

## EAST SUSSEX SCHOOLS' FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the Schools' Forum held remotely with Microsoft Teams on 10 May 2024

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### MEMBERS

#### Primary

Richard Blakeley (Harlands Primary)  
Laura Cooper (St John's CE School)  
Vicky Anderson (Catsfield CEP School)

#### Primary Governors

Debra Vice Holt (Oak Tree Federation)  
Peter Hughes (South Malling Primary School)

#### Secondary

Emily Winslade (Priory School)  
Helen Key (Chailey School)  
Julie Campion - (Grove Park School)

#### Secondary Governors

Monica Whitehead (Claverham community College)

#### Academies

James Freeston (King Offa Primary Academy) **Chair**  
Gavin Bailey (Swale Academy Trust)  
Kelly Johnson (UoBAT)  
Zoe James (MARK Education Trust)  
Sally Hill (Aquinas Trust)  
Richard Preece (Saxon Mount and Torfield)

#### Pupil Referral Unit

Jo Foulkes (Sabden Multi Academy Trust)

#### Non School Members

Joanna Sanchez (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton)  
Jon Gilbert (Diocese of Chichester)  
Hannah Caldwell (Post 16 East Sussex College Group)

#### ESCC representatives

Cllr Bob Standley (Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability)  
Carolyn Fair (Director Children's services)  
Elizabeth Funge Assistant Director Education  
Honor Green (BSD Finance)  
Nathan Caine (HofEd SEND & Safeguarding)  
Edward Beale (Acting Finance Manager - Childrens Services)  
Sarah Rice (Finance Manager - Schools)  
Kirsten Coe (Schools Funding Manager - Acting)  
Rachel King (Clerk)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES (Note)

1.1 It was confirmed the meeting was quorate, recognising the apologies below.

Jo Foulkes - (Sabden Multi Academy Trust)  
Jon Gilbert - (Diocese of Chichester)  
Richard Preece - (Saxon Mount and Torfield) Kirsty Prawanna attended as rep  
Julie Campion - (Grove Park School, Crowborough)

1.2 The chair welcomed Carolyn Fair, new Director of Children’s Services.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 12 January 2024 (Approval)

2.1 The minutes for the meeting held were approved as a true record and will be signed by the Chair and scanned to clerk.

3. MATTERS ARISING AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Discussion)

3.1 Matters arising - none  
Declarations of interest - none.

4. High Needs Block - Demands and Pressures (Approval)

4.1 All members of the forum that joined the sub-group were thanked for their time and input into the discussion. Schools’ Forum members were provided an update on the current pressures on the High Needs Block (HNB). Recommendations from the HNB subgroup were reported and members were asked to approve those.

4.2 Recommendations.

That Schools’ Forum

a) considers the recommendations (as set out in paper 2.13) made by the HNB Subgroup.

b) agrees whether any amendments should be made to the recommendations from the HNB Subgroup.

Decision - The chair asked if any amendments to the recommendation to be brought forward. No amendments were proposed.

c) That Schools’ Forum votes to endorse the proposed financial arrangements for 24/25 (specifically a 3.4% uplift for special and mainstream school top-ups and no changes to the exceptional mainstream funding) and/or any amendments that are made.

Decision:

	Number voting ‘Yes’	Number voting ‘No’	Number of Abstentions
3.4% uplift for mainstream schools	14	0	0

d) That Schools' Forum agrees the proposal for the HNB Subgroup to undertake more work to develop proposals for future uplifts to mainstream and special school top-ups, based on a more nuanced understanding of costs, and to bring these back to SF for approval.

Comments:

It was asked that East Sussex officers could offer information on Schools Block and understanding any disparity in relation to other local authority areas. **ACTION EB**

It was proposed the sub group discusses more about cost pressures within the special sector.

A proposal for sub group to investigate whether or not there is disparity between costs of pupils with needs in different settings.

An objection was put forward to any inter block transfers in the future.

4.3 The work for this will be reported back to Schools' Forum in the Autumn meeting.

5. Permanent Pupil Exclusions - Money following the Pupil (Information)

5.1 Information on this future item for the upcoming agenda at July Schools' Forum was given. A paper will be brought about money following the pupil, following permanent exclusion. There are regulations in place for a deduction of funding for a pupil excluded from maintained schools, but not for academies. This creates a two tier system in East Sussex; if the child is excluded from a maintained school the money will follow but if they are excluded from an academy it will not. In other LAs, there are process which mean maintained and academies are on equal footing. Proposal for next Schools' Forum will be to outline how a system can be created to treat maintained and academies the same, on the basis of research from other LAs.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair wanted to express the need for a new Chair to take over from the Autumn, as his term will be up after the July 2024 meeting. If anyone is interested, please get in touch.

Meeting concluded at 09:27 am

Next meeting - Friday July 12, 8:30am. To be held on Microsoft Teams