



19 November 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians

## School Funding

As Headteacher of Dane Court Grammar School, I find myself having to write to you about school funding. You may already be aware that over the last five years the amount of funding granted to schools has been reducing steadily. Schools such as ours, with large, academic sixth forms, have been hit particularly hard: we now receive £1,000 less per sixth-former per year than we did three years ago, a reduction of more than £300,000 each year. The budget for students aged 11 to 16 has been 'protected', according to the government, but in real terms this means that funding even for these students is not keeping pace with rising costs.

At the same time as income is dropping sharply, employment costs have risen steeply. We have seen the costs of employing our staff rise by almost 8% this year alone, through unfunded increases in National Insurance contributions, pay awards and pension costs.

We have already taken steps to cut our costs without compromising the quality of the education we offer. We have restructured administrative and support staff roles and have renegotiated cleaning and power contracts. Unfortunately, these economies do not address the scale of the problem. You may also know that many other schools are in the same position as us.

Because the biggest cut in funding is in relation to the sixth form, we have had to evaluate very carefully the curriculum we offer in order to make savings. Our governing body has approved our plan to remove subjects where group sizes have been consistently small over the last few years. From September 2016, therefore, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Italian, Music, Theatre, and Design Technology will no longer be offered in our sixth form curriculum. Students already on these courses in year 12 will continue to completion.

It is extremely regrettable that we have had to take such drastic action, but we have been left with no choice. Inevitably, there will need to be an overall reduction in staffing levels. We will do all we can to avoid compulsory redundancies, although these may be necessary. We believe that the removal of these subjects, as well as an increase in teaching time for each teacher and some other revisions in our curriculum lower down the school, will enable us to operate a balanced budget for the foreseeable future.

You will realise, I am sure, that the funding crisis in secondary schools is a national issue. Our local politicians tell us that they are actively highlighting this, but I regret that this appears to have had little impact so far. You may wish to register your own views by writing to your MP.

I would like to reassure you that we will do everything we can to minimise the impact of the cuts and to make sure that the education we offer all our students at Dane Court continues to be outstanding in every respect.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A T Fowler  
Headteacher