

Pupil Premium – General Information

The pupil premium grant provides funding to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in state-funded schools in England.

The service pupil premium (SPP) provides support for children and young people of service families. It is combined into pupil premium payments to make it easier for schools to manage their spending. Pupils that the SPP intends to support are not necessarily from financially disadvantaged backgrounds.

Funding criteria

Pupil premium funding is allocated to eligible schools based on the number of:

- pupils who are recorded as eligible for free school meals (FSM), or have been recorded as eligible in the past 6 years (referred to as Ever 6 FSM)
- children previously looked after by a local authority or other state care, including children adopted from state care or equivalent from outside England and Wales

Pupil premium is not a personal budget for individual pupils, and schools do not have to spend pupil premium so that it solely benefits pupils who meet the funding criteria. It can be used:

- to support other pupils with identified needs, such as those who have or have had a social worker, or who act as a carer
- for whole class interventions which will also benefit non-disadvantaged pupils

Pupil premium funding is allocated to local authorities based on the number of:

- looked-after children, supported by the local authority
- pupils who meet any of the eligibility criteria and who attend an independent setting, where the local authority pays full tuition fees

For pupils who are looked-after children, funding should be managed by the local authority's virtual school head (VSH) in consultation with the child's school.

Details of the funding criteria for SPP are outlined in the [Service pupil premium](#) section.

Implications of the free school meals expansion on pupil premium

From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, the Department for Education (DfE) is delivering an expansion to FSM eligibility to include all pupils from households in receipt of Universal Credit. There will then be 2 categories of FSM:

- Targeted FSM, which continues to be based on the existing £7,400 income threshold
- Expanded FSM, which will apply to meals only, covering pupils who do not qualify for Targeted FSM, but who are in households in receipt of Universal Credit

Following the expansion of FSM, only pupils eligible for Targeted FSM will be part of the Ever 6 FSM cohort. This means that pupils who become eligible for FSM for the first time through the new Expanded FSM category will not attract pupil premium funding.

Pupils who were eligible for FSM before the expansion will continue to be part of the Ever 6 FSM cohort after the expansion. That includes any pupil whose household income increases after the expansion, such that they either lose FSM eligibility altogether or become eligible for FSM through Expanded FSM. Such pupils will remain part of the Ever 6 FSM cohort for 6 years.