouraged to attend that meeting with clear plans about how the child's learning will be supported to make the required progress.
- 2.3 On receipt of costed plans for any additional support, the head teacher will authorise additional payment and this amount plus the initial £500 will be paid to the school.
- 2.4 As now, the Virtual School will track the attendance, progress and attainment of looked after children and an additional Personal Education Planning meeting can be requested by the school, the designated teacher, the Virtual School, the social worker or the foster carer if there are concerns about attendance, progress or attainment
- 2.4 Schools finance will undertake a termly reconciliation to ensure that all agreed monies have been appropriately dispensed to the school where the child is on roll.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Schools Forum as asked to note the contents of this report

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