



Whitefield

Schools

A member of
Whitefield Academy Trust

29th November 2019

Dear parents,

Waltham Forest Consultation on Allocation of High Needs Block funding How this could affect Whitefield Schools

You will have received a letter from Waltham Forest Council asking for your views on how the Council should use the High Needs Block funding. As some parents have asked for guidance on how to respond I am writing to explain how the outcome could affect Whitefield Schools.

The High Needs Block is the money which the government gives Waltham Forest to support children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). This funding is for children and young people in special and mainstream schools. The council is saying that the money is not enough to meet all the children's needs because there are more children with SEN and because young people with SEN are now supported up to the age of 25. Therefore, the council is looking to make savings from the High Needs Block.

The amount of money provided to support each child with SEND depends on their funding 'band'. Bands at Whitefield go from level E (£8,000) to level I (£43,000). This money pays for staffing and equipment therefore the amount of each resource level directly affects the support for our children and the quality of education and care we can provide. The amount of money at each resource level has not changed for the past 8 years. Staffing costs have gone up considerably over that time so we are already in a very challenging financial situation. Any reduction in the resource levels will have a significant impact.

The letter also says that the council has asked Special Schools to agree to a reduction of 1.5% in their funding to meet the shortfall elsewhere. This would mean that Whitefield gave back £137,000 from our budget. We cannot afford to do this and Whitefield's Directors have refused. We do have some reserves which are needed to provide the best facilities for our children and young people and to make sure we are prepared for a 'rainy day'.

There are four questions on the consultation

1. Do you think that bands should continue to be different for primary and secondary schools?

This does not directly affect Whitefield Schools as our banding is the same for Primary and Secondary pupils.

However, you might want to comment that banding should depend on a child's needs as set out in the Education, Health and Care Plan, not their age.

2. If we adopt Model A, do you agree with the proposed bands?

Whitefield objects to the proposed bands.

Under Model A, band G will no longer exist and children now on band G will be funded at band F – a reduction of just under £3000. Whitefield currently has 70 children on band G so we could lose nearly £200,000. Children on level G mostly have profound and multiple learning difficulties or more complex autism.

If your child is funded at level G you might want to ask how their needs will be met with reduced funding.

If your child is on a different resource level you might still want to ask how these children's needs will be met and whether if the school loses funding it will affect other children.

3. If we adopt Model B, do you agree with the proposed bands?

This does not directly affect Whitefield Schools

Model B reduces funding for bands E and F in mainstream schools by 10%. As far as we can see the council is not proposing to reduce bands E and F at Whitefield. However, you might want to express a view on this as it will have an impact on the quality of education for children in mainstream.

4. Do you have any other comments on our proposals for EHCP banding?

You might want to comment on the proposal to ask Whitefield to give back 1.5 % from our budget which we cannot afford to do.

You might want to comment on the fact that funding bands have been the same for 8 years while the cost of staffing and equipment has gone up considerably in that time.

You might want to say that the amount of funding should depend on a child's needs as set out in their EHCP and that it should not be reduced because the council has overspent.

The link to the survey is:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HNB041119>

The closing date is 9th December

I hope this information is helpful and clarifies some of the points in a complicated letter. If you would like any more information, please feel free to ask.

We are very concerned that the council is trying to reduce our budget in two different ways – by removing band G and by asking us to give back a chunk of our budget. Please be assured that the senior leadership team, supported by the Directors, will make every effort to continue to give all our children the very best education we can. That becomes more difficult if the council does not fund every child's individual needs.

Yours faithfully,

Laura Pease, Principal

Gill Wadeson, Family Support Team