



March 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

Given the high profile coverage education spending has continued to receive over the last few years, we are sure you will be very aware that all schools nationally are facing a major funding crisis. The secondary schools in Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth are no exception to this and are all as affected as other schools throughout the country. We are fortunate to have so many successful schools in our local community, but our collective concern on this matter is very real and we are writing to ask for your help in bringing this issue to the attention of your MP and government ministers.

You may well have read that funding in education is at record levels, though this is simply because there are more children in the education system than ever before. The reality is schools have been facing real-terms budget reductions for several years, because of the so-called 'flat cash settlement' we have received. This means we have been receiving the same amount of funding for 11-16 year olds, year-on-year, despite costs increasing steadily during that time, creating a 10% cut in real terms. Funding for sixth form students has been reduced by more than 20% since 2010.

During this time we have seen the introduction of completely new GCSE, IB and A-Level specifications with associated costs for resources and staff training and have seen significant increases in:

- teaching staff salary costs
- National Insurance contributions
- employer contributions for teachers' pensions
- local government pension contributions

You will appreciate, the majority of any school's budget is spent on staffing and such increases as those listed above are having a massive impact on our ability to continue to provide your children with the quality of education and experience we all want for them. We have already been forced to make cuts in varying ways over recent years and, unless we see a major change in the levels of funding, will inevitably have to make further cuts including:

- Increase class sizes by further reducing the number of teachers (thus putting greater pressure on remaining teachers)
- Teachers teaching outside of their specialism
- Cut the number of GCSE, IB and A-Level courses we offer
- Reduce curriculum time for A-Level courses
- Cut unfunded extra-curricular activities
- Reduce admin teams
- Reduce training for teachers
- Reduce levels of pastoral care
- Reduce the number of support staff to work with children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities
- Remove counselling support for children with issues relating to mental health and well-being

The pressure on schools is exacerbated by the significant reductions in other publicly funded services such as Health and Social Care, which means we are being asked to do far more with less money.

[PTO]



THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD & SAWBRIDGEWORTH SECONDARY HEADS CONSORTIUM

The purpose of this letter is to help you understand that, without a major change, we will have a much-reduced capacity to meet the needs of your children in the future, despite our great desire to do so.

We have held off from writing to parents until now but are finding it increasingly unrealistic to maintain the high quality of provision for your children we feel currently exists. We are blessed to have a great range of highly successful schools in the area, but if nothing is done to reverse this funding crisis immediately, we will almost certainly not be able to operate at the same level in the future.

We urge you to write to your local MP; to the Secretary of State for Education, Damian Hinds MP (damian.hinds.mp@parliament.uk); to Minister for Schools, Nick Gibb MP (gibbn@parliament.uk), and to the Prime Minister (mayt@parliament.uk), to express your thoughts and concerns about the lack of adequate funding for our schools. We need your help to ensure we can fully provide for your children, now and in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Mr D Reeve

The Bishop's Stortford High School

Mr R Markham

Hockerill Anglo-European College

Mrs C Tooze

The Hertfordshire and Essex High School

Dr C Ingate

Birchwood High School

Mr M White

Leventhorpe School

Mr A Celano

St Mary's Catholic School