

Date of meeting:	Thursday 19 May 2022
Title of report:	Pupil Growth Fund Update
Type of report: Delete as required	For decision
Executive summary: Including reason for submission	In the instance where the final decision on a school closure is determined prior to the date for the LA submission of school budget calculations to the DfE, the DfE advocate that the funding attributable to that school for the period from the date of closure to the end of the financial year (31 st March) is allocated to the Pupil Growth Fund. This report provides a proposal for the extension of the Pupil Growth Fund criteria from April 2022 to cover the utilisation of this funding to provide additional funding to LA maintained schools and academies that admit pupils from the closed school.
Budget / Risk implications:	Financial implications for schools experiencing a rise in pupil roll as a result of a school closure. Affordability within the current funding limits of the Pupil Growth Contingency Fund.
Recommendations:	The Schools Forum is asked to consider and provide approval for the implementation of the proposed changes to the Pupil Growth Fund eligibility criteria and funding methodology as detailed in 4.3 a. & 4.3 b. of this report.
Voting requirements:	All Schools Forum Voting Members
Appendices:	None
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Presenting officer: If not the originator	

Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Contingency Funds**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 In the instance where the final decision on a school closure is determined prior to the date for the LA submission of school budget calculations to the DfE, the DfE advocate that the funding attributable to that school for the period from the date of closure to the end of the financial year (31st March) is allocated to the Pupil Growth Fund. The purpose of this report is to request Schools Forum consideration and approval of a proposal for the extension of the Pupil Growth Fund criteria from April 2022 to cover the utilisation of this funding to provide additional funding to LA maintained schools and academies that admit pupils from the closed school.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Falling Rolls and Pupil Growth Contingency Funds were first introduced in the 2014/15 financial year, where relevant criteria and methodology were endorsed by the Schools Forum. A review of the eligibility criteria for funding was undertaken in 2015, one year after both funds were introduced. A further review of both funds was undertaken in September 2020. The most recent review considered the operation of the Funds, relevancy of the eligibility criteria to ensure the Funds were working as intended, schools accessibility to the available funding, and to enable a more proactive approach to be undertaken to identify schools eligible for support, where appropriate. Proposed changes to the criteria and funding methodology were endorsed by the Schools Forum on 17 September 2020.
- 2.2 This report proposes an extension of the Pupil Growth Fund criteria from April 2022 to provide additional funding to LA maintained schools and academies that admit pupils from a closed school. The proposal is in respect of the instance where the funding attributable to the closed school for the period from the date of closure to the end of the financial year (31st March) is allocated to the Pupil Growth Fund.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF THE NYCC PUPIL GROWTH FUND

- 3.1 The purpose of this fund is to provide financial support to schools experiencing significant pupil growth where such growth results in funding pressures, resulting from the system of lagged funding. Pupil growth funding is only available for schools to support the revenue costs associated with exceptional pre-16 pupil growth to meet basic need in three clearly defined circumstances, being:
1. Primary schools - class expansion to meet basic need or in-year pupil number increases
 2. Growth in secondary schools
 3. New schools
- 3.2 The operation of circumstances 1 and 2 detailed in 3.1 were considered in a review of the Pupil Growth Fund undertaken in September 2020 by the Schools Forum. Following the review, the following criteria were endorsed by the Schools Forum and implemented:

Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Contingency FundsPrimary Schools:

- An assessment of the school's current class structure and future requirement needs, to ensure an additional class is required. Class structures are assumed to be based on an average of around 30 pupils.
- A school's balance will also be taken into account should it reach at least 15% in the previous financial year. Where this is the case, the school would be expected to meet the cost of pupil variances from within that balance.
- Lump-sum funding contribution of £50k (full year allocation – 7/12 adjustment for LA maintained schools)

Secondary Schools – the eligibility threshold changed from a 25% increase in pupil numbers to-

1. Year 7 growth of at least 15% between the current census and the previous census, and total pupil number growth of at least 5% between the current census and previous census
2. Once a school has met the Year 7 growth criteria detailed in 1. above, as well as being considered against the eligibility criteria for Year 7 growth in future years, there is also be consideration of overall pupil growth in the school for the next 4 years after the year in which the Year 7 growth criteria was met. Schools with overall growth of at least 5% between the current year census and the previous year census will be eligible for funding based on the increase in total pupil roll (Y7 – Y11) growth above the 5% threshold in each of the following 4 years.

In subsequent years after meeting the initial Year 7 growth eligibility criteria, a school could qualify for a funding allocation under either 1 or 2 above. If a school qualifies under both 1 and 2, the school would receive the higher of the funding allocation calculated under each growth threshold criteria.

Funding methodology for secondary schools changed from a £50k lump sum to KS3 AWPU value x Y7 growth in excess of 15%. Funding allocation capped at £100k per secondary school per annum. An adjustment is applied of 7/12 to local authority maintained schools.

Schools with excessive balances would not be eligible for funding from the Pupil Growth Fund. An excessive balance is deemed to be a revenue balance of 15% or more of delegated budget funding.

Exceptional requests from any school who does not meet the eligibility criteria for the Fund but feels that they have a strong case for the receipt of a funding allocation from the Pupil Growth Fund will be considered. This approach will take the form of the submission of an application for funding which would be considered by a Panel of LA officers and Schools Forum representatives.

- 3.3 The current NYCC Pupil Growth criteria does not cover the instance where a school admits additional pupils as a direct result of a school closure.

Pupil Growth & Falling Rolls Contingency Funds**4.0 EXPANSION OF PUPIL GROWTH FUND CRITERIA TO COVER THE ADMISSION OF PUPILS FROM A CLOSED SCHOOL**

4.1 It is considered appropriate to review the criteria of the Pupil Growth Funding to include provision for the allocation of additional funding to schools and academies that admit pupils as a direct result of the closure of a LA maintained school or academy. The review is against a background of:

- The increasing number of school closures, including the closure of an academy, occurring within North Yorkshire over recent years
- The admission of pupils to both LA maintained schools and academies as a direct result of a school closure
- Guidance from the DfE advocating the use of the Pupil Growth Fund for the allocation of additional funding to schools and academies admitting pupils as a direct result of a school closure.

4.2 The DfE have advocate use the Pupil Growth Fund where the final decision on a school / academy closure is confirmed by the LA or DfE prior to the LA submission of school budget calculations to the DfE. In this instance, the funding attributable to the school / academy from the date of closure to the end of the financial year (31st March) would be allocated to the Pupil Growth Fund. This funding could then be utilised to provide funding to schools and academies that admit pupils as a direct result of the closure of the school. NYCC has adopted this approach in respect of the DfE confirmation of the closure of Baldersby St James Primary Academy on 31st August 2022.

4.3 It is proposed to update the eligibility criteria and operating methodology of the NYCC Pupil Growth Fund to facilitate the use any funding allocated to the Fund that is attributable to a school closure as follows:

- a. In consideration of the additional costs that a school may incur as a result of enrolling transferring pupils from a closing school, additional funding may be made available from the LA Pupil Growth Fund. The level of any additional funding will:
 - Only be available for those pupils that transfer from the closing school at the point of closure. Any pupils that transfer from the closing school prior to the point of closure will not be eligible to be included in the calculation of any additional funding.
 - Be initially based on the on the average pupil led funding of the closing school that the pupil transfers from.*
 - Reflect the period of time between the point of the school closure and the start of the next financial year. E.g. where a school closes on 31st August, any additional funding related to pupils transferring from the closed school to an LA maintained school on 1st September would attract 7/12 funding; any additional funding related to pupils transferring from the closed school to an academy on 1st September would attract 12/12 funding.

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- Not be applicable for Year 6 pupils transferring from a primary school at the point of closure to a secondary school.
 - * The LA reserves the right to scale back the level of any additional funding provided in order to ensure affordability within the balance of funding available from the closed school's delegated budget funding allocation related to the period from the point of closure to the 31st March.
- b. Schools accepting pupils transferring from a closing school are able to submit a request for exceptional funding from the LA Pupil Growth Fund in order to address the following situations:
- Where a significant number of pupils have transferred to the school from the closing school in the period between the time of the closure decision and the point of closure AND significant additional costs have been incurred by the school to accommodate the pupils.
 - The point of closure for the closing school is after the October pupil census count and pupils transferring to the school at the point of closure are not counted in the delegated budget funding for the next financial year. Any funding request will need to clearly demonstrate the additional costs incurred by the school to accommodate the transferring pupils.

Exceptional funding requests to the LA Pupil Growth Fund are considered by a Panel of LA officers and Schools Forum representatives. The approval of exceptional funding requests is subject to funding availability. Schools with excessive balances would not be eligible for exceptional funding from the Pupil Growth Fund. An excessive balance is deemed to be a revenue balance of 15% or more of delegated budget funding.

- 4.4 In the instance where the closure decision of a LA maintained school is confirmed after the final determination of school budgets and a full year funding allocation has been allocated to the closing school, the funding arrangements for closing schools require the school budget to be adjusted to reflect the period that the school is open. Whilst outside of the Pupil Growth Fund, the LA will adopt the methodology detailed in 4.3a above for the allocation of delegated budget funding attributable to the closed school from the point of closure to the end of the financial year to schools and academies admitting pupils from the closed school. Schools accepting pupils transferring from a closing school would also be able to submit a request for exceptional funding from the LA Pupil Growth Fund as detailed in 4.3b above.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Schools Forum is asked to consider and provide approval for the implementation of the proposed changes to the Pupil Growth Fund eligibility criteria and funding methodology as detailed in 4.3a. & 4.3b. of this report.

STUART CARLTON
Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service