



14th September

Dear Parents/Carers

Over recent years school budgets have become increasingly strained. The schools of Worcestershire have certainly been no exception to this. With additional demands on our budgets and significantly rising costs, secondary schools have, year on year, had to balance the range of options offered, assess class sizes, cut back on non-teaching staff and amend our support services offer.

Although we are not one of them, in the school year just begun most of the county's 34 high schools have been forced to set a deficit budget. The problem is now so acute that the headteachers of each of the high schools will today be writing letters such as this to every one of their parents. We are doing this because you should know that it has become simply unsustainable to have our finances stretched so severely and continue to provide the service for which Worcestershire secondary schools have become known.

Last year the Department for Education brought in a new system for allocating money between different parts of the country. This scheme, the National Funding Formula, is an attempt to spread the spending on schools more fairly. It is a step in the right direction, but counties such as Worcestershire remain at a disadvantage. It remains true, for example, that a child in the West Midlands region is substantially better funded than one of similar age in Worcestershire (the basic unit of funding for each secondary pupil in Worcestershire is £887 less than in Birmingham). As a result, our best teachers can be enticed to move, our courses provide less choice and our students with the most need have less support.

However, the problem goes much deeper than this. Not only is the national educational cake still being divided unfairly, in real terms it is getting smaller. Despite headlines announcing an increase in the national allocation for schools, the real value of government funding has been falling. The Institute for Fiscal Studies, which carries out objective research, calculates that the value of funding for the nation's schools will be 4% less this year than it was three years ago and 8% less than it was in 2010. Beyond this are the other increases which schools have to meet, in pensions, insurance and all that is involved in running our buildings day to day.

No parent needs to be reminded that the high school years are essential to a successful future and a precious opportunity that should not be under sold. They do not come again. But we do need your support in making this point emphatically to government. Please consider doing this in any way that you choose. Attached is the draft of a letter you may wish to use should you decide to join those of us making the case to our local MP.

In a letter such as this we can only scratch the surface of a very complex problem. If you would like any further information please contact the school and we will endeavour to help in any way.

Yours sincerely,

Samantha Roach
Principal

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Chair of Governors

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14th September 2018

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Dear Mr Walker (Member of Parliament for Worcester)

I am writing to you because I am very concerned about the funding of my child's secondary education.

Despite the introduction of the new National Funding Formula, this county is still at a disadvantage compared with the metropolitan area nearby. I cannot see why there should be less spent on my child's schooling than if we lived in a suburb of Birmingham. Nor can I accept that, ten years after the financial crisis, less is being invested in the education of my child's cohort than was the case just three years ago. I have seen the headlines about increased funding, but I am aware that the amount does not compensate for the increased costs which schools have had to face.

I support the campaign which is being mounted by the Headteachers of secondary schools across this county. It is not a matter of party politics, but one of securing the best possible start in life for my child and ensuring that the school children of Worcester are not disadvantaged.

Yours sincerely,