



Federation of Boldmere Schools Governor Update | Finance Update

Dear parents/carers,

The leadership team and Governors met on Thursday 3rd November to discuss school budgets and put plans in place to address the financial crisis we potentially face. We feel it important and right to share with you why we feel this action was needed and summarise the situation.

All schools are facing a serious funding shortfall. A survey commissioned by the National Association of Head Teachers last month suggests as many as 90% of schools 'will have run out of money by the start of the next academic year'. We are at crisis point and are being forced to make decisions about what we can and can't afford to avoid an unsustainable budget deficit.

This update is not intended to alarm; rather our intention is to help parents and carers understand the gravity of the financial challenge facing schools currently, and to provide some context to the decisions we may make in the coming weeks and months.

This situation has been building over recent years as funding in real terms has fallen while at the same time costs have increased. Spending in school has already been cut to the bone, but now, rising energy costs, recent unfunded pay increases and inflation have exacerbated the situation.

At Boldmere, our energy costs are set to treble while the teacher and support staff pay increases awarded by government, must come from our already stretched budget.

"Schools are being hit by a perfect storm of costs. In attempting to balance their budgets, school leaders are being faced with eye-watering energy bills, spiralling costs to resources and supplies, and the financial impact of an unfunded pay increase this year. With no fat left to cut following a decade of austerity, many thousands of schools are now looking at falling into deficit unless they make swingeing cuts. Education is truly in a perilous state."

(Paul Whiteman, General Secretary, National Association of Head Teachers)

The school senior leadership team and governing board are working with Birmingham City Council, the Department for Education, respective trade unions and other schools within Sutton Coldfield to seek a positive path through this crisis. Action has been taken over several years to manage costs and further steps were agreed in this latest meeting.

We must emphasise that the needs of the children and the delivery of a high quality education in a safe, happy and positive environment remains the school's absolute focus. We continue to meet this expectation, but we feel it also important that we make the wider school community aware of the financial issues, and signpost you to areas that provide additional information related to this educational funding crisis.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. Please do get in touch on the email address below if you have any questions,

Best wishes,

Federation of Boldmere Schools Board of Governors



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Additional reading

There have been numerous reports in the media in recent weeks on this crisis. You may find the following links/QR codes useful:



[Schools to cut staff in budget squeeze, union says](#) (BBC News)



[Worcestershire heads 'grave concerns' over school funding](#) (BBC News)



[90% of schools in England will run out of money next year, heads warn](#) (The Guardian)



[Schools may be forced to cut teachers and expand class sizes due to 'devastating' funding shortages](#) (The Independent)



[9 in 10 schools to have real-terms funding cut next year](#) (Times Educational Supplement)



[Most schools to cut staff, axe repairs and up class sizes over funding crisis](#) (Schools Week)



The [School Cuts](#) website is a useful tool to look at the funding cuts for schools in the local area. At present the site gives only retrospective data for the financial year 2021-22, but a new site will be launched shortly showing data for the year ahead (information taken from The Guardian 07/11/22).



The National Education Union along with Parent Kind and Association of School and College Leaders and National Association of Head Teachers trade unions have written an open letter to the Prime Minister and are encouraging educational professionals and parents/carers to add their names. You can find out more at <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/rishi-sunak-stop->

A call to action

We would like to encourage all parents/carers to consider signing this online petition calling for immediate funding from government to fully meet the rising costs schools are facing.



<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/627130>

You may also wish to consider writing to your MP.



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Changes to expect

We have already taken wide-reaching action to reduce school deficits that are anticipated. This includes a recruitment freeze; reducing the use of supply teachers to cover sickness absence; renegotiating supplier contracts; utilising the school facilities to generate an income (e.g. holiday clubs); and cancelling subscriptions to services and teaching tools. This is a summarised list: the true reach of the school's cost management is far greater.

However, it is not enough and therefore additional changes will follow. Practical things parents will start to notice are:

- Requests to dress children warmly over the winter, as we limit how we use the heating in the school, whilst ensuring we meet statutory requirements
- Requests for contributions for school activities incurring an additional cost to the school. Examples of these may be:
 - o An increase in travel costs to swimming or events
 - o Cost of design materials
 - o Contributions to cookery classes
 - o Contributions for extra-curricular activities (e.g. clubs, theatre visits)

We regret that there is a need to make changes and greatly appreciate parents/carers support. We know it is not easy as the cost of living rises for us all.

Fundraising

In order to help pay for non-centrally funded activities, the school will be running an additional fundraising campaign to support this crisis. You may have seen our big donation bucket at the recent maths workshops! More information will follow in due course.

Additionally, If you are able to fundraise for the school please get in touch by emailing enquiry@boldmere.bham.sch.uk.

PTA support

The Boldmere School PTA fundraises for activities, events and equipment which sits outside of the curriculum. The amount of asks for support have increased, and we know they are doing excellent work to raise funds, such as through the recent fireworks display, which was an amazing community event.

We thank the PTA for their ongoing support – it is now critical, no longer a 'nice to have'.

A little extra help

In these difficult times, we know some families are struggling to cope.

Please don't forget to use the PTA uniform exchange to get gently worn uniform at fantastic prices.

[Boldmere Schools PTA \(pta-events.co.uk\)](http://pta-events.co.uk)



Get in touch

The governors welcome feedback and questions from all parents/carers.

Please contact either of the school offices or email enquiry@boldmere.bham.sch.uk marking the email for the attention of the FGB.