Information for Parents and Carers - The Scottish Attainment Challenge – Closing the Gap

The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF)

Pupil Equity Funding is additional funding allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap. From April 2017, £120m will be provided via the Attainment Scotland Fund directly to head teachers across Scotland, to use for additional staffing or resources considered to help reduce the poverty related attainment gap.

The funding will reach schools in every local authority in Scotland, and will be distributed based on the numbers of pupils in P1-S3, known to be eligible and registered for free school meals.

The Scottish Government announced the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) school level allocations for 2017/18, with draft guidelines to accompany this. Ellon Academy been allocated £24,000 for session 2017-18.

These funds can be spent in accordance with the underlying principles set out below, with interventions and success criteria detailed in our School Improvement Plan. We expect similar amounts each year for the term of this Scottish Parliament. The PEF is concerned with additional and targeted interventions to support those young people affected by poverty. The diagram below illustrates in a simple way the difference between equality and equity.



We have been tasked to spend the Pupil Equity Fund on targeted support interventions to deliver equity, and not on universal supports for all. The spending will be carefully planned and the impact of support interventions will be measured in order to assess impact on outcomes for young people.

Information and support on what interventions are most effective have been made available to the school and we have also been analysing our own data to target our interventions. The Government’s advice is that our PEF interventions should be additional to our normal practice and should prioritise the following areas:

* To improve young people’s attainment in literacy and numeracy
* To improve the health and well-being of our young people
* To improve young people’s employability skills and support their move towards positive destinations when they leave school.

The factors that can make a difference are:

* Learning and Teaching
* Leadership
* Families and Communities
* Early Intervention

The diagram below, produced by Education Scotland, has helped to inform our decision making.



The allocation of funds is based on those pupils receiving a Free School Meals Entitlement (FME). Also based on those pupils from deciles 1-3; deciles 1-3 refer to those pupils in the most deprived areas according to the Scottish Index for Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

Some of our findings are not surprising in a successful school such as ours. However there is always room for improvement.

Our findings are:

* Young people who attend school regularly, attain better and have more positive outcomes
* Young people who stay on to S6 attain better and achieve more positive destinations
* Positive relationships with young people and their families supports attendance and attainment
* Early interventions (from S1 and earlier) provide better opportunities to improve outcomes for young people

As a result, we have created the following targets:

* Raise attainment in literacy and numeracy through targeted interventions and a positive presentation policy
* Improve attendance and late-coming amongst young people in deciles 1-3 and/or those receiving FME
* Reduce demerits and referrals of young people in deciles 1-3 and/or those receiving FME
* Develop positive relationships and supports for challenged young people and their families.
* Develop early intervention strategies for challenged young people in S1-S3.

How will we meet these targets?

The school will employ a Principal Teacher Equity and Excellence to support challenged young people from deciles 1-3 with their engagement in learning.

The post holder will work with young people and their families to develop positive learning behaviours.

The school will analyse attendance and late-coming data, focussing on young people in deciles 1-3.

The post holder will also visit and work with families to support improvements in attendance and late-coming.

The post-holder will have strategic and operational responsibility for targeted support and improving outcomes for young people in S1-S3 from deciles 1-3 and/or those with FME.

The post holder will develop strategies to support the cost of the school day for those affected by poverty.

The post holder will develop programmes and strategies working with staff across the school to raise attainment for those affected by poverty and will liaise closely with Principal Teachers of Guidance to maximise this targeted support.

How can you help?

As a school and with our Cluster Primary Schools, we have been discussing and consulting how our PEF money can be best used. Parents and carers views have been represented through our Parent Council. We would like to know your views and suggestions too.

When appointed, our Principal Teacher of Excellence and Equity will be co-ordinating our work in this area, and will be developing future interventions and supports.

If you have suggestions and ideas on how we can improve attainment for those young people challenged by poverty please contact the school at the email address, below.

ellon.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

More detailed information on the poverty-related attainment gap can be found via the links below. These will give you more details on the PEF and the opportunities that this brings for Ellon Academy’s Learning Community.

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/Raisingeducationalattainment/pupilequityfund>

<http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S5/SB_16->

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/Interventions-for-Equity.aspx>

We are aware that some families in the Ellon community are entitled to the free school meals allowance, but do not claim this entitlement. Click on the link below to find out more information on Aberdeenshire Council free school meals and clothing grants.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/parents-carers/assistance/free-school-meals/>

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/parents-carers/assistance/school-clothing-grants/>

Staff at Ellon Academy Community Campus are committed to doing our best to REACH out to support everyone through developing:

**R**esilience – Striving to instil confidence and determination in all members of our school

**E**thos - Striving to develop respect, understanding and equity for all

**A**chievement - Striving to enable all of learners to realise their full potential

**C**ommunity - Striving to prepare our pupils to contribute as local, national and global citizens

**H**ealth and Wellbeing - Striving to inspire healthy, happy, creative and aspirational young people

Through developing resilience, ethos, achievement, community and health, Ellon Academy aims to create a caring and supportive environment, which enables excellence, equity and positive outcomes for all our young people.