

Message sent on behalf of Sarah Hammond – Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Headteachers and School Business Managers

Dear Colleague,

2025-26 School Budgets

I am pleased to inform you that on Friday 28th February 2025 the 2025-26 School Budgets were published on KELSI; [2025-26 School Budgets](#). We have also provided a separate budget template for Kent Academies which provides details of the relevant payments the Council is responsible for making, which can be accessed via the same link.

This year's school budget for primary and secondary schools will include an increase in schools core budgets by an average of 0.9% per pupil (due to a mix of both rate increases and demographic changes). The budget will also include several grants that schools had previously received separately in 2024-25, this includes the full year equivalent Core Schools Budget Grant along with Teachers Pay and Pension Grants.

The Government did give councils the option to reduce the per pupil funding rate for 2025-26 (in comparison to 2024-25), but reflecting on the results of the school budget consultation and the views of the Schools Funding Forum we have chosen to ensure that no primary or secondary school will see a decrease in their per pupil funding (in comparison the previous year).

I want to extend my gratitude to all who have contributed to the various consultations and events over the past year to help shape the wider system changes to support children with special educational needs (SEN) in Kent. This work will be crystallising over the next 18 months with the implementation of the new SEN funding system. This will start with the roll out of the communities of schools budgets from September 2025 to support children on SEN support and with lower level needs in mainstream schools. Whilst, funding for children with higher level needs is secured with current allocations continuing to be paid to schools directly until August 2026. In the coming months we will also be preparing and finalising the new tariff funding model in readiness for September 2026. This will be used to determine the funding rates for SRPs, special schools and some mainstream students.

Further information on the new SEN funding system will be shared separately over the next few weeks and the latest information can be found on the Kelsi website and in Christine McInnes' Kelsi bulletin (Communities link: [Locality Model for School Inclusion - KELSI](#)). I thank you in advance for all your help in delivering this significant change across the county.

We continue to work with the Department of Education (DfE) in delivering the Safety Valve Agreement. We will shortly be sharing further information on this on our website ([The new Safety Valve web page](#)). Whilst the overarching aim to deliver a more financially sustainable offer for supporting children with SEN has not change,

the detailed plans continue to evolve in response to feedback and the outcome of reviews undertaken. We anticipate the impact of actions will be seen in the coming years and we continue to thank you all for your efforts in supporting these changes.

The key headlines this year are as follows:

Primary and Secondary School Budgets

- We are continuing to provide a falling roll fund to offer temporary protection to mainstream schools who experience a sudden reduction in their pupil numbers. Local planning data and advice from the Assistant Directors of Education for your area will still be used to support final eligibility.
- The 2024-25 Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG), Teachers Pay Grant (relating to September 2023 pay award) and Teachers Pension Employers Contribution (TPEC) Grant have been rolled into the main budget allocations in 2025-26 and will not be received separately.
- We are transferring 1.2% of the Schools budget into the High Needs budget to help to support the system of SEN support across the county including ensuring sufficient funding for the [County Approaches to Inclusive Education](#). This proposal has been supported by schools, the Schools Funding Forum and the Secretary of State.
- Our Schools Funding Formula will continue to mirror the principles of the Schools National Funding Formula, in terms of funding factors & rates. We are also continuing to set funding rates on the principle that ensures all schools are contributing as equally as possible towards the High Needs transfer. These proposals were supported by schools, the Schools Funding Forum and the Secretary of State (where appropriate).
- The minimum per pupil funding levels for Primary and Secondary Schools will be set at 0.9% lower than the Government's National rate with an average of £4,910 in Primary schools and £6,407 in Secondary schools (and necessary approvals have been received by the Secretary of State).
- The Minimum Funding Guarantee will be set at 0% (this is the maximum amount allowable by the DfE).

High Needs Funded Budgets

- There is an increase in the Formula Funding Rates for Specialist Resource Provisions by 1%.
- An uplift of 1% to be applied to the Special School Formula Funding Rates. Special schools will continue to receive the CSBG, TPG and TPEC Grant separately.
- For Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)/Alternative Provision. The total budget for alternative provision will increase by 1% mirrored with a 1% uplift for PRUs funding. PRUs will continue to receive the CSBG, TPG and TPEC Grant separately.
- For mainstream top-up funding: the current claim system will cease from 1st April, all agreed claims will continue to be paid until August 2025 (including those claims due to be renewed for the Summer Term), subject to the child still attending. Introduction of the Community of Schools Budgets from 1st September for children on SEN support and with lower support needs. Existing top-up claims for children with higher support needs will continue to

be paid directly to the school (with the money to follow the child at phase transfer).

- Kent will continue to provide additional funding for primary and secondary schools to support the costs for the first £6,000 of additional need for High Needs Funded Pupil for schools with significant numbers of High Needs Funded Pupil (Pupils who receive Mainstream Top Up Funding). The thresholds for each year are based on affordability with a ring-fenced pot of £2.5m.

Many thanks to all who responded to our school's budget consultation completed during the autumn term. This year's budget incorporates these views along with the views of the Schools' Funding Forum.

We will be producing a separate guidance note explaining the calculation of school funding in more detail which can also be accessed here [Schools Funding Guidance 2025-26](#).

In accordance with the Scheme for Financing Schools, maintained schools are required to submit their Three-Year Financial Budget Plan to the Council (via The Schools Financial Services team within The Education People) by 31 May 2025.

We do not have any further details of planned increases to the overall national Schools' budget for 2026-27 onwards nor details of future year National Funding Formula. In terms of future cost increases, we also do not know future pay awards for teachers or support staff. Therefore, after careful consideration, we have provided recommendations to support future budget planning. Further details can be found on the [budget planning](#) page on KELSI.

Schools will be able to revise their medium-term planning assumptions as and when further information is released. The three-year financial planning tool is interactive and allows schools to provide their own pupil forecasts for both 2026-27 and 2027-28.

If you experience difficulties when setting the budget for your school, please contact Schools Financial Services on email via schoolsfinancialservices@theeducationpeople.org

The [budget planning](#) page on KELSI include a list of contact names for specific queries. Please contact the schools funding team via email schoolsfunding@kent.gov.uk if you have any questions on overall policy issues.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Hammond

Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education