

2nd February 2017



**SIR JAMES SMITH'S
COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Dear Parents/Carers

At a meeting of Cornwall's secondary Headteachers and Principals last Friday, 27th January, it was agreed that this letter would be sent to all parents/carers explaining to them the very serious financial pressures that schools are facing. The heads and their governing bodies are also writing to their MP; many have already done so. During the last week or two, MPs from across England have been raising their concerns with the Secretary of State and on the floor of the House of Commons – we are urging our MPs to add their voice to the growing concerns being expressed nationally.

The Government is imposing real terms funding cuts on schools by freezing the amount of money that is allocated to schools for each pupil at the same time that inflation, the contributions that schools have to make towards their employees pensions and National Insurance contributions have risen significantly. This affects all schools and academies alike, both primary and secondary. Whilst the amount of money coming into schools from government has remained static, the amount going out on expenditure due to government imposed changes has risen considerably.

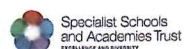
Schools across the country are funded differently, and have been for many years. Generally, schools in rural areas are funded at a lower level than those in cities. This government has been brave enough to try and address these differences and introduce a new National Funding Formula, and the initial details were announced just before Christmas. However, rather than help rural areas such as Cornwall, it is now clear that many schools will actually lose funding; the new formula announced will do nothing to help the majority of schools in Cornwall. Figures from the National Union of Teachers and the Association of Teachers & Lecturers, using the government's own formula and statistics, show that between now and 2020 there will be an average cut in funding of 8.7% in secondary schools across the country. Some Cornish secondary schools have already made staff redundancies over the last three or four years, class sizes have already increased, and the subjects offered to GCSE students and sixth formers have already been reduced.

It is clear that schools in Cornwall are already struggling with their finances. We do not want children in this county to miss out on being taught a full curriculum in a school which has sufficient teachers and support staff to give children the attention they need to make the best of their education. The current Government was elected on a manifesto that promised to protect school funding. It is clear that this pledge is not being honoured in real financial terms. We are asking our MPs to press the Chancellor to use the Budget to announce increased education spending. We are also asking our MP to stress the impossible financial situation that Cornwall's schools

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A Co-operative Foundation Trust School

are facing when meeting with the Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening and her ministers. The Chair of the Conservative backbench 1922 Committee, Graham Brady has asserted that "it is clear that the draft published by the DfE does not rectify the long-standing unfairness of education funding," and many other senior Conservative MPs have already publicly condemned the funding reforms announced.

What can parents do to help and support their school?

The more people that raise their concerns with their MP, the more likelihood there is that changes may be made. The government is currently consulting on their funding reforms, so now is the time for Cornish parents to make their voice heard. You can do two things:

- Sign a national online petition by clicking on this link: <http://www.schoolcuts.org.uk/#/contact-us> AND
- Email your MP; you can use this link if you wish: <http://www.schoolcuts.org.uk/#/email-your-mp>

Your local MP will be expecting to hear from you – they know that we are sending this letter to you all!

The Governing Board at Sir Jims appreciate all parents/carers do for the school and its students; please stand with us on this issue. Thank you in advance for your consideration and support.

Yours faithfully



Ruth Krolik
Chair of Governors