

WIRRAL COUNCIL

SCHOOLS FORUM 19th JANUARY 2021

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

CONTINGENCY, SPECIAL STAFF, AND INSURANCE COSTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the current provision for contingency, special staff, and insurance costs for Wirral's maintained nursery, primary, secondary, and special schools in accordance with Schools Forum Good Practice Guidance.

2.0 SCHOOL SPECIFIC CONTINGENCIES

2.1 This is a de-delegated budget, and is used for exceptional and unforeseen costs, which would be unreasonable to expect the schools and governing bodies to bear.

2.2 Costs met from the contingency budget vary each year, but in the past have included:

- Adjustments for Business Rates, where actual charges are greater than those estimated when setting the budget;
- Support for schools in Key Stage 1 where a larger than usual reception class (above the published admission numbers) requires additional staff;
- In exceptional cases deficits arising from closing schools;
- Support for unfunded additional places required in Special Schools.

2.3 At January 2020 Schools Forum it was agreed to de-delegate this budget for primary and secondary maintained schools at £2.76 and £2.15 per pupil, respectively. All special schools agreed to buy back this service for 2020-21.

2.4 The contingency budget for 2020-21 is as follows:

	Budget
	£
Primary Schools	59,100
Secondary Schools	7,000
Specials Schools	<u>155,000</u>
Gross budget	<u>221,100</u>

3.0 SPECIAL STAFF COSTS

3.1 This is another de-delegated budget that makes provision for staff maternity, paternity and trade union facility time for both teaching and non-teaching staff. It may also in certain circumstances meet additional costs arising from staff suspensions.

- 3.2 Maternity costs make up approximately 90% of the overall spend. While a member of staff is on maternity their costs are held centrally, while the school meets the cost of any required supply cover. Costs can vary greatly from year to year depending on the number of maternity cases, and the salary costs of those staff.
- 3.3 This budget also meets paternity costs, by reimbursing the cost of supply cover for the statutory paternity leave.
- 3.4 The Trade Union Facilities time budget has regard to guidance which confirms that representatives are entitled to reasonable paid time off during working hours to undertake Trade Union duties and relevant training. Wirral like many LA's has a local facility agreement in place. The budget for facility time also includes non-teacher representation. Primary and Secondary schools de-delegated this budget for 2020-21, Special Schools Buyback and there is a separate SLA for Academy schools.
- 3.5 Spend in 2019-20 was as follows:

	Cost
	£
Maternity/Paternity	757,577
Trade Union Facilities	89,433
Insurance & Recharges	<u>6,900</u>
Total spend net of Special School buy back	<u>853,910</u>

- 3.6 The budget for special staff costs in 2020-21 is as follows:

	Budget
	£
Maternity, Paternity & Other Staff Costs	607,400
Trade Union Facilities	87,100
Insurance & Recharges	<u>6,900</u>
Total budget	<u>701,400</u>

4.0 INSURANCE

- 4.1 This budget is to cover the cost of governors' liability insurance for Voluntary Aided schools. A VA school's governing body should insure 10% of the replacement cost of the whole of the school premises. Where a VA school makes a claim under the policy, the Department for Education has the power (but not an obligation) to pay capital grant, usually at 90% of relevant expenditure, with governing bodies being responsible for the other 10%.
- 4.2 For several years Wirral schools have de-delegated budget to meet the cost of this insurance. Since 2017-18 only Primary schools have de-delegated, all secondary VA schools now having converted to Academy status.
- 4.3 VA schools purchase the insurance and can then claim the cost back from the Authority. Spend in recent years from this budget is as follows:

	Spend
	£
2014-15	29,900
2015-16	28,700
2016-17	16,000
2017-18	15,500
2018-19	11,000
2019-20	17,286

- 4.4 It should be noted that even though the governing body need only insure 10% of its premises liabilities, it is essential that proper security measures are taken to protect the premises and appropriate risk management advice to minimise losses is accessed.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the Forum notes the report.

Paul Boyce
Director for Children, Families and Education