



*The Governing Body of
St Dunstan's, Cheam, C of E Primary School
Anne Boleyn's Walk, Cheam, Surrey SM3 8DF*



Diocese of Southwark

Chair of Governing Body:
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Dear Parents and Carers,

Government Cuts in Funding for Schools

I am sure that you cannot fail to be aware of the cuts in funding that some schools are receiving from the Government and the impact this is having on schools throughout the country. This ranges from schools charging for small items of stationery at one end of the scale, to having to reduce the number of hours in the school week at the other.

You may not be aware that these cuts have already started to hit our own school. Our Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and all the staff must be congratulated on their considerable efforts to mitigate these cuts, continually driving down costs and searching for ways in which to make savings. These have ranged from supplier reviews, to changes in how our teachers undertake CPD training. None of the steps taken have impacted on the high quality of teaching, support and materials enjoyed by the children attending St Dunstan's, Cheam, CofE Primary School.

However, the School's Senior Leadership Team, along with the Governors, have reached a point where the current situation can no longer be sustained within the reduced funding that we will be receiving. I am therefore writing in the first instance to update you on the funding situation, and then – with your help - to try to address the future challenge.

- The Government is changing the way money will be allocated per pupil - this is the new National Funding Formula. The NFF aims to spread funds more evenly regardless of geographical location. Whilst we agree that this is a fairer way to fund schools, what is clear is that the Government does not have enough money to implement this without many schools losing out.
- The funding that St Dunstan's will receive per pupil is forecast to reduce by at least 1.5% for 2019/20. This means that in the school year 2019/20 St Dunstan's will face a £27K reduction in its current budget.
- The School's rising costs are exacerbated by significant increases in National Insurance and pension contributions along with increases in the utilities and general running costs.

Additional savings must be made to enable the School to operate within its reducing budget. Therefore, the Senior Leadership Team, along with the Governors, is reviewing where further costs can be cut or additional revenue generated, without having any negative impact on the children's education and their daily enjoyment of school, also being mindful of our fervent wish to keep our School on the path to becoming an 'Outstanding School'.

Your School needs your help! I am giving below just two examples which are having an immediate impact on our budget.



1. Science Week

We ran a very successful Science Week in April which thoroughly enthused all the children. We were fortunate to have a wonderful supply of volunteers who freely gave up their time to run the special Science lessons for each year group. However, in order to do this the School asked for a donation of £5 per family to cover the costs of raw materials and some of the external personnel who came in to add to the children's experience. **Sadly, only 54% of families contributed.**

2. Friends of Cheam Church Schools

The Staff and Governors work hard to ensure the School building and grounds maintain the right environment within which the children can effectively learn and play. This is achieved by Staff, pupils and visitors respecting the building. However, the school is now 25 years old and in some areas is starting to show its age. Payment for any maintenance projects, such as the recent essential water piping upgrades, is funded 90% by the Diocese and 10% from the School via the Friends of Cheam Church Schools. In addition, FCCS makes an annual payment to a Diocesan- wide emergency repair fund which the School can access if necessary. To cover these payments each family is asked to make a yearly donation of £50. During the current school year, **only 37% of families have done so.** It is essential that we raise as much as possible through FCCS as without it the money would have to come directly from the teaching budget which is what we are trying so hard to avoid.

These two examples alone impact our budget by several thousands of pounds. (If you are able to make your donation, please do so as soon as possible through your ParentPay account – every donation is significant.)

Following discussions at Governors' and SLT meetings, School activities such as Science Week may well have to be run on a different basis, ie, obtaining contributions before the event and should insufficient donations be received, the activity will not go ahead that year. We ask you to give this considerable thought. If you look back to your own school days, your fondest memories are probably not day to day school life, but the special outings and activities. These can be – indeed are – inspirational. This is one cost-cutting exercise we would not wish to implement, but we may have no choice.

We are also trialling other initiatives this term to reduce operating costs and are considering others such as charging a nominal fee for after school clubs.

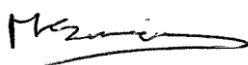
This letter makes for some difficult reading. However, I feel it is important that you know of the funding issues we are facing at the School, so you can better understand the challenges we are facing.

Many of you will have come across practical cost-saving ideas in your own workplace, or will have heard ideas from friends whose children attend other schools. We must also look at ways to generate revenue and I'm sure you will have some excellent ideas on this. Please share them with us. It is vital that we maintain the highest level of education possible as well as the children's all-round enjoyment of school, whilst retaining the fundamental ethos of our School which makes it such a special place.

The Governors would welcome any practical suggestions to improve efficiency or revenue. Please feel free to email me at chairofgovernors@stdunstans.sch.uk.

As ever, I am very grateful for the support parents give to our School – in a myriad of ways.

On behalf of the Governing Body



Martin Swain
Chair of Governors