



11.01.2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

We hope this letter finds you well. We are writing to bring to your attention some significant challenges that our secondary schools are currently facing in relation to our budget and the subsequent impact on the services we provide.

Over the next few years, the financial constraints and budgetary position for all secondary schools in Carmarthenshire is going to prove to be very difficult and will present significant challenges. There are a number of uncertainties and external forces at play which will directly affect our school's ability to maintain the high standards of education and support that we strive to offer all our learners.

Externally, inflation and increased costs are coupled with budgetary constraints at National and UK government level. Whilst there has been a slight increase in the Welsh educational budget, the extremely high rate of inflation has meant a considerable cut in our real term budgets.

The budget settlements for schools in 2024/25 and over the next few years are likely to be very challenging as public spending comes under increased pressure and continues to see cuts. Carmarthenshire County Council, in order to preserve wider essential services and make necessary savings, is likely to reduce the amount of funding per pupil that schools receive, as part the delegated school budget. This level of reduction is estimated to be around £120 per learner which will have a significant impact on our school budgets'. For example, in a school of 1000 learners this would result in a £120,000 reduction in the school budget for that year, a significant sum.

Welsh Government grants, which schools have become accustomed to using as part of their 'core budget' are guaranteed for this financial year. However, in the near future, some grants have the potential to be withdrawn completely, or their value decreased considerably. In addition, energy costs, though currently protected, could potentially increase again in the future due to global insecurities.

These are unprecedented times as regards school finances and budgets. One of the most notable challenges we face is in maintaining a comprehensive curriculum that meets the diverse needs of all our students. Reduced budgets often lead to limitations in resources, staff and extracurricular activities, which can diminish the breadth and quality of the education we aim to provide. This may result in larger class sizes, limited access to specialized courses, and a reduction in enrichment programs that foster holistic development.

Furthermore, the need to make savings may well affect the provision of essential support services within the school and those provided by the Local Authority. Counselling, special educational needs assistance, mental health support, and pastoral care are integral components of a nurturing learning environment. However, with constrained resources, we will find it increasingly challenging to provide these vital services at their current levels of provision.

As headteachers, we will always do our very best to maintain the core provision in our schools and protect teaching and learning. We would also reassure all parents and carers that we will give the utmost consideration to any decision to cut back on the provisions and services available in our schools. However, we believe it is inevitable that, at least in the short term, we will not be able to provide and sustain the same level of support and services across our schools.



Your support and understanding during these challenging times are invaluable. We encourage you to advocate for education funding and support initiatives that aim to safeguard the quality of education for all learners. In this context we would urge you, as concerned parents, to participate in the county's consultation on budgets which can be found by following this link:

<https://carmarthenshire.welcomesyourfeedback.net/s/9lr3rr>

Additionally, your involvement in our school community through volunteering or fundraising initiatives can make a significant difference in overcoming these challenges.

We are genuinely proud of what we achieve in Carmarthenshire. We remain committed to providing the very best possible educational experience and support for all our learners despite the obstacles we face. Your continued trust and partnership with us is, as always, deeply appreciated as we navigate these challenging financial constraints together.

We will certainly continue to update you and keep you fully informed, as the situation becomes clearer following National/ Welsh Government announcements at the end of this month.

If you have any concerns or suggestions regarding this matter, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. Your feedback is essential as we work to address these challenges and ensure a positive learning environment for all students.

Yours faithfully

Headteachers of Carmarthenshire Secondary Schools

