

Q&A: EXTENSION OF THE PUPIL PREMIUM TO ALL PUPILS ADOPTED FROM CARE

Why has the Government extended eligibility for the pupil premium to all children adopted from care? Why was there an eligibility cut-off date?

The pupil premium was originally allocated to pupils adopted from care on or after 30 December 2005 to ensure consistency with the eligibility criteria for adopted children and priority school admissions as set out in the School Admissions Code of Practice. The Government recently revised its advice to school admissions authorities, asking them to give all children adopted from care the highest priority. The change in pupil premium eligibility aligns the pupil premium with the recent change in advice to school admission authorities.

How many children do you expect this to benefit?

We anticipate that this change will benefit over 10,000 more children and young people adopted from care in the current financial year. Many of these will be in secondary school. We know that some adopted children experience particular challenges during adolescence and they in particular should benefit from the tailored support that this extra funding can provide.

Do parents have to self-declare their child's adopted status to the school?

It will be for adoptive parents to decide if they wish to self-declare their children's status to schools. Parents should be asked to provide supporting evidence, for example, a photocopy of the adoption order, and asked to confirm that their child was adopted from care. Parents will need to self-declare by 2 October 2014 which is the date schools must complete the autumn census.

When will schools get the extra funding?

Schools have been asked to record in the autumn school census all children adopted from care on the school roll on 2 October 2014. The data will inform additional pupil premium payments to schools before the end of March 2015.

Is the money ring-fenced? What can schools use it for?

The funding is allocated to schools to help improve the attainment of pupils who have been adopted from care. Schools have flexibility over how they use the pupil premium, as they are best placed to understand the specific needs of their adopted pupils and to address the barriers that might prevent those pupils from achieving their full potential. For example, schools could choose to invest in one-to-one tuition or catch-up sessions for particular curriculum subjects, or training for staff on issues relating to attachment. While the money is not ring-fenced, the accountability measures in place around the pupil premium should ensure that schools use the funding specifically to benefit those pupils for whom it has been allocated.

How do you know schools will use this money on raising the attainment of adopted children? How will this be monitored?

Schools are held to account in several ways for the educational progress and attainment of their disadvantaged pupils, including those adopted from care. Ofsted inspections now look closely at the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils, and the gap between them and their peers. Schools will not normally be judged 'Outstanding' if disadvantaged pupils are not making at least good progress. The key stage 2 and key stage 4 school performance tables include details of the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the in-school gap between them and their peers, reported for that year and as an average over the last three years. There is also a legal requirement for schools to publish information online about their pupil premium funding allocation, how it has been used and the impact it has had on disadvantaged pupils.