

SCHOOLS FORUM

17 January 2018

SEN Update

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consult Schools Forum regarding the attached SEN Top Up Payment Policy, which seeks to clarify and confirm the processes for the payment of Top Up funding, following previous discussions at previous Additional Educational Needs committee and School Forum meetings.

In line with previous discussions, it is intended to implement these arrangements from the current term commencing January 2018 as this simply represents a clarification of processes and requirements.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools forum is recommended to :

- Note the adoption of the SEN Top Up Payment Policy, as attached at Appendix A;

3. BACKGROUND

Schools Forum has previously received information in relation to various aspects of the increasing pressures arising in the High Needs Block. The need for greater accuracy in the recording of Top Up payments was highlighted following a review of cases where:

- More than one School claiming Top Up for the same pupil;
- Top Up funding being paid where a pupil had previously left the school

The importance of the accurate recording of all SEN information was highlighted in order to ensure that data held by the Department for Education (DfE) accurately reflects the position in Northumberland. It was therefore agreed that School Census data, as completed by individual schools on a termly basis and submitted to the DfE would be used to cross reference data and verify top up payments.

In order to support this process a policy has been drafted in relation to how this will be applied to ensure there is clarity and consistency across all schools both maintained schools and academies. This is attached at Appendix A.

4. CONCLUSION

The adoption of the attached draft policy is intended to ensure consistency and fairness in the payment of Top Up payments. This should also assist in ensuring improvements in the accuracy of SEN data recording in the School Census which will in turn provide us with a more accurate picture of SEN in Northumberland.