

31 March 2017



#FlatCashEd
East Sussex Schools' Campaign
for Fair and Sufficient Funding

Dear Parent/Carer

This letter is to update you on the next steps in our campaign to secure a better funding arrangement for our schools. We are very grateful for all the support shown by parents and appreciative of how many of you have written to your MP as a way of showing support.

As you will have seen from the last letter we sent you, the number of counties who are speaking with one voice has now risen to 14. This covers 3500 schools and 1.5 million students who will be disadvantaged through the changes proposed under the Funding Formula and increasing costs.

Our MPs have been supportive, they understand the issues our schools face and have been active in speaking to the Schools Minister and Secretary of State for Education. On Wednesday 22nd March Prime Minister's Question Time saw school funding an issue of heated debate and on 29th March a report released by the cross-party Public Accounts Committee criticised "delusions" in government over the budget situation stating "*the biggest school funding shortages in England since the 1990s are threatening to damage standards*". The consultation on the Funding Formula has now closed and we wait the outcomes of that process.

In the meantime, we have been fortunate to work with the members of East Sussex Elected Council. Throughout this year, we have been raising the variety of pressures on school funding with the County Council. A group of primary and secondary Headteachers met with leaders of the Elected Council this week and discussed a range of these issues and the areas that lie within the remit of ESCC to assist. We are reassured that we speak with a common voice on this topic.

Members of the elected council will be seeking your support as local residents in their bid to be re-elected in May; we thought it might be useful for parents to have some key questions to ask or points to raise if you have the chance to engage with a local county councillor seeking your vote.

Parents may wish to:

1. Ask prospective councillors how they will continue to work actively to secure sufficient funding from central government for East Sussex Schools *in real terms*, as promised in the manifesto.
2. Ask whether they would support offering maintained schools the same 80% reduction in the business rates afforded to academies, free schools and private schools operating as charities, as long as the money then stays within education.
3. Ask councillors to support the maintained schools and local academies in seeking sufficient funding for Special Educational Needs provision. This would ensure the funding for mainstream schools is not reduced to compensate for high levels of spend on Special Provision as it was in 2016-17.

We believe there is cross party support for sufficient school funding for East Sussex among the elected members but parents may wish to seek assurances that those seeking election will be actively pursuing this matter.

We would also encourage you, if you have not already done so, to write to your MP and ask them to lobby actively for sufficient school funding in order to safeguard the educational provision for young people in our schools.

Thank you for your ongoing support,

Yours sincerely



MS CAROLINE BARLOW
Headteacher