

## Cost of living information and support for parents and carers

At Ashton Keynes C of E Primary we understand that the cost of supporting your children through school can put pressure on your household budgets. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in money worries for many more families and now we are facing even further pressures with increases in cost of living for essentials like food, heating and fuel.

We understand how difficult it can be when children are unable to participate in activities in the way they would like to, when costs get in the way. We want all our children to feel comfortable and confident in school and be able to participate in everything that is on offer. We want to do all we can to make every school day affordable for all our families and to help you find the support you might need if you have money concerns.

### Getting help

It can be difficult to talk about money worries. People finding it hard to make ends meet often hang on and try and sort things out themselves; not seeking help until the situation has become very difficult. Whatever the issues you are facing we would encourage you to ask for support before things get that way. There is no shame in seeking support and both the school and the help organisations listed below will help with sensitivity and confidentiality.

Please talk to us about your concerns so that we can work together to ensure your child can access everything on offer whatever the cost. Please come and speak to a member of our office team or give them a call on 01285 861436.

There are also many sources of support from both local and national organisations. Here are some key agencies that we recommend:

### Local support

**Advice Local:** find local advice services in your area.

[Advicelocal](#)

#### Community Directory

[Interactive Community Directory - Wiltshire Council](#)

#### Council tax, benefits and financial support

[Council tax, benefits and financial support - Wiltshire Council](#)

#### Energy costs advice and guidance

[Energy costs advice and guidance - Wiltshire Council](#)

#### Housing information and support

[Housing information and support - Wiltshire Council](#)

#### Mental Health support

[Mental Health support - Wiltshire Council](#)

#### Local Practical Help

[Local practical help - Wiltshire Council](#)

## Supporting businesses

[Supporting businesses through the rising cost of living - Wiltshire Council](#)

## Warm spaces

[Wiltshire Council warm spaces - Wiltshire Council](#)

## National Advice and Information Support Services

**Citizens Advice:** free, independent and confidential financial advice

[Search for your local Citizens Advice - Citizens Advice](#)

**EntitledTo:** benefit calculator to make sure families are getting the support they are entitled to

[Benefits Calculator - entitledto - independent | accurate | reliable](#)

**The Money Advice Service:** Government website offering comprehensive guidance on all aspects of money, benefits, debt and investments.

[Benefits | MoneyHelper](#)

**Martin Lewis Money Saving Expert:** Martin Lewis' free site saves you money on Credit Cards, Shopping, Energy & more. Consumer champion. Money saving guides. Fighting your corner. Easy to Use.

[Money Saving Expert: Energy Help, Credit Cards, Flight Delays, Shopping and more](#)

**Shelter:** free support from expert housing advisers

[Get help from Shelter - Shelter England](#)

**BBC i-player:** There are lots of money-related tips on this programme on BBC i-player. You can listen any time. Topics have included surviving debt, tips for rented housing, coping with cost of living rises, avoiding scams and fraud calls, applying for benefits and much more.

[BBC Radio 4 - Money Box - Available now](#)

**NHS Low Income Scheme:** If you have a low income, the NHS Low Income Scheme could help depending on your weekly income and necessary outgoings, plus any savings or investments you have at the time you apply

[NHS Low Income Scheme | NHSBSA](#)

**The home energy scheme:** Energy and cost saving actions which could help reduce bills

[Energy saving tips to save money - Help for Households](#)

### Support for your family and school

Parents can claim 'Pupil Premium' support for children (referred to as Free School Meals FSM) if you are in receipt of any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance

- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if applying on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax & not including any benefits you get)

This entitles your child to free school meals, beyond EYFS and KS1 where this provision is universal, as well as a wide range of additional support for your child (academic, cost of the school day support and wellbeing)

Information for parents about access and benefits of claiming FSM can be found at: [Free school meals - Wiltshire Council](#)

If your child is eligible for free school meals, they'll also qualify for the [Holiday Activity and Food Programme](#). Food vouchers may also be available through the [Household Support Fund](#).

Please ask the school for support if you have any questions about your entitlement or application.