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15th March 2017

NJC/JFR

Dear Parent/Carer

As you may already be aware, schools and academies receive a budget each year which they use to fund all of their operating costs: everything from staffing to ICT, resources and buildings maintenance costs. The Government is progressing with plans to implement big changes to the way this funding is distributed, by fundamentally amending how the total amount of money available is shared out between all schools & academies in England. There are huge concerns for headteachers & governors that this will mean big losses for our schools.

From 2019-20 the Department for Education (DfE) intends to put in place a Schools National Funding Formula (SNFF) and the intention is to have greater consistency between school and academy budget allocations, across the country. This will be different to the current position whereby each Local Authority (Durham, Darlington, Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, Northumberland, South Tyneside, North Tyneside, Stockton and Hartlepool) has some say in the way individual school funding amounts are decided across each area. **Instead of 152 different local funding formulae for schools, there will be only be 1 national formula.**

In summary, a massive amount of money (£32,071m nationally) will be gathered up by DfE and they will decide how it should be allocated to all schools & academies.

Key Funding changes are proposed as follows – nationally there will be:

Less funding linked to the **number of pupils** in a school;
Less funding linked to a fixed **lump sum** fund per school/academy;
More funding linked to pupil & area **deprivation**;
More funding linked to pupil **attainment** at the previous stage of their education; and
More funding linked to remoteness of schools – **sparsity**.

The current proposals will have the following effect on funding **for Sunderland schools** by 2019:

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- A reduction of approximately £14 million in funding for Sunderland.
- A reduction in funding, on average, of £399 per pupil across the city.
- The loss of up to 374 teachers across the city.
- Larger class sizes in Sunderland schools.
- Some GCSE courses will not be offered due to staff shortages.

You can find out more about the predicted impact on Sunderland schools at: <http://www.schoolcuts.org.uk> where you can see the impact on **YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL**

This disregard for our children's futures CANNOT be allowed to happen.

We appeal to you to make your voice heard to alert the government to the potential harm of these proposals which will adversely affect every school child in Sunderland for many years.

School leaders in our region have endeavoured to make every conceivable cut to our spending but are now faced with reducing basic services still further, all to the disadvantage of your child. The operational implications for us, despite the phased implementation of these funding changes means that we must reluctantly, but very seriously, consider the following as possible courses of action:

- Increasing class sizes;
- Reducing basic services such as cleaning and site and premises work;
- Stopping any investment in books and IT equipment;
- Designing curriculum offers that fulfil only basic requirements; and
- Not replacing staff who leave.

As you can imagine, such radical considerations are the very last thing that any school wishes to do but we are being given no option.

We do not understand why children in our region are worth less than others around the country.

Furthermore, whilst the headline government message is that they will protect the budgets of schools and academies, it has been announced that from September 2017 The Education Services Grant (ESG), valued at £600m for Local Authorities and Academies, is

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also being removed. The ESG equates to a reduction in funding of £77 per pupil and this, alongside increased costs relating to employer pension contributions, unfunded pay rises and the introduction of the new Apprenticeship Levy, presents even further budget pressures on our schools. In a recent publication the National Audit Office quote the following facts:

- 8.0% real-term reduction in per-pupil funding for mainstream schools between 2014-15 and 2019-20 due to cost pressures;
- £3.0bn savings which mainstream schools need to make by 2019-20 to counteract cost pressures; and
- 60% of secondary academies spent more than their income in 2014/15.

We urgently need your support. This can be done in a straightforward way that will allow us to demonstrate to all political parties the unfairness of the education funding system.

Respond directly to the government consultation via:

1. <https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula2/consultation/intro/>
2. www.schoolcuts.org.uk

School leaders will always act responsibly on behalf of the children we educate and care for. We need your support in order to do this to the best of our abilities.

Yours faithfully,

Sunderland Secondary Head Teachers

Nicola Cooper

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Principal

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