



Monday 10th December 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

**RE: SCHOOL FUNDING CRISIS AND PETITION**

As a school, we feel that it is our duty to provide parents with a fair and accurate picture of the real state of school funding in our area. Along with many of my colleagues in the region, I am writing to you to ask for your support.

All state schools in England are funded by a central government grant that is administered by the Department for Education. According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), school funding per pupil has fallen 8% in real terms since 2010.

Schools are having to make difficult choices on how to spend their limited funding as their income has not kept pace with the rise in costs since 2010. All schools are working very hard to 'make ends meet' but this is becoming increasingly difficult. Bank of England information shows that between 2010 and 2017 costs have increased by approximately 20%, so the cuts in schools funding need to be understood in this context.

On average, school funding in the North East of England will be cut by the following by the year 2019/20 compared to 2015/16:

- £30,904 less per primary school
- £189,776 less per secondary school

(Source: [www.schoolcuts.org.uk](http://www.schoolcuts.org.uk))

The government's latest statistical information on school funding by parliamentary constituency can be found using the following website address: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/social-policy/education/schools/constituency-data-schools-funding/>.

Furthermore, there is a crisis in funding for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Cuts to local authority budgets have affected the services they can provide to schools to support children with SEND. Local authority spending on schools has fallen by 55% since 2010, according to the IFS. Schools have to fund the first £6,000 of a child's education, health and care support plan (EHCP) from the wider school budget, rather than receiving specific extra SEND funding.

It is not just primary and secondary schools which are feeling the impact of real-terms cuts. Despite an excellent record, government spending decisions will mean that 64% of maintained nursery schools predict a budget deficit by 2020 unless the government takes measures to fund them properly. Post-16 funding has faced the most severe cuts over the years. Ten years ago, when I led a large Sixth Form, we received up to £5,000 per student to fund their studies; we now receive £3,800 per student. The picture in our special schools is no better.

With increased pressures on school budgets and cuts to services that support our most vulnerable young people and their families, these schools are experiencing significant difficulties too.



As funding has become tighter, schools have had to cut back on:

- Teaching and non-teaching staff
- Support for more vulnerable pupils
- Small group work for children who are not thriving in school
- Teaching resources (parents being asked to pay for books and materials)
- Subject choices in secondary schools
- The range of activities for primary pupils
- Extra-curricular activities provided free or subsidised
- Repairs to buildings
- Renewal of equipment

In his last budget statement, the Chancellor announced a very small increase in funding for schools ("to purchase little extras"). However, this increase has not closed the gap between the funding our schools receive and the funding our schools need to provide the number of teachers and resources required to deliver the education all our children deserve.

At Framwellgate School Durham, we continue to manage our resources well and efficiently, and have been cushioned a little because of the increase in the number of students joining us (we are projecting a 20% increase over two years). Nevertheless, like all state-funded schools, we are experiencing many of the difficulties seen across the sector.

If you think government should fund schools sufficiently and fairly, please show your support by adding your name to the petition 'Increase Funding for Schools', as well as encouraging family and friends to do so, via the link below:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/232220>

You will be asked to add some minimal information (name, email address, postcode) and then you will be required to confirm your email address by responding to the automated response sent to you.

I am happy to support my colleagues in Durham as a similar letter is being sent out by many schools and colleges; headteachers in Gateshead have already done something similar. The crisis in school funding is a national issue and by raising the profile and discussing the impact of these cuts, we hope to the Government will make education a priority in its upcoming spending review. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and please support your children's future by signing the petition.

Yours sincerely

Andy Byers  
Headteacher