

# LIBERAL DEMOCRAT EDUCATION BRIEFING

**The Liberal Democrats are the party of education. From “a penny on income tax for education”, to the Pupil Premium and extending early education provision, the Liberal Democrats have led the way in radical, transformational policies to give every child a fair start in life.**

This briefing aims to give every Liberal Democrat the information they need to campaign confidently on the Liberal Democrats’ education record in government and their commitments for the next Parliament. It has been prepared by the Liberal Democrat Education Association, an Associated Organisation within the Liberal Democrats. Comments or questions should be directed to [info@ldea.co.uk](mailto:info@ldea.co.uk)

## ***Liberal Democrat Key Messages***

“Education sets people free. That’s why the Liberal Democrats will always put education first”

“Too many people have their chances in life determined by who their parents were, rather than by their own efforts and abilities”

## **Our Record in Government**

- Protected the schools budget in real terms and prevented “for profit” schools
- Introduced a pupil premium for every child between 5 and 16 of £1,300 for primary-aged pupils and £935 for secondary-aged pupils
- Introduced free early years education for the 40% most disadvantaged two year-olds
- Introduced free school meals for all infant pupils
- Reformed school league tables to ensure teachers help every pupil (not just those on the C/D borderline) and supported high quality vocational education
- Nearly 2 million new apprenticeships
- No undergraduate student in England has to pay a penny up front of their tuition fees; students do not have to pay anything back until they are earning over £21,000 per year. We now have the highest university application rates ever, including from disadvantaged students.

## **Key Pledges for 2015**

- Protect Education Spending: protect the education budget in real terms from early years to age 19
- Parents’ Guarantee: All teachers in state-funded schools will be qualified or working towards Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). A slimmed-down core curriculum will be taught in all state-funded schools
- High quality early years education: by 2020 every nursery or pre-school setting should employ at least one Early Years teacher as this makes the most difference to disadvantaged pupils
- Pupil Premium: At least protect the schools pupil premium and triple the early years pupil premium to £1000 per pupil per year
- Extend free school meals to all primary school children as resources allow, because this helps children learn and helps family finances, particularly for those in work but on a low income.

### **Other pledges for 2015**

- 15 hours of free childcare per week for all 2 yr-olds, aiming for 20 hrs for all 2-4 yr-olds from 2020, and for further extensions to the end of paid maternity leave
- A new Young Person's Discount Card for all aged 16-21 giving 2/3<sup>rd</sup> discount on bus travel
- A funded entitlement to professional development for all teachers, and help to establish a profession-led Royal College of Teachers
- An independent Educational Standards Authority, free from Ministerial interference, with responsibility for curriculum content and exam standards
- Age-appropriate sex and relationship education and financial literacy & citizenship education
- Rule out profit-making schools and Trusts and allow Local Authorities to open new schools
- Ensure an effective, democratically accountable "middle tier" to support schools. Abolish unelected regional schools commissioners
- 200,000 more apprenticeships – funding employers to give young people a chance.