

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Pupil Premium funding?

A: There is a detailed explanation of this on the main Pupil Premium section of the school website, however, in brief, Pupil Premium is additional money given to publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged students and close the gap between them and their peers.

Q: Why have I been sent a letter about Pupil Premium funding?

A: All parents of students who are eligible for Pupil Premium receive a letter and information pack detailing the amount of funding they are entitled to and the provisions in place to assist you in spending this funding.

Q: Why is my child deemed eligible for Pupil Premium funding?

A: Students eligible for Pupil premium funding fall into several categories, please see below:

Children registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years (Ever 6 FSM)

Children with parents in the Armed Forces within the last 5 years (Ever 5 Service Child) or in receipt of a child pension from the Ministry of Defence

Looked-after children (LAC) defined in the Children Act 1989 as one who is in the care of, or provided with accommodation by, an English local authority*

Children who have ceased to be looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because of adoption, a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order or a residence order (PLAC)

*The funding for Children who have been in local-authority care for 1 day or more (LAC) does not go to their school; it goes to the virtual school head (VSH) in the local authority that looks after the child. VSHs are responsible for managing Pupil Premium funding for looked-after children.

If a student has been registered as eligible for free school meals and has also left local-authority care for any of the reasons above, they will attract the £1,266 rate rather than receive both awards.

Q: My child does not struggle academically, why should I use this funding?

A: This funding is allocated in order to assist all pupils to reach their potential, not just for those that struggle. Whilst your son/daughter may not be finding their academic studies difficult, there may be ways in which their learning or academic experience

can be enhanced and developed. There is always room for improvement and finessing within academic subjects and, if you feel that your child has reached the top of all their current subject selection, we would encourage you to offer them the opportunity to learn something new such as an additional foreign language such as Russian or Mandarin.

Q: Do I have to use the funding if I feel that my child is busy enough and I don't want to make them study for longer during the week or take up their weekends?

A: Whether you use the funding or not is entirely up to you. We would obviously encourage it as we feel it benefits students considerably, but the choice is yours.

However, please note, parents are required to have spent, or at least allocated, 1/3 of their total funding by February Half Term. Allocation of funding means that tuition sessions are at least booked with either a tuition company or a private tutor ahead of the February cut off. Any remaining funds must then be spent, and invoices received, by the end of July in the current academic year.

If Pupil Premium funds are not utilised by these cut-off dates, the school reserves the right to redistribute the relevant funding at our discretion.

Q: What subjects can I receive tutoring for?

A: Any academic subject you wish, although Gordon's School would strongly recommend that focus is given to tuition in literacy and numeracy.

Q: Can funding be held back and used in later years?

A: No. All funding allocated in a specific school year must be spent by the end of July in that academic year.

Q: I don't want to use my funding right away; can I save it for a time closer to my child's exams?

A: Yes. As long as you book the sessions you would like with a company or individual, you are able to make use of your funding at any point of the year. The only caveat is that all invoices need to be with the Finance Department by the end of July in each academic year. It is also important to remember that all tutors and tuition companies get booked up well ahead of the Easter holidays, therefore, it is important to make such bookings in good time.

Please also note; in order to ensure that the available funding is utilised before the end of the academic year, parents are required to have spent, or at least allocated, 1/3 of their total funding by February Half Term. Allocation of funding means that tuition sessions are at least booked with either a tuition company or a private tutor ahead of the February cut off. Any remaining funds must then be spent, and invoices received, by the end of July of that academic year. If Pupil Premium funds are not

utilised by these cut-off dates, the school reserves the right to redistribute the relevant funding at our discretion.

Q: Can I use my funding for something other than academic tuition?

A: In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to use the Pupil Premium funding allocated to your child for something other than direct academic tuition. This may include, but is not limited to, musical instruction for GCSE music, wider reading books or subject specific text books, revision material, computer software designed to support learning or revision.

These decisions will be taken on an individual basis but are likely to be considered only in exceptional circumstances.

Q: Can I use the funding for music lessons?

A: Yes, although only if your son/daughter is taking GCSE Music. In exceptional circumstances we may consider allowing the funding to be used for music lessons at Key Stage 3. Again, however, we would draw your attention to the cross-curricular benefits of literacy and numeracy tuition which Gordon's suggests remains the focus of the Pupil Premium funding.

Q: How do I know how much funding I have left?

A: You will have received notification regarding the amount of funding you are entitled to under the Pupil Premium scheme in the letter we sent in September/October. In order to monitor how much funding you have remaining, please note the cost of your sessions and the amount of your initial allocation.

If you cannot find this information, please contact the Finance Department at this address ppfinance@gordons.surrey.sch.uk to enquire about the initial amount of your funding or the amount you have left if you have already used some.

Q: What happens if I forget how much I've spent and go over my Pupil Premium allocation?

A: If the number of sessions you use exceeds the amount of funding that has been allocated to your son/daughter then unfortunately you must cover the excess cost yourself.

If an invoice is submitted by an individual or company that exceeds your allocation, the Finance Department will return the invoice and ask that a correct one is sent to us and the excess is billed to the parent in question.

Q: My child is a residential boarder, can they have tuition on-site?

A: If your child is a full or international boarder then yes, they can have on-site tuition. However, if your child is a weekly boarder, we ask that you make use of tuition at

weekends or in school holidays using one of the local tuition companies the school has sourced. In *exceptional* circumstances, if this is not possible, applications for on-site tuition of weekly boarders will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Q: How do I apply for on-site tuition for my child?

A: Please contact your child's Head of House in the first instance and they will be able to advise you of how to proceed. However, there is also a full explanation of how this process works on the main area of the website, please refer to this for details.

Q: Can my child have tuition during Prep or on Saturday mornings?

A: We would generally advise against using Prep time for academic tuition as this may compromise your child's ability to keep up with their regular school work.

However, we recognise the demands of the busy school week and the need for family time at weekends. Therefore, should you wish to take your son/daughter home during Prep to facilitate a tuition session we are happy to accommodate this. However, we would recommend that your child's ability to keep up with their Prep is monitored and any issues addressed promptly.

If a student receives on-site tuition, we will make use of Prep time in order to fit in the number of sessions we need to in each evening.

We also believe that recreational activities on a Saturday morning are an important part of a broad and balanced education. Therefore, we do not offer on-site tuition on Saturday mornings. Students are also not permitted to withdraw from Saturday morning school to undertake tuition at home.

Q: I live too far away to use the companies you recommend; can I still use my Pupil Premium funding?

A: Yes. Please read the section of the main website titled 'Out of area tuition' and make use of the relevant forms that will be required. These were included in your original information pack and can also be downloaded from the website.

Q: I've heard my child can have LAMDA lessons, what is this?

A: LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts) qualifications are designed to provide pupils with a means to improve communication skills, increase self-confidence and develop strong social skills, regardless of their experience or ability.

Q: How do I apply for LAMDA lessons for my child?

A: Unfortunately, in the 2016-17 academic year, we no longer have any space for new entrants onto LAMDA courses. We anticipate this to be the case until Easter 2017. However, should you be interested in placing your child's name on a waiting list, please contact the music Department at: music@gordons.surrey.sch.uk

Further information about LAMDA courses, and application forms, are available on the Pupil Premium section of the main school website

Q: Will the cost of LAMDA lessons come out of my child's Pupil Premium allocation?

A: No. The cost of LAMDA lessons is met by the School out of the 'top slice' funding.

Q: What is 'top slice' funding?

A: Top Slice funding is the name given to the money the school retains from the bulk Pupil Premium payment we receive each year. The Pupil Premium funding comes to us as one single annual payment, from this we make individual awards to cover the cost of tuition. However, in order to cover the expenses incurred in providing certain services within the school, we retain a set amount of the funding each year, equivalent to 1/3 of each student's allocation.

The top slice funding regularly covers the cost of LAMDA lessons, a school councillor and certain administrative costs, however, it is also possible that the funding may be used for additional, one-off expenses subject to the approval of the School Senior Leadership team and/or the School Governors.

Q: I have heard that some students receive additional music lessons paid for by Pupil Premium funding. What is this and can my child have these lessons?

A: In some years, where there is sufficient 'top slice' remaining, or there is money which has not been spent by parents in the previous academic year, we may make some funds available to the Music Department. These funds are used to provide lessons and/or instruments to Pupil Premium students deemed 'promising musicians' by the Music Department. If your child is on this list then yes, they will be eligible to receive lessons or equipment under this initiative. However, this is for a small number of specially selected students only.