



SASH
Suffolk Association
of Secondary Heads
Stronger Together



Suffolk Headteachers' Campaign for Fairer Funding for Suffolk Pupils

Dear Parent

Why should your child in a Suffolk school be funded at a lower level than children in some other parts of the country? Are they worth less than pupils elsewhere?

In 2013, the Government announced a review of the way schools across the country were funded to remove unfairness and inconsistencies between Local Authorities. For Suffolk schools and more importantly Suffolk children, this review was well overdue and was initially welcomed, as historically Suffolk schools have not been funded as well as schools in other areas of the country. Sadly, this long-awaited review, the National Formula Funding (NFF), does not appear to deliver fairness for Suffolk pupils and has not "levelled the playing field". Although some Suffolk schools will receive some additional funds under the NFF proposals, any gains will be lost by increased costs. However, other schools could face significant cuts, so for some schools, their funding problems have been made worse.

The impact of increased costs in schools is significant, the only way they can operate is by making significant staffing cuts over the coming years, some schools have already had to start this! That means larger class sizes, less additional support and less resources for pupils. When schools look to reduce spending further they will have to reduce the curriculum offer; specialist teachers may have to go and some minority subjects may well disappear.

All those things that make schools exciting places for our pupils; the extracurricular clubs and specialist coaching may be cut as will the number of visits and trips. The current provision that schools provide freely or at a subsidised rate such as breakfast clubs and after school activities could be cut. Schools might need to ask parents for increased voluntary contributions and it will be those schools in the poorest communities who will lose out.

The National Audit Office said schools faced an 8% real-terms reduction in funding per pupil by 2019-20 and cost pressures could result in "significant risks" in making the necessary spending cuts. Schools have already suffered a number of increased "stealth taxes" in the last few years. There have been substantial increases in National Insurance and Pension costs, increased minimum wage as well as having to absorb pay increases, with no extra funding. Early Years funding settings have already seen reductions in their funding, affecting our youngest learners. On top of this schools are being hit this year by an Apprenticeship Levy which they weren't expecting to pay. The Levy in a maintained school of 1000 pupils could be as much as £23000, in a small primary school of 100 it would be £2300 (probably their whole resources budget). This money is lost to their pupils' education.



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What we want in Suffolk is fair funding for our school pupils. Despite the rhetoric of the Secretary of State's claims when she says *'Underfunded schools do not have access to the same opportunities to do the best for their children, and it is harder for them to attract the best teachers and to afford the right support. That is why introducing fair funding was a key manifesto commitment.'* The funding reform proposals do not work for Suffolk pupils. The devil is in the detail of the proposals and it is obvious that the Government has reneged on its promise by manipulating the funding formulas to appease higher funded areas.

On the surface of things Suffolk schools look to be a major gainer as a Local Authority, increase of 2.7% per pupil funding with an overall increase of 3.9% if the reforms were fully implemented. But beware, percentages are misleading! A 2.7%/3.9% increase on a low budget doesn't solve the underfunding problem. On average Suffolk schools are still £307 worse off per pupil than the national average. In a secondary school of 1000 pupils that means £307,000 less funding and in a primary school of 200 that equates to £61,400 less. Under the new proposals, Suffolk moves from being the 38th worst funded Local Authority in England to the 44th worst funded out of 152. The 50 highest funded Local Authorities out of 152 in England are still the highest 50 and the lowest 50 authorities are still the lowest. **Fairer funding? We think not!**

If you wish to take action to protect your child's education and seek fair funding for Suffolk schools, please write or email your local MP and the secretary of State for Education with your views.

The Right Honourable Justine Greening greeningj@parliament.uk ; ministers@education.gsi.gov.uk

Madeleine Vigar
Chair of SASH
Suffolk Association of Secondary Headteachers

Cheryl Singleton
Chair of SPHA
Suffolk Primary Headteachers' Association

Links to Suffolk MPs

Aldous , Peter (Conservative)	Waveney peter.aldous.mp@parliament.uk
Cartlidge , James (Conservative)	South Suffolk james.cartlidge.mp@parliament.uk
Churchill , Jo (Conservative)	Bury St Edmunds jo.churchill.mp@parliament.uk
Coffey , Thérèse (Conservative)	Suffolk Coastal therese.coffey.mp@parliament.uk
Gummer , Ben (Conservative)	Ipswich ben.gummer.mp@parliament.uk
Hancock , Matthew (Conservative)	West Suffolk matthew.hancock.mp@parliament.uk
Poulter , Dr Dan (Conservative)	Central Suffolk and North Ipswich daniel.poulter.mp@parliament.uk