

# Top-up Funding Guidelines

## 1. SEN Funding for Schools

The Local Authority receives money from central government each year to fund schools. This is called the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The DSG is split into four blocks of 'block' funding:

- Early years block
- Schools block
- High needs block
- Central block

## 2. Schools Block

Schools block is the main budget for mainstream schools including academies. The schools block is made up of:

- Element 1 – per pupil funding. This is used by individual schools to support all pupils. It includes those who have special educational needs.
- Element 2 – SEN funding. This is for schools to spend directly on making special educational provision. Element 2 funding is often referred to as the SEN Notional Budget.

## 3. Element 2 – SEN funding (SEN notional budget)

The SEN funding (element 2) for each school is calculated using a formula. This formula uses the following SEN 'proxy indicators'.

- Pupil numbers (AWPU) - 4%
- Low Prior attainment – Primary 47% and Secondary 55%
- Social deprivation;
  - FSM and FSM6 – Primary 20% and Secondary 25%
  - IDACI – Primary 45% and Secondary 45%

Each year the school is informed through their School Budget Share how much Notional SEN money they will receive in support of low-cost high incident pupils. Schools should use their Notional SEN funding to meet the needs of the cohort of children and young people with SEND in their setting.

#### Consideration for SEN Notional Budget

- Expertise within the school to plan for any resources needed
- Curriculum pathways and grouped provision
- Specialist advice needed
- Specific SEND resources
- Provision specified in Education Health Care Plans
- Evidence-based targeted interventions

#### **4. Element Three - High Needs Block – Top Up Funding**

Schools and academies should have sufficient funding in their delegated SEN funding budget to enable them to support the majority of pupils' SEND where required, up to the nationally agreed cost threshold of £6,000 per pupil.

Where individual pupils require additional support that costs more than £6,000, the extra costs can be met by requesting Element 3 funding for the individual pupil. Top-Up funding is intended to provide additional, individually targeted support for named pupils who have a range of complex special educational needs whilst remaining in mainstream schools.

Top-up funding is provided where these needs, and the provision required to meet them, are more significant than those typically met by resources that are already available to schools. Pupils who access top-up funding will have exceptionally complex special educational needs.

Examples of the different types and levels of need children may experience Pupil's requiring top-up funding will require:

- daily highly structured learning opportunities
- frequent access to small targeted group support or individualised teaching
- additional support required to ensure an integrated learning experience
- support to ensure equal access and social integration opportunities during the school day
- additional curriculum activities/arrangements that need to be in place within or outside of the usual learning environment for the child or young person to achieve
- significant levels of regular teaching and/or support of a teaching assistant to address individual outcomes

Top-up funding can be used for a range of responses to SEND including:

- providing support for pupils with complex needs in mainstream settings;
- purchase one off resources or equipment for a specific child or young person;

- SEN training and development for specific members of staff in order to deliver specific provision.

Top up funding is paid at the agreed rate of £12.90 an hour (from April 23)

## **5. Applying for Element Three – High Needs -Top-up Funding**

It is expected, that prior to making an application for Top-Up funding, a school or post-16 setting should be able to demonstrate how it has implemented universal and targeted SEN support through a graduated approach. This should include ongoing assessment, observation, support, advice and training for staff from external supporting services.

Only the child's educational school or post-16 setting can apply for top-up funding. A maximum of one application for all CYP requiring TUF to be made per term by the school or educational setting.

Top-up funding will ordinarily only be considered where:

- School is at their identified 'trigger point' for making a request
- The pupil is, or will be accessing full time provision (this also applies to group top-up funding requests)

Provision using top-up funding should increase access to the curriculum and learning environment and to support the child or young person in achieving their outcomes.

Applications will be considered on a weekly basis during the SEND Inclusion Forum held every Thursday. All applications must be received by the end of Wednesday during the week prior. Applications should be sent to: [SENDsupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:SENDsupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

In order for your application to be considered, please include the following documents:

- Overview of total HNTUF being received, for how many pupils and how this is currently being utilised
- Reviewed SEN Support Plan with signed parental consent (signed within last 6 weeks)
- Costed timetable of the child's provision or the provision that is to be in place
- Ensure the provision on the timetable is specific (what, by whom, staff to child ratio, location) and based on evidence-based approaches
- Start date the provision is planned to be in place from and until (*typically maximum of 2 terms will be agreed*)

- Where applicable, reports from relevant professionals that support or recommend the provision to be in place
- For group top-up funding requests, please include a SEN Support Plan for each pupil and a costed timetable for the group

*(add link to SEN Support Plan)*

You will be notified of the decision within 7 working days of the discussion at the SEND Inclusion Forum.

## **6. Equipment funding**

Equipment funding requests will be considered for items that are over £500 - excluding VAT. For an equipment funding request you will need to provide;

- The external agency report stating that the equipment is required – this is typically a report from the Sensory Team or Specialist Teaching Team
- The SEN Support Plan – or an explanation of why a SEN Support Plan is not required

Once the funding is agreed, school will be asked to purchase the agreed equipment and send the receipts showing purchase to [SENDSupport@mtilton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:SENDSupport@mtilton-keynes.gov.uk). This will allow the funding to be released. As VAT can either be deducted at point of ordering or reclaimed following standard school budgeting procedures it is only the net amount that will be reimbursed to school.

## **7. Appealing a decision**

Top-up funding decisions made at the SEND Inclusion Forum are final. However, consideration to appeal the decision will be given where you feel that the following circumstances apply:

- Additional supporting information which could not be submitted at the time of the application should be considered
- Significant change in circumstances or the CYP presentation since the information first submitted
- Exceptional circumstances apply

Where the above applies, appeals can be made by emailing [SENDSupport@mtilton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:SENDSupport@mtilton-keynes.gov.uk). You will be requested to state the reasons for the appeal and to share any additional information. Following this, you will be expected to attend the SEND Inclusion Forum within 3 weeks of the appeal and additional information being submitted to discuss at the SEND Inclusion Forum.

## 8. Monitoring of Top-Up Funding

It is expected that the most appropriate SEND agency would continue to be involved with the pupil will meet termly to monitor provision in place and the impact of it.

There is no expectation that SEND Support Service representatives will attend termly review meetings for each child or young person in receipt of top-up funding.

Where there are concerns that the additional provision being funded is not supporting the child or young person to progress towards achieving their short-term outcomes, further actions will be set. These actions may include additional individual progress meetings, observations of provision being delivered or further involvement to inform relevance of provision.

Where a CYP is in receipt of top-up funding and moves school or post-16 provider:

- The school or post-16 provider is responsible for informing the LA as soon as they become aware
- Funding will cease and backdated to the time the pupil left
- Where the CYP moves to another school/post-16 setting, the new setting / school will be responsible for considering if top-up funding is required and make a request where applicable and in accordance with the guidance set out within this document

### **See also:**

[High needs funding: 2023 to 2024 operational guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/high-needs-funding-2023-to-2024-operational-guide)

Early years inclusion grant funding

SEN Support Plans