



# Preston Lodge

## High School

Dear Parent/Carer

1 September, 2020

### Reducing the cost of the school day

I'm writing to all families to introduce myself as the new Attainment Manager at Preston Lodge, and secondly to let you know about the financial support available within the school, which you may not be aware of.

Part of my role as Attainment Manager is to remove financial barriers to pupil's learning. We understand that school comes with many costs, and that these costs can cause difficulty and stress for some families. Covid-19 has had a significant financial impact on the country and, inevitably, some families in our school community will be feeling the effects of this.

### Targeted reductions in course costs

As a response to Covid-19, this year the school has been successful in securing outside funding to help us better support families in our community pay for some of the costs of school. For this academic year S1-6 pupils who will have their course costs paid for them in full automatically are those:

- registered for Free School Meals;
- looked after or accommodated/care experienced;
- who live in Scottish Government data zones 1-5 (see end of letter for explanation),

This applies to all HE and CDT courses for all year groups. These costs are usually paid online by families using our School Pay system so young people will not be able to tell who is and is not paying – this will be dealt with confidentially. Young people who meet the above criteria will also be able to claim a free scientific calculator. If you would like to enquire about this please ask your child to speak to their maths teacher or email me at [elittle@prestonlodge.elschool.org.uk](mailto:elittle@prestonlodge.elschool.org.uk) and this will also be dealt with confidentially. In addition to this we have been able to fund a basic art kit and folder for all S1 pupils free of charge.

If you think a reduction may have been wrongly applied to your child, or you believe your child has been missed out then please contact me at [elittle@prestonlodge.elschool.org.uk](mailto:elittle@prestonlodge.elschool.org.uk).

### Support available to all

We are aware that some young people may not fall into the above categories, but may still need financial support. To support all pupils we are able to provide many basic items of day-to-day school equipment

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Headteacher: Gavin Clark Depute Headteachers: Jonny Else (Grange), Julia Robertson (Seton), Calum Stewart (Gosford)  
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free of charge, from pencils to school bags. Please contact Julie Lowe or Emma Little if there is any equipment that you are in need of.

The school provides a breakfast club, which is free of charge to all pupils each morning in school from 8.20am.

Furthermore, all pupils are able to access our Community Fund, which provides help with the cost of schooling. This can include contributions towards expenses like school trips, transport, subject resources, and school uniform. Grants are expected to be in the region of £10 to £50, but all applications are considered on an individual basis. Applications can be made by students, families, staff, and members of the wider community. A Community Fund application can be accessed [here](#) or requested from the school office.

### Why should I sign up for Free School Meals?

Some families may be eligible to register their children for Free School Meals but perhaps are not currently signed up because their child doesn't make use of the meals provided in school. I wanted to take this opportunity to outline the full list of support that comes with registering for Free School Meals

- A Free School Meal entitlement which can be used at break or lunch time.
- A free clothing grant each year of £100 per child to use to buy school uniform.
- Free access to the Active Schools programme, including after-school clubs for rugby, football and hockey – usually costing £35 per pupil each year.
- Free course costs for HE and CDT. This year we are broadened our criteria for free course costs as a response to Covid-19, but generally only pupils who are registered for Free School Meals would receive this benefit. These courses can cost up to £50 per pupil per year, and some pupils study more than one of these courses at a time.
- Free scientific calculator – again this is generally only available to pupils registered for Free School Meals.
- Reduced trip costs. Typically Preston Lodge offers a large variety of day and residential trips, both in the UK and abroad. Most trip costs are subsidised for pupils registered for Free School Meals.

If you would like to find out more about whether your family are eligible for Free School Meals and the wider support that comes along with it, you can do so [here](#). In the coming months I plan to get in touch with families by phone who have been registered for Free School Meals in the past but who are not currently signed up to double check you are aware of the support which may be available to you.

If you would like any help or advice with accessing any of the supports set out above please do get in touch with me at [elittle@prestonlodge.elcschool.org.uk](mailto:elittle@prestonlodge.elcschool.org.uk)

Yours sincerely,

Emma Little, Attainment Manager

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## Scottish Government Data Zones: Information for families

The Scottish Government has divided the country into “data zones”. They then use a variety of measures, such as income, employment, educational performance and access to health services to decide how advantaged or disadvantaged a data zone is.

Every part of the country is given a number, ranging from data zone 1 (most disadvantaged) to data zone 10 (least disadvantaged) and you can find an interactive map showing every data zone in the country [here](#). This allows the government to identify challenges in particular areas, and propose solutions. PL students live in data zones ranging from 2 to 10.

Our funders have asked us to target support to students who live in data zones 1-5. Of course, we cannot make clear judgements about individual student circumstances, based on the area they live in. Many relatively affluent families will live in less affluent areas, and vice versa. We will contact all families who live in data zones 1-5, explaining that payment for Home Economics or CDT costs will not be required this year. However, experience shows that a small number of families living in data zones 1-5 would rather pay for course costs, and they simply need to let us know if that is the case.

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