

For the attention of:  
Head Teachers  
Chair of Governors  
Finance Staff

31 January 2025

Dear Colleagues

**PROVISIONAL School Budget Share 2025/26**

The School's Forum considered the 2025-26 budget at its meeting on 16 January 2025 and the Local Authority (LA) has subsequently submitted the funding formula template to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for approval. Outlined below and in the accompanying annexes are the details of your PROVISIONAL budget share for 2025-26.

Academies should note that this information is indicative only, as actual allocations will be notified by the ESFA in their General Annual Grant (GAG) statement.

Further information on the 2025-26 school funding allocations is outlined in the [January 2025 Schools Forum Reports](#), the budget toolkit on [Local Management of Schools \(LMS\) website](#) and Annex A to this letter.

Please review this information carefully and if you have any queries, please contact the Finance Team by email at [schoolsfinance@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:schoolsfinance@milton-keynes.gov.uk).

**Budget Setting 2025-26**

Guidance notes to assist schools with budget setting will be available on the [LMS website](#) in February 2025 – please ensure you read the guidance thoroughly.

Budget plans for maintained schools must be approved by your governing body, or a committee authorised to approve the budget and submitted to the Finance Team by 1 May 2025.

**Need to contact us?**

Michelle.hibbert@milton-keynes.gov.uk  
01908 253494  
Civic, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes MK9 3EJ  
[www.milton-keynes.gov.uk](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk)

In normal circumstances schools are not permitted to plan for a deficit budget therefore if you are having difficulty setting a balanced budget, please contact the Finance team as soon as possible. A reminder on the rules for deficit balances is outlined in the [Scheme for Financing Schools](#).

### **3 Year Budget Plans**

As per the Scheme for Financing Schools, maintained schools are required to provide LAs with three-year budget forecasts approved by your governing body, or a committee authorised to approve the three-year budget no later than 1 June 2025.

Further guidance and budget templates to complete will be published on the Local Management of Schools (LMS) website in due course.

Yours faithfully

*Sonia Hattle*

Sonia Hattle  
Head of Finance for Social Care, Education and Housing

## **Annex A**

### **Schools Block Funding**

The components for determining the total funding allocations for each school can be summarised as follows:

- [Primary and secondary school funding formula](#)
- [Early years](#)
- [Top up funding and place funding for high needs pupils](#)
- Post 16 funding – these will be determined by the ESFA
- [Government grants](#)
- [Growth funding](#) – some schools may receive funding for a planned growth in pupil numbers. This is determined in line with the [growth fund criteria](#) agreed by the Schools Forum.

### **National Funding Formula Factors**

#### **Basic Entitlement and Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU)**

The unit rate applies to each pupil on roll at the October 2024 census, including occupied places in special units, occupied places in resourced provisions and adjustments for approved growth places in new and growing schools.

#### **Deprivation**

Funding for deprivation is allocated to schools using a combination of free school meals (FSM), FSM Ever6 eligibility and the income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) data for each school.

Eligibility for FSM uses the previous October census and Ever6 FSM (pupils entitled to free meals at any time in the last 6 years) from the previous October census.

The funding through IDACI is designed to meet the additional educational needs of children from deprived backgrounds. The DfE have determined that LA's must use six bands, the bands are configured on the probability that a pupil comes from a deprived background based on the postcode of the home of the pupil using IDACI criteria. There are 7 IDACI bands A to G where A is the highest level of deprivation, although funding is allocated to bands A to F.

### **Minimum per Pupil Funding (MPPF)**

The MPPF factor has been mandatory since 2020/21. The MPPF sets the minimum amount of funding per pupil that each school attracts through the NFF.

For each school, the minimum per pupil is a weighted average for primary, KS3 and KS4, with the weighting determined by the number of year groups in the relevant phase that are present at the school. Only the year groups that contain pupils are counted in this calculation:

<b>School Phase</b>	<b>2025/26 MPPF</b>
Primary	£4,955
KS3	£6,221
KS4	£6,831

This provides per-pupil funding of at least £4,955 for each primary school, and £6,465 for each secondary school with standard structures of seven and five year groups respectively.

### **English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

Pupils identified in the October census with a first language other than English attract funding for up to three years after they enter the statutory school system.

### **Low Prior Attainment (LPA)**

This funding is based on prior attainment of pupils and is allocated to fund the low level special educational needs of children and contribute to the first £6,000 of needs of pupils with higher needs.

This factor is applied for: -

- Primary pupils identified as not achieving a good level of development in the early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP).
- Secondary pupils not reaching the expected standard in KS2 at either reading or writing or maths.

Since 2017/18, the department has weighted the LPA factor for some secondary year groups so that year-on-year fluctuations in pass-rates, do not disproportionately affect the distribution of funding through the LPA factor in the mainstream formula.

In 2025/26, the department has carried forward the weightings it used in 2024/25 for the year 7 to year 10 cohorts, so they will apply to the year 8 to year 11 cohorts respectively.

For the financial year 2025/26, the weightings are:

- pupils in year 7 in October 2024: 58%
- pupils in year 8 in October 2024: 56%
- pupils in year 9 and 10 in October 2024: 54%
- pupils in year 11 in October 2024: 65%

The weightings will operate in the same way as in 2024/25: the number of pupils identified as having LPA in the data will be multiplied by the relevant weighting to determine the number of pupils eligible for the factor for funding purposes.

Following the cancellation or incompleteness of both EYFSP and KS2 assessments in summer 2020 and summer 2021 due to coronavirus (COVID-19), local authorities will not be able to use assessment data from these years in the low prior attainment factor in their local funding formulae. Instead, local authorities will use:

- 2022 attainment data as a proxy for the missing assessments in 2021
- 2019 attainment data as a proxy for the missing assessments in 2020 for primary pupils
- 2019 attainment data from the 2024/25 authority pro-forma tool (APT) as a proxy for the missing assessments in 2020 for secondary pupils. (The 2024/25 data is used for secondary since the secondary pupils who sat the 2019 assessments have now left KS4)

### **Pupil Mobility**

The mobility factor allocates funding to schools with a high proportion of pupils with an entry date in the last 3 years which is not typical. For year groups 1 to 11, 'typical' means that the first census on which a pupil is recorded as attending the school (or its predecessors) is the October census. 'Not typical' means that the first census a pupil is recorded as attending the school is a January or May census.

For the reception year, 'typical' means the first census in October or January.

To be eligible for mobility funding, the proportion of mobile pupils a school has must be above the threshold of 6%. An amount per-pupil is then allocated to all mobile pupils above that threshold.

## **Sparsity**

Schools that are eligible for sparsity funding must meet two criteria: -

- its sparsity distance is equal to or above the main distance threshold, or above the tapered distance threshold, and
- the average year group size (calculated as the APT-adjusted pupil count divided by number of year groups present at the school) is below the relevant size threshold

As was the case last year sparsity distances have been measured using road distances instead of straight-line distances. To calculate a school's sparsity distance, the ESFA take all the pupils for whom it is the nearest compatible school and find the average shortest road distance from these pupils' home post codes to their second nearest compatible schools.

As the pupil population changes each year, it is possible for a school to be eligible for sparsity funding in one year but not in the next.

A distance threshold taper was introduced in 2022/23, this means that where schools' sparsity distances are marginally below the main distance thresholds for sparsity funding, they will still attract some allocation through the NFF. The distance threshold taper has been set 20% below the main distance thresholds.

## **Lump Sum**

This is set at a fixed amount for every school in line with the NFF rates.

## **Split Site**

In 2024/25 a national formulaic approach has been introduced to split sites funding, which replaces the previous local authority-led approach. The new split sites factor is compulsory for all local authorities, ensuring that split sites funding will be allocated consistently and fairly across the country. Local authorities are required to set their split sites factor values within the 2.5% mirroring threshold for the NFF.

The factor is made up of 2 parts, both of which are compulsory:

- basic eligibility funding: schools must be allocated a lump sum payment for each of their additional eligible sites
- distance funding: additional funding must be paid out on top of the basic eligibility lump sum for schools whose eligible sites are separated by more than 100 metres (by road distance) from the main site

The basic eligibility criteria for split sites funding requires additional sites to:

- be part of the main school, that is, to share the same unique reference number (URN) with the school's main site
- be separated from the school's main site by a public road or railway
- have a building on them which is maintained by the school, and which is primarily used for the education of 5 to 16- year-old pupils in mainstream education. This excludes playing fields, 'ancillary buildings' and buildings leased out full time by the school to another entity

Funding for the distance element is allocated through a tapered approach, beginning at 100 metres, with allocations increasing linearly up to 500 metres, from which point schools will receive the total maximum funding allowed.

### **National Non-Domestic Rates**

Since 2022/23 funding for the cost of rates will no longer be passed to schools through the school budget share, instead rates will be paid to billing authorities directly by the ESFA to settle schools rates liabilities.

### **Unit Rates**

The DfE NFF unit rates have been applied but adjusted by the Milton Keynes area cost adjustment (ACA) of 1.02977.

### **Pupil Count**

The pupil count is based on the October 2024 census, including occupied places for pre-16 pupils in special units and resourced provisions.

The ESFA have advised that all new and growing schools should be funded through the funding formula on the basis of estimated numbers. This means a school expanding by one year group of 30 pupils will be funded based on the census plus an additional 30 pupils for 7 months of the year (September to March) i.e.  $7/12 \times 30 =$  an additional 17.5 pupils.

Information on weighted pupil numbers to be applied was reported to Schools Forum in October 2024 and January 2025.

## **Post 16**

Funding is allocated by the ESFA on an academic year basis, therefore funding is currently available for April to July 2025 only. Further funding information will be issued to maintained schools for August 2025 to July 2026 when this is available.

## **Early Years**

For 3 and 4 year olds the rate will be paid at £5.73 per hour, an increase of £0.23 per hour from the 2024/25 rate. The same rate will be payable to all provider types.

For 2 year olds – receiving additional support, the rate will be paid at £8.03 per hour, an increase of £0.30 per hour from the 2024/25 rate. The same rate will be payable for 2 years – working parents and to all provider types.

For under 2s the rate will be paid at £11.24 per hour, an increase of £0.28 from the 2024/25 rate. The same rate paid to all provider types.

Budgets will be issued in February using estimated hours of take up; this will include deprivation calculations using postcode data from the January 2025 census, matched to the English indices of deprivation measure updated in September 2019.

Other early years funding is as follows:

- Disability Access Fund (DAF) – providers can claim for children from all age entitlements in receipt of Disability Living allowance (DLA) for this funding, the 2025/26 rate is £938 per annum.
- Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) – this funding is now paid for eligible children from all age entitlements, providing they meet the EYPP criteria.
- The list of allowable funding supplements was extended in 2024/25 to include all of the age entitlements, for MKCC this means:
  - Deprivation funding is now applied to all age groups (3-4 year olds, 2 year olds and under 2s).
  - Inclusion funding is now applied to all age groups (3-4 year olds, 2 year olds and under 2s).



## De-Delegation

There was agreement with Schools Forum members in October 2024 to de-delegate funding for the following services: -

Service	Basis of Allocation	Applies to
Facilities Time	Number on roll	Maintained Primary Schools
Insurance	Number on roll	Maintained Primary Schools
School Improvement	Number on roll	All Maintained Schools

The insurance de-delegation for 2025/26 has currently been set at a rate of £27 per pupil, however the rate has not yet been confirmed by Zurich our insurers. Once the rate per pupil has been confirmed we will notify all maintained primary schools and will adjust the de-delegation accordingly.

## Gains CAP

No gains cap has been applied to funding for 2025/26 meaning that all schools will attract their full formula allocation.

## Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

Local authorities are able to set an MFG between +0.0% and -0.5% per pupil. The Milton Keynes formula has been set at +0.0%, as per the consultation with all schools.

MFG protects schools from excessive year-on-year changes and to allow changes in pupil characteristics (for example, reducing levels of deprivation in a school) to flow through.

The following formula factors are automatically excluded from the MFG calculation, as not doing so would result in excessive protection, or would be inconsistent with the school finance regulations:

- The 2025/26 lump sum; this is excluded from both the baseline and 2025/26 funding so that schools are protected against significant change in the lump sum between years.
- The 2025/26 sparsity factor; this is excluded from both the baseline and 2025/26 funding so that schools are protected against significant change in the sparsity value between years.
- Rates are excluded from both the baseline and 2025/26 funding, at their respective values for each year.
- Split site funding: this is excluded from both the baseline and 2025/26 funding, at their respective values for each year. This exclusion ensures that funding increases and decreases in line with split site eligibility resulting from changes to the school estate.

## Government Grants

### Pupil Premium

The rates for 2025/26 have not yet been announced. The allocations will be based on the October 2024 census data, just as the October 2023 census was used for the 2024/25 pupil premium allocations. Schools must ensure that all eligible pupils are recorded on the census in order to receive the funding.

	2024/25
Free School Meal Primary	£1,480
Free School Meal Secondary	£1,050
Service Children	£340
Looked After Children – funding to be allocated by the virtual head teacher	£2,570
Previously Looked After Children	£2,570

Eligibility for 2024/25 was based on a number of criteria, these will be updated when the 2025/26 funding has been confirmed:

- Disadvantaged Children ‘Ever FSM 6’ Eligibility – The pupil premium for 2024/25 is £1,480 per primary pupil (2023/24 £1,455) and £1,050 per secondary pupil (2023/24 £1,035). The pupil premium for 2024/25 includes pupils recorded in the October 2023 school census who have had a recorded period of FSM eligibility since January 2017, as well as those first recorded as eligible on the October 2023.
- Service Children “Ever 6” Eligibility – The rate for 2024/25 is £340 (2023/24 £335) for each pupil in year groups reception to year 11 who is either an Ever 6 service child or in receipt of child pension from the Ministry of Defence. An Ever 6 service child means a pupil recorded in the October 2023 census who were eligible for the service child premium since the January 2017 census as well as those recorded as a service child for the first time on the October 2023 school census.
- Looked After Children – The rate for 2024/25 is £2,570 (2023/24 £2,530) for each eligible looked after child. The eligibility covers all those who have been looked after for one day or more as recorded in the March 2023 children looked-after data return (SSDA903) and aged 4 to 15 at 31

August 2022. The virtual school head will work closely with schools to ensure that, as the 'corporate parent' of looked after children the funding is used to maximum effect.

The pupil premium for 2024/25 includes pupils recorded in the October 2023 school census and alternative provision census, who were looked after by a local authority immediately before being adopted, or who left local authority care on a special guardianship order or child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order). These are collectively referred to as post-LAC and are also eligible of funding at £2,570 (2023/24 £2,530).

- Early years Pupil Premium has been confirmed for 2025/26 – this is payable to schools, nurseries and childminders, who will receive £570.00 per year, £1.00 per hour (2024/25 £387.60, £0.68 per hour). In 2023/24 this was payable for eligible 3 and 4 year olds only, but from 2024/25 this applies to all of the age group entitlements. The additional funding is to support disadvantaged children and will be applied where the child is from a low-income family or where the child is looked after or has left care through an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order.

### **Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)**

The Universal Infant Free School Meals grant (UIFSM) is allocated on an academic year and the funding is agreed for the 2024/25 academic year. The allocation is based on the average number of meals recorded in the school census in October 2024 and January 2025.

The funding rates for 2024/25 could not be announced during the pre-election period in 2024, so the allocations for the first 2024/25 payments were calculated using the 2023/24 academic year UIFSM funding rate of £2.53 per meal.

However it has now been confirmed that a further uplift to £2.58 will be implemented for the 2024/25 academic year. This additional payment will be delivered alongside the final allocation for 2024/25 in July 2025. This will be backdated to the start of the academic year.

### **Primary PE and Sports Premium**

The Primary PE and Sports Premium grant is allocated on an academic year basis and the funding is agreed for the 2024/25 academic year.

The allocations are based on the number of pupils in years 1 to 6 as recorded in the January 2024 census.

- Schools with 16 or fewer pupils received £1,000 per pupil
- Schools with 17 or more pupils received £16,000 + £10 per pupil.

[Further guidance can be found here.](#)

### **High Needs Funding**

The high needs funding system supports provision for children and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) from their early years, up to the age of 25. The block includes funding for pre-16 and post-16 places in both maintained and academy special schools, alternative provision, pupil referral units and further education institutions. The high needs block funds commissioned places in these settings, together with top up funding for individual pupils and students. The 2025/26 funding rates can be found on the below table:

Description	Hourly Rates	Annual Rate	Apr-25		Sep-25		Comments
			Pre 16	Post 16	Pre 16	Post 16	
<b>SEN Funding:</b>							
Mainstream Top up Funding (for a child with an EHCP)	£13.55						Annual payment dependant on hours agreed at SEN Panel
SEN Support Funding (for a child without an EHCP)	£13.55						Annual payment dependant on hours agreed at SEN Panel for a fixed period
Early Years Inclusion Grant	£13.55						Annual payment dependant on hours agreed at SEN Panel
Disability Access Fund (DAF)		£938.00					Must be claimed by school and paid in a lump sum
Additional Notional SEN Payment							Different for every school, dependant on number of children with an EHCP compared to trigger point
<b>Place Funding:</b>							
Pre-16 (if filled) for all units and resources provision per place		£6,000					Place filled / unfilled is determined at October census date
Pre-16 (if unfilled) for all units and resourced provision per place		£10,000					Place filled / unfilled is determined at October census date
Post-16 (filled or unfilled) for all units and resourced provision per place		£6,000					
<b>Units:</b>							
Bradwell Village - ASC			£12,882	£0	£12,632	£0	
Germander Park - ASC			£12,882	£0	£12,632	£0	
Priory Common - ASC			£0	£0	£15,032	£0	New unit opening September 2025, top up funding paid from July 2025
Southwood - ASC			£12,882	£0	£12,632	£0	
Romans Field - ASC			£12,726	£0	£11,186	£0	
St Paul's Catholic School - Social Comm (Emmanuel)			£27,824	£0	£11,186	£0	Opened September 2023, higher top up rate initially to reflect phased opening
<b>Resourced Provisions:</b>							
Charles Warren Academy			£15,180	£0	£15,180	£0	
New Bradwell - Communication			£10,658	£0	£10,658	£0	
Shepherdswell Academy - Communication			£15,180	£0	£15,180	£0	
Orchard Academy - Communication			£10,658	£0	£10,658	£0	
Radcliffe - Social Communication			£10,564	£10,564	£10,564	£10,564	
St Paul's Catholic School - Social Comm			£10,846	£10,846	£10,846	£10,846	
St Paul's Catholic School - HI			£23,031	£22,194	£23,031	£22,194	
St Paul's Catholic School VI			£15,292	£14,455	£15,292	£14,455	
Stantonbury Campus - Social Comm			£40,159	£0	£0	£0	Closing August 2025

### Need to contact us?

Michelle.hibbert@milton-keynes.gov.uk  
 01908 253494

Civic, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes MK9 3EJ  
 www.milton-keynes.gov.uk