# ST. DAY & CARHARRACK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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Dear Parent/Carer

**Update – School Funding Issues**

I wanted to contact you to provide an update on current issues relating to school funding.

Sadly, I have to confirm that despite intense lobbying of the Government and Department for Education, matters remain extremely challenging. In short, schools are still not being provided with adequate funding and resource to deliver the level of provision and support that is expected and that our families and children deserve.

**Current Concerns**

- Since 2010 school budgets have been reduced in real terms by 8% and by 20% at post-16.
- Class sizes are rising, and the curricular offer in many schools is being restricted.
- Increasingly, schools are being asked to support with children's emotional health and wellbeing.
- Frequently, we do not have adequate resource to meet a growing need.
- Often, the most vulnerable students in our schools – those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – are bearing the brunt of cuts and schools are struggling to provide the levels of support that they are entitled to.

These issues are not simply affecting a few schools. They are common features across our education system up and down the country. Levels of concern are so widespread amongst headteachers that we are all working together with a united voice.

As such, we have written to the Secretary of State for Education on three separate occasions since September 2018. We are dismayed that he has chosen to ignore our communications and repeated requests to meet. On 13 December 2018, we were informed by a junior civil servant that ***"I am afraid that, on this occasion, the Secretary of State and the Minister of State must decline your offer to meet. I hope you will understand that their time is heavily pressurised and their diaries need to be prioritised according to ministerial, Parliamentary and constituency business."***

Given the seriousness of the current school funding crisis and the impact upon schools, children and families, headteacher colleagues and I believe that this approach is entirely ill-judged. On 14 January 2019, we wrote again to the Secretary of State for Education asking that he reconsider meeting with representative head teachers. Six weeks later, this request was declined once more: ***"As I'm sure you will appreciate, both their diaries are very full and they are unable to accept your kind offer at this time."*** Thousands of head teachers simply do not understand what issues could be seen as more important than the ones we are raising on behalf of schools, children and families.

In September 2018, over 2000 headteachers campaigned at Westminster in order to underline the seriousness of the current situation. This action was unprecedented.

The 'Worth Less?' campaign group now comprises 66 Local Authorities and Boroughs, covering thousands of schools and millions of families. This gives a clear indication of the levels of concern felt by reasonable and moderate headteachers and in England.

Governors of schools and academies are also very concerned, and only last week members of the National Governors' Association from across England travelled to Westminster to lobby parliament. The Association's CEO, Emma Knights stated "Governors and trustees are committed to giving pupils in their school the best possible educational experience, but instead of deciding how they can best invest in children, they are having to decide what to take away from them. Each school has a unique experience of the effects of funding pressures but what unites governors and trustees is immediate and long-term concerns about the damage being caused to education at a time when there are more pupils than ever and when more and more is being asked of schools."

Headteachers continue to recognise that there is not a 'bottomless pit' of money and also acknowledge that many local MPs from across the political spectrum are taking a supportive approach. We must make clear, however, that the current response from the Department for Education and the Treasury is inadequate.

**Why headteachers need to meet government ministers:**

- Headteachers want to contribute constructively to overcome current funding issues.
- Headteachers want to reflect the serious concerns expressed by families regarding inadequate levels or resource and provision especially for our most vulnerable students.
- Headteachers want to ensure that schools receive a much better deal when future Government spending plans – the Comprehensive Spending Review - are drawn up over the next few months.
- Headteachers want to indicate serious and rising concerns relating to the wider pastoral and social care that schools are expected, by default, to provide against a background of severe cuts to Local Authority provision.

Headteacher colleagues across Cornwall feel fortunate that we have been so strongly supported by parents and carers as we campaign for a much improved level of funding for our schools and pupils. Our Cornish MPs have been working hard in Westminster to improve funding for our schools, and we urge you to continue to make representations to them and to the Department for Education and wider government to do everything possible to ensure that matters improve.

We will continue to inform you of the facts and to campaign vigorously over coming weeks and months. A positive starting point should come, we hope, from the Secretary of State for Education in the form of an urgent meeting.

Yours sincerely

Susannah Storey
Headteacher