

Extract from ESFA High Needs Operational Guide 2018-19

Mainstream schools, academies and free schools without specialist provision

Schools and academies should have sufficient funding in their delegated budget to enable them to support pupils' SEND where required up to the mandatory cost threshold of £6,000 per pupil. Where individual pupils require additional support that costs more than £6,000, the excess should be met by top-up funding associated with the individual pupil. Top-up funding rates are for local authorities to agree with schools and academies. They should reflect the needs of the individual, and the cost of meeting those needs.

Local authorities should provide additional funding outside the main funding formula for mainstream schools and academies on a consistent and fair basis where the number of their high needs pupils cannot be reflected adequately in formula funding. They should define the circumstances in which additional funding will be provided from their high needs budget.

Similarly, additional funding may be provided where there are a disproportionate number of pupils with a particular type of SEND. For example, a primary school may have developed a reputation for meeting the needs of high achieving pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, or pupils with physical disabilities, and it's not possible to target additional funding to the school through factors in the school funding formula.

Local authorities should have a formula or other method, based on their experience of distributing additional funding to their schools and academies. This should be agreed with schools and described on the APT. In all cases the distribution methodology should be simple and transparent, and devised so that additional funds are targeted only to a minority of schools which have particular difficulties because of their disproportionate number of high needs or SEND pupils or their characteristics.