



Long Sutton Church of England (VC) Primary School

Hyde Road, Long Sutton, Hook, Hampshire RG29 1ST

Tel: 01256 862238 | Fax: 01256 862136

adminoffice@longsutton.hants.sch.uk

School Funding

Dear Parents,

You may be aware that the new National Funding Formula for schools, which was introduced in April 2018, is resulting in a reduction in income for many schools, including our own. We would appreciate you taking the time to read this letter, in which we outline the national context and what this means for Long Sutton CE Primary School.

How is school funding determined and allocated?

Each local authority receives an allocated budget from the Government annually and then uses a local funding formula to share this money out to local schools. Schools receive funding primarily on 2 bases; a lump sum and an amount per pupil. In the new Funding Formula, the lump sum has been reduced and the 'per pupil' funding has been increased. In addition, schools also receive funding for:

- Socio-economic deprivation
- Low prior attainment of pupils
- English as an additional language
- Mobility (schools that have high numbers of pupils joining throughout the year)

The aim is to allocate a greater proportion of the overall budget towards funding for schools in deprived areas or those that have a large number of pupils from a disadvantaged background, with the aim of helping raise the attainment of children who statistically perform less well than their peers.

As this week's news shows, despite an overall increase in the amount of funding the Government allocates to schools, the overall picture from the Institute of Fiscal Studies is one of less funding per pupil, largely driven by an overall increase in pupils and by inflation. The following article explains this in more detail: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-44794205>. Schools in Hampshire are additionally impacted by the fact that, by most measures, we are in an area of low socio-economic deprivation and high attainment relative to the statistical average.

What does this mean for our school?

We are seeing a significant decrease in our operational budget. Several factors contribute to a squeeze on the funding for our school:

1. Limited or no inflationary increases in funding to existing schools set against the necessary staff pay rises to allow for inflation – staff costs are over 80% of our total budget and pay levels are fixed at national and county level so are out of our direct control.
2. Changes in the National Funding Formula set by the government and the formula used by Hampshire County Council. Whilst the decrease in the fixed sum given to schools has been compensated by an increase in the amount per pupil, the Formula used by Hampshire benefits schools with over 200 pupils but results in decreased funding to smaller schools like ours.
3. Additional demands on school budgets, including increased charges for services provided by HCC and new costs for pensions and the apprenticeship levy.
4. A decrease in the birth rate a few years ago has led to fewer new pupils coming to the school, the effect of which is compounded by a bigger proportion of the school budget being driven by the number of pupils on roll.



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When you also consider that schools are also funded according to the degree of deprivation in the area and our area is one of the least deprived in Britain, you will appreciate that we have very little more than the base level of funding to work with in the first place.

We have so far been able to sustain our relatively small class sizes, in contrast to some schools, which are now running classes of up to 36 children. We are committed to keeping class sizes for all our children at a maximum of 30, with predicted class sizes for next year being between 19 and 26 children. However, our pupil numbers continue to fall overall, and this puts us in a very vulnerable position financially going into the 2019/20 financial year. School budgets are set based upon the numbers on roll on census day in early October; the lower our overall pupil numbers at this time, the lower our funding will be going forward.

What can we do?

As the Governing Body of Long Sutton CE Primary School, we have decided to introduce a Voluntary Parental Contributions scheme, to help us continue to deliver the high quality education which we currently provide; many schools already run similar schemes and have been doing for some time. The voluntary funds will be used to supplement the day to day running of the school, for example by augmenting our resources and equipment (areas where we are currently having to make cutbacks). Raising funds for will allow us to focus the government funding on the major teaching costs and so help us to maintain our smaller class sizes.

We are suggesting a voluntary contribution of £10 per family per month, however we are aware that some may wish to give more, and that some of you may not be in a position to offer a donation. Please be assured that the scheme is genuinely voluntary and that all contributions will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

In September, we will be sharing with you the process for making a donation. Whilst we suggest a monthly donation, you may prefer to offer a one-off lump sum or a quarterly or annual donation, to suit your circumstances.

In the meantime, we are looking into the most beneficial approach, including the arrangements for Gift Aid. If you have any questions about the Voluntary Parental Contribution scheme, please feel free to contact us directly.

Yours faithfully,

Ms. Sally Francis

Chair of Governors

Mrs. Hannah Inglis

Headteacher

On Behalf of the Full Governing Body