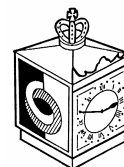




Brownhills School

Headteacher : Helen Keenan



To all Members of the School Forum:

Brownhills School-transfer of pupils from Sneyd School

On behalf of the Trustees and the Governing Body of Brownhills School, I am writing to the School Forum to request additional funding from the Specific School Contingency Budget in relation to the transfer of 40 pupils from Sneyd School during the school year 2010-2011. These pupils are IN ADDITION to the 13 Sneyd pupils who were part of the formal transfer arrangements from Year 9 to Year 10 in September 2010 who were funded and in addition to 41 other non- Sneyd mid -year admissions resulting in a total of an additional 94 mid- year admissions for the school, a 15% increase on the school roll.

As members will know however, 81 of these mid -year admissions have not been funded. This is an actual loss of funding for the school of £144,901.83.

Governors and Trustees are well aware of the current national system which does not fund mid-year admissions and will be writing to the Department of Education to point out the swingeing economic impact of that central regulation.

In the case of Sneyd pupils however, Governors and Trustees feel that the situation is very different and indeed unique. The school is closing. It has received funding for each of these pupils but it is no longer providing an education for them. Parents have made the choice to move them before the actual closure date because of concerns about their children falling behind on GCSE courses and concerns about the emotional effect on their child of being educated in a closing school. Like most schools, Brownhills School now starts several GCSE courses in Year 9. If these pupils waited until the end of year 9, they would be a year behind their peers in their new school.

Schools closer to the Sneyd catchment area are full and parents have chosen Brownhills School after successful visits to the school and seeing how well we have welcomed and supported the pupils who transferred in the summer. As a Walsall school, we want to ensure that these children continue their education in Walsall. Sadly, many Sneyd pupils who left the school earlier went to Staffordshire and Wolverhampton schools because of a lack of places in the closest school to them in Walsall and concerns over transport costs and routes.

Some of these families are particularly vulnerable families who need more support both financially and emotionally. As a consequence of several of the factors above and the delay in informing parents of the financial support available, many families were in limbo and very worried about their child's future education.

After attending Parents Meetings at Sneyd School and discussing the issues with a large number of parents, Trustees made the decision to offer transport for Sneyd pupils so that they could directly access Brownhills School. At the same time the Trustees agreed to pursue adequate funding for the transferring Sneyd pupils with the Local Authority and we have now been advised to approach the School Forum directly to request this.



"the heart of the community"

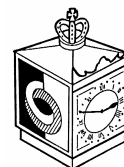
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I have attached a financial and data report which clearly identifies the funding that has not transferred with these pupils and the cost of one school coach. Obviously we will need to continue to operate that coach for the duration of the pupil's education. The Local Authority undertook to provide a bus pass for the year 9 pupils who transferred in the summer although it is not clear if this is for one year only or for the duration of their education. When the coach was provided, SERCO gave Brownhills School a one off payment of £10,000 towards the cost of the coach for one year only.

Brownhills School is the largest receiving school for Sneyd pupils in Walsall by a significant margin. We have put in place additional measures to support the transferring pupils and feel that the emotional and social impact on the pupils of such a tight knit community based school closing was underestimated. Similarly the school has supported many of the families emotionally during this time. We have done this because it is the right thing to do and many of these families are the most vulnerable in the borough, they need this support.

It is worth noting that the Local Authority has now recognised the problem and for any pupils transferring from Sneyd School after the January 2011 Census, they have pledged to transfer seven twelfths of their AWPU to follow them in September 2011. This is effectively what we have been requesting throughout this transition time but has not addressed the original failure to transfer AWPU funding with Sneyd pupils. We believe that this was a mistake in the transition process, is not in the best interests of the transferring Sneyd children and is financially unfair to Brownhills School and its existing pupils.

We will continue to provide a good education and additional support for all of the transferring Sneyd pupils and their families whatever the decision of the School Forum on this matter. However we do ask the group to consider this request carefully due to the unique and difficult circumstances arising from the Sneyd School closure and the economic impact of this on Brownhills School.

I will be attending the School Forum meeting on March 4th as an observer and am willing to answer any questions which may arise from the papers attached if that is allowed.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Keenan
Headteacher



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