



Preston Lodge

High School

Dear Parent/Carer

21 March 2018

Pupil Equity Fund spending at Preston Lodge

Many families will already be aware of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) money that has been allocated to Scottish schools this session. This money aims to close the poverty related attainment gap or, put in more simple terms, the lower examination results which national statistics show are more likely to affect less affluent families. This funding is to be spent at the discretion of schools, working in partnership with their local authority.

Preston Lodge High School was allocated £63,000 in session 2017-18. Our challenge was to target spending on those who face financial challenges, in as sensitive and effective way as possible. We have worked hard with our local authority, school staff, our Parent Council and outside agencies to focus our spending, and this letter informs all of our families about the decisions we have made.

Many schools in Scotland have found that it has taken longer than expected to finalise their spending, and the government recently announced that any money unspent from this year can be rolled over into next session. Here at Preston Lodge we will have spent approximately two thirds of our allocation by the end of this session, with our focus being on management of data, literacy and support for students facing examinations.

Which students are able to benefit from PEF spending?

Some of our funding is targeted at specific learning needs, such as low literacy levels, where some students are more likely to face challenges. Other spending is only available to students who meet specific criteria based on data that we have in school. Further information about this can be found overleaf.

What will we spend this year's money on?

We are currently finalising recruitment materials for a **Principal Teacher of Attainment**. Evidence from around the world shows that better use of data is essential if a school is going to effectively support the right students, and every East Lothian secondary school has committed to providing a designated person with this responsibility.

We will target low **literacy** levels in our S1-S3 student group by appointing a **Literacy Worker**. A new literacy programme will be supported by additional Chromebooks and new software. All students in S1-S3 who require additional support with literacy will benefit from this increased focus.

We intend to set up an **Inclusion Fund**, to provide additional learning materials for S1-6 students. This fund will provide small grants to students to ensure they can properly resource their studies, and we will shortly finalise with our local authority how best to target this fund.

This week we are launching a small-scale pilot of '**tailored tutoring**' in S5. Following last year's successful Small Group Tuition project (which was available to all students), this session's work will be providing that tutoring for students who meet PEF criteria in specific subjects. We are writing separately to families whose children can benefit from this approach.

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This is a new direction in Scottish education and, inevitably, a number of families will have questions around the fund, and our school's approach. Do please get in touch with us if you would like to discuss any aspect of the Pupil Equity Fund further.

Yours sincerely



Gavin Clark
Headteacher

Frequently asked questions

How is the amount each school receives decided?

Each school receives funding based on the number of S1-S3 students who claim free school meals. For this reason we are keen to encourage families to claim free school meals. Not only will this increase the funding we receive, but it will also open up participation in some projects to those students. Although the funding is decided on the basis of S1-S3 students money can be targeted on students from S1-S6.

Which students qualify for targeted projects?

Some projects, such as this years tailored tutoring, can only be accessed by students who meet certain data requirements. For example, students who live in SIMD 1-4 (see below), students entitled to free school meals, who are Looked After and Accommodated, or who are young carers. However, these are very specific measures, so our guidance team also identify students that they are aware of, who have experienced 'Adverse Childhood Experiences', who will be entitled to participate. A number of other local authorities are focusing their PEF spending on students who have had adverse childhood experiences.

What is 'SIMD'?

SIMD is the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, and is a tool for identifying areas of potential poverty and inequality across Scotland. It was created by the government to help organisations, like schools, provided support to those most in need. Scotland is split up into many small 'data zones' with roughly equal population, and then a range of measures such as income, student attainment, health, etc are used to rank the data zones in a 'list' from the most affluent to the least affluent.

This list of data zones can be split in many different ways, but the most common approach is to divide them in to 10 groups, or 'deciles', with decile 1 being the least affluent and decile 10 being the most affluent. Our school catchment area includes data zones ranging from SIMD 2 through to SIMD 10. When we are using SIMD for targeting projects we will focus on SIMD 1 to 4, because we know that the families in these areas are, more likely to be less affluent than the Scottish average. However, we are well aware that each data zone will contain many families who have very different financial means. For that reason we also use free school meals, for example, as a way of targeting our work.

What if I live in SIMD 1 to 4 but do not feel that my child needs specifically targeted support?

Any family is very welcome to let us know if they would rather not benefit from targeted projects. We experienced this feedback when we offered reduced trip costs to SIMD 1-4 students participating in our S1 Big Adventure, and we entirely understand that some families will not wish to benefit in this way.

How will we know if our PEF spending has helped to close the attainment gap?

One of the tasks for our new PT Attainment will be to analyse the impact of projects. This will allow adjustments, where necessary, and reduce the possibility of money being spent ineffectively.

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Preston Lodge is a community of learning. We value achievement, happiness and respect.



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