

**West Down Primary School**

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Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to encourage all eligible families to apply for **Free School Meals (FSM)** and **Pupil Premium** funding. These programs not only support your child's wellbeing and education, but also provide vital funding to our school to enhance learning opportunities for all pupils.

Why Apply?

- **Free School Meals** ensure your child receives a nutritious meal every day, helping them stay focused and energized.
- **Pupil Premium** funding is additional money given to schools to support children from lower-income families. It helps us provide:
 - Extra teaching support
 - Access to educational trips and activities
 - Learning resources and enrichment programs
 - Wellbeing and pastoral care
 - Individually allocated budget to support your child. (see below)

Even if your child is in **Reception, Year 1 or Year 2** and already receives a free meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme, **please still apply** if you meet the eligibility criteria. This ensures the school receives the Pupil Premium funding your child is entitled to.

Who is Eligible?

You may be eligible if you receive any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

- Child Tax Credit (without Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (with a household income below a certain threshold)

When does the funding get allocated?

Pupil premium funding is calculated using data from the October School Census and schools receive the funding the following September. Once a child becomes eligible for the pupil premium this funding will continue for 6 years even if the family's financial circumstances change. As soon as school receives the funding we will offer a personal budget for the child.

How to Apply

Applying is quick and confidential. You can apply online [Citizen Port](#)[Citizen Portal - Sign in](#) or contact the school office for support. We're happy to help guide you through the process.

Your application can make a real difference – not just for your child, but for the whole school community.

The local authority will soon be moving to an opt out system and you may receive a letter informing you that your child is eligible for free school meals. However, as we are not yet certain when the 'opt out' system will be launched we would encourage you to apply for free school meals for your child if you think you might be eligible.

Children eligible for Pupil Premium funding have the opportunity to access a personal budget of £175 per academic year once funding has been received (we'll let you know when we've received Pupil Premium funding for your child). This budget can be used to support their learning and development in a way that best suits their individual needs. Families may choose to spend this allowance on

- Up to 50% toward the cost of trips, including residential trips
- Up to 50% towards the cost of peripatetic music lessons
- Up to 50% towards the cost of an afterschool club
- Towards to cost of school uniform and shoes (please contact the school office discuss this before purchase)
- Other items identified by their teacher and agreed with the parent.

The aim is to ensure that every child has access to the tools and experiences that help them thrive both in and out of the classroom.

Funds not spent within the year will be allocated to class support.

What is the Armed Forces Pupil Premium (Service Pupil Premium)?

The **Service Pupil Premium (SPP)** is additional funding provided by the UK government to state schools, academies, and free schools in England to support children whose parents serve in the Armed Forces. It recognises the unique challenges that service children may face—such as

frequent school moves, separation from a parent due to deployment, and the emotional impact of military life.

For the 2025–2026 academic year, schools receive **£350 per eligible child**

Who is eligible?

Your child may be eligible if:

- One parent is currently serving in the regular Armed Forces or is on full-time reserve service.
- One parent died while serving and your child receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or War Pensions Scheme.
- Your child has been registered as a 'service child' on a school census at any time in the last 6 years (known as the **Ever 6 measure**).
- One parent is serving in the armed forces of another nation and is stationed in England

How is the funding used?

The funding is **not given directly to families**, but to schools, who use it primarily for **pastoral support**. This might include:

- Emotional wellbeing support (e.g. counselling, nurture groups)
- Help with transitions between schools
- Resources to help children stay connected with deployed parents (e.g. photo books, Skype sessions)

Schools have flexibility in how they use the funding, but it must be targeted to support the specific needs of service children.

What do parents need to do?

To ensure your child's school receives this funding:

- **Inform the school of your Armed Forces status before the autumn school census (usually early October).**
- If you've left the Armed Forces in the last 6 years, your child may still be eligible—make sure the school knows this.

Thank you for your continued support.

Warm regards,

Su and Faye

