

AOB Schools Forum 16th January 2018 – Deductions for Excluded Pupils

Purpose of the report

To bring to attention of Schools Forum, recent guidance from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), on the methodology for deducting funding for excluded pupils from school budgets, and its possible impact on the current local agreement.

Recommendation

For Schools Forum to delegate to the Schools Forum Funding Sub Group the review of the current local agreement and methodology and consider the options.

Background

The Local Authority has received a number of queries from schools regarding the methodology used to calculate the amount of funding deducted for excluded pupils following the publication of the Schools Revenue Funding 2018 to 2019 Operational Guide (December 2017).

The Operational Guide now defines the period the deduction will be for, namely 'the financial year' and then goes on to state 'The adjustment for a particular exclusion relates only to the current financial year, and cannot be applied to subsequent years.' 'The only exception to using the number of weeks remaining in the financial year is where the exclusion takes place after 1 April, in a school year where the pupil would normally have left at the end of that school year. In that case, the calculation is based just on the number of weeks left until the end of the school year.

Buckinghamshire County Council's current methodology was agreed by Schools Forum 27th September 2016 (see Appendix below) and deducts an amount for pupils excluded after the October census, that covers the weeks remaining in the current financial year (31st March for maintained schools and 31st August for Academies) **and the whole of the next financial year** if the pupil is not in the last school year. This is because the next financial year funding is based on lagged October census data.

The purpose of the agreed methodology was to fairly fund schools for pupils that changed schools due to exclusions, i.e. fund schools taking on excluded pupils where the pupil was not on their census and remove funding from schools given funding for pupils that had subsequently been excluded.

Advice was sought from the Education Funding Agency prior to the consideration of the new methodology and on this basis the local agreement was introduced.

The Local Authority has sought further advice from the ESFA following the change in operational guidance. The ESFA responded as follows: 'If you have made a local agreement outside of the regulations and guidance then it is difficult for us to advise a position.'

The regulations still state funding period not financial year but the ESFA have updated the operational guidance to clarify this instead of changing the regulations. The operational guidance will become effective from 1st April 2018.

Options to be considered:

1 - Change the procedure to follow the operational guidance from 1st April 2018. This would require recalculations of deductions and additions of funding for schools respectively.

2 – Confirm the local agreement and write to the schools concerned about the process.

Appendix

<https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=461&MId=6812>



PXs - Schools Forum
v2.pdf

Charges for Permanently Excluded Pupils - for decision pdf icon PDF 395 KB

Update from Laura Nankin, Head of Fair Access and Youth Provision

Paper attached:

- Charges for Permanently Excluded Pupils

Minutes:

Mrs L Nankin, Head of Fair Access and Youth Provision highlighted the following key points from the report:

The current method used in Buckinghamshire was to only charge AWPU from the excluding schools from the point of exclusion to the end of the current financial year that ends 31st March and only give the AWPU to the admitting schools from the date of admission to the 31st March. This method currently applied to all schools including academies.

The proposal was being recommended for the following reasons:

- The new charging mechanism would be fairer
- The financial incentive to Permanently Exclude would be removed and create an incentive to reintegrate
- Funding pressure

The additional paper circulated during the meeting clarified the 'Funding Period', cross border arrangements for exclusions with other local authorities and explained how treating Academies and Maintained Schools differently could be managed financially.

During discussions the following comments was made:

- If a member of staff had been specifically contracted to support a child who was then subsequently excluded, there could be a financial cost to the school.
- High Needs block and other extra funding allocated would follow the child if they moved school.
- The reintegration grant followed managed moves and was funded from a different budget.

RESOLVED

Members of the Schools Forum AGREED the following recommendations:

- Change to charging the excluding schools (allocating to the admitting school) for the school's relevant financial year i.e. to 31st March for maintained schools and 31st August for academies.
- Charge the excluding school (allocate to the admitting school) for the remained of the current financial year and additionally the following year if the exclusion was after the October census and the pupil was not in year 11 and include all the relevant factors in the formula outlined in Appendix 1.