

23rd January 2017



Dear Parents,

I am writing to you to enlist your support on an issue which is crucial to our school, indeed all schools in Cheshire East. Schools are funded on a per-pupil basis and this amount is calculated using a formula, which, once set, is the same for all students in a Local Authority. The current formula creates a huge variance in the amount awarded to fund each pupil's education across the various Local Authorities in England. Cheshire East is currently one of the five worst funded Local Authorities in England.

At the end of last year, the Government announced plans to consult on a new 'National Fairer Funding' formula which had the explicit aim of ensuring a fairer, more balanced formula for all students across the country. I had hoped that, in this review of the budget arrangements, we would benefit. Unfortunately, I am writing to inform you that the formula that the Government has offered for consultation leaves Cheshire East schools, including ours, even worse funded than we have been. Under the proposed new formula, Cheshire East becomes the worst funded Local Authority in England. In simple terms, the money offered for a child's education in Cheshire East is the lowest amount anywhere in England. If Eaton Bank Academy were in the best funded Local Authority in England the school would receive over £2 million more for its budget every year. Even if Cheshire East were the second worst funded Local Authority in England, there would be an average increase of £80,000 a year for secondary schools. As proposed, the differences in funding are stark and deeply unfair and will seriously damage the ability of Cheshire East schools to maintain their current education provision. This issue is already starting to make the local press and may well develop into an ongoing national press issue.

All schools in Cheshire East are currently working together, with the full support of the Local Authority and Fiona Bruce MP, to challenge these proposals. I recently travelled to Westminster as part of a delegation of Headteachers and MPs to meet with the Minister of State for Schools, Nick Gibb MP, who has given a commitment to consider the minimum level of funding required to deliver a good education and consider some historic anomalies which have resulted in this potential reduction in funding.

I am writing to ask for your support in this matter and to strongly encourage you to respond directly to the Government's consultation. The consultation is available at <https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula2/>.

You have until 22 March 2017 to respond to the consultation.

I very much appreciate your support and understanding in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed O'Neill', written over a large, faint watermark of the school's name.

Ed O'Neill
Headteacher.