



## **Balfour Primary School**

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Acting Headteachers:

Dawn Loader & Sandra Mulholland

29<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Dear Parents, Families and Carers

### **School Funding**

Further to the Parent Forum meetings that took place earlier this week, I am writing to clarify what was communicated at these meetings pertaining to school funding to ensure that all of our families are in receipt of the same factual information.

### **The Financial Position**

As you might be aware from the national media school funding has been decreasing year on year in real terms.

Schools receive £2,605 per pupil. Schools also receive a £150,000 lump sum, regardless of school size. So, because of the large size of Balfour Primary School, this only makes up a very small percentage of our budget per pupil.

Schools then receive additional funding for children:

- On Free School Meals
- Adopted or in care
- With a Service parent
- With English as an additional language
- With EHCPs
- With low prior attainment

Because of the population demographic this additional funding is incredibly low. As such, Balfour Primary School receives the least amount of money per pupil for any primary school in the local authority (LA). This also means that Balfour Primary School has the least expenditure per pupil for any school in the LA.

However, we are one of the most successful schools within the LA for raising our own income through activities such as:

- lettings of our site and facilities (albeit this is limited because our facilities are primarily there for the children to learn)
- the breakfast club
- income derived from grant applications, university students and other means



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As you might be aware from the Save Our School banner positioned in Balfour Road, there is a projected average funding loss to schools in Brighton and Hove of £193,425 due to national Government funding reductions.

Additionally within Brighton and Hove there are low birth numbers across the city (circa 300 less for the coming year and year after). Balfour Primary School is expecting to start the year with only 83 children in reception in September. This is a reduction of 37 pupils and represents an additional projected loss of £216,000 per year. There are 28 schools in Brighton that are facing the double hit of funding loss due to the national position *and* the reduced intake.

This means that Balfour Primary School has a projected funding shortfall of £409,425. It is important to be clear that the school is not projecting a deficit budget. Schools are not legally allowed to return a deficit budget they are required to return a balanced or surplus budget. In order to achieve a balanced budget in the forthcoming year, Balfour Primary School will be required to either secure additional funds of £409,425 to bridge the predicted shortfall or make sufficient cuts and efficiencies that total £409,425 in order to return a balance budget.

### **The School Position**

In no way are the Full Governing Body (FGB) or School Leadership Team (SLT) seeking to raise fears but are committed to a factual and evidence-based open dialogue with staff, families and carers about the financial challenges facing the school. We are exploring all potential solutions and any/all suggestions are welcome.

Balfour Primary School is committed to protecting and maintaining the quality of the educational experience for children and the professional work experience for all teaching and support staff.

The FGB will be defending the protection of adequate state funding for schools by supporting the local and national Save Our Schools campaign (which has traditionally had a lower engagement from across our community) and engaging with elected Councillors and MPs in lobbying national Government about the national funding formula for schools.

I have already offered to meet with Local Authority officers and elected Councillors and the representatives of staff trades unions in a city wide discussion about the local situation and identifying potential policy solutions re: funding flows for schools within the City.

The FGB are already engaged with council officials in seeking transparency around Community Infrastructure Levy Section 106 monies seemingly owed to Balfour School.

The school will be reviewing all options for income generation and efficiencies that protect the quality of educational outcomes and experience for pupils and professional working experience for staff.

At this point in time Balfour Primary School is not actively considering redundancies of any teaching or support staff roles. In the future wherever possible, Balfour Primary School will endeavour to avoid cuts to teaching or support staff. In the first instance the new substantive HT, when appointed, will review the whole school plan to ascertain what, if any, efficiencies could be made that are in line with the Ofsted Action Plan and School Development Plan.

The school will consider options of scalable efficiencies e.g. joint procurement of stationary, paper etc. within the network of schools across the City.

## Potential Solutions and Actions

The FGB and SLT are grateful for the potential solutions that have already been suggested by parents, staff and community representatives, and every suggestion will be given due consideration. Suggestions to date include:

- Paid-for advertising in newsletters
- External advertising (e.g. on fences)
- Standing order donations from parents and carers similar to the systems already in place at secondary schools (e.g. Dorothy Stringer)
- Improve playing field facilities to attract hires – this would require a substantial initial investment
- Further scrutiny of existing expenditure in school including staffing, training and resourcing

The FGB and SLT are conscious that every family has a unique and personal financial circumstance and it is important that in the endeavour to secure necessary funds for the school, no family should feel disenfranchised or under any undue pressure to contribute additional money towards the school unless they are comfortable and content to do so.

Balfour Primary School is a state run school and part of the challenge for such schools in the current economic climate is to operate within the rules and legislation pertaining to school finance and balanced budgets whilst simultaneously working to preserve the fundamental principle of a national state education system that is adequately and appropriately funded in order that every child receives the same start in life and an equitable education irrespective of their background or financial circumstances.

## What can parents, families and carers do?

The FGB and SLT are committed to an open dialogue with our community about the challenges we face. There are some things that you can do:

- Contact the school with fundraising suggestions – all of our email addresses are available on the school website
- If you have fundraising or income generation expertise - share it with us
- If you work for an organisation that provides sponsorship, grants or legacy monies would they consider supporting a school project?
- Engage with the local and national debate around school funding – [www.saveourschools.uk](http://www.saveourschools.uk) is a website that provides information about the citywide and national campaigns. Any person living in Brighton and Hove can contact them by emailing [saveourschoolsbh@gmail.com](mailto:saveourschoolsbh@gmail.com)

The FGB and SLT understand that this is a difficult message but we are committed to an honest dialogue with you about the challenges and opportunities Balfour Primary School faces over coming months.

This academic year has been tough with the Ofsted Inspection and required improvement plan. However, the progress that the school is making in every area of the Ofsted Action Plan is incredible and widely recognised as truly impressive. There are updates on progress in every school newsletter and the teachers and support staff at the school have worked so hard to make such significant progress in a short period of time. It is our ambition that this improvement journey continues to grow from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely



**Rachel Cashman**  
*Chair of Full Governing Body*