

Schools Forum Report

Schools Block Disapplication Request for Exceptional Circumstances 2024-25

11/10/2023

Executive Summary

The Department of Education (DfE) allows for local authorities to dis-apply regulations governing certain elements of local formula after seeking agreement from the Secretary of state. This report outlines the proposal for 2024-25 that will be submitted. School Forum are asked to give a view on these proposals which will be reported to the DfE.

Details of recommendations and timescales for decisions:

Schools Forum are asked to consider and agree to on the proposals.



1. Background

- 1.1. To be eligible for exceptional circumstances funding a disapplication of the normal NFF funding rules should be applied for. A school variation is only allowed if the amount of funding applied for is more than 1% of the school's budget and impact less than 5% of schools in your local authority.
- 1.2. The deadline date for local authorities to submit any application for exceptional circumstances is 17 November 2023. This is to ensure DfE decisions are communicated back to local authorities prior to the APT submission deadline.
- 1.3. The application process includes reporting to the DfE the views of the School Forum. Following this meeting, officers will relay the outcome and decision of the Forum to the department, which will be considered before issuing an official response in time to issue the schools funding formula.
- 1.4. The disapplication request is a continuation of circumstances approved in 2023-24

2. Disapplication school rents in the APT

- 2.1. The school funding formula includes provision for National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) funding automatically. NNDR liability is a fixed cost, and it is deemed unfair to have a possibly high proportionate cost funded from a potentially low pupil number. The principle does not extend to rental costs. To manage this discrepancy the authority should apply for agreement to fund rents under the 'exceptional circumstance' disapplication process.
- 2.2. Bygrove Primary School disapplication was agreed in 2023/24. The rental cost is due to be in the region of £241k per year (2023-24 costs), approximately 12% of the budget share.
- 2.3. Oakland Secondary school expanded the upper school into a vacant school site which is let via a lease agreement. This is on top of the National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) for the main school site. The lease agreement for the additional site is expected to be in the region of £60k per year, which represents a possible 1% of the budget share.

3. Consultation with schools

- 3.1. All schools have been informed of this request and asked for views via the Head Teachers consultative, and a deadline of 6th October has been set for receiving comments. These will be verbally presented to the meeting. The disapplication will have minimal impact on other schools, which will all continue to receive a full formula funding as expected under the national formula.

