



# Marling School

An 11-18 Grammar School for Boys

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Dear Parents/Carers/Old Marlingtonians and Friends of the School

## National Funding Formula for Schools

You may remember us writing to you in October 2015 regarding the campaign for a National Funding Formula (NFF) and asking parents to sign a petition during Information Evenings.

Our letter was prompted by a BBC story entitled 'Heads push over school funding disparities' which explained how historical differences in local authority funding had created a system where the ten best funded areas of England receives an average £6300 per pupil (and some closer to £10000) while the same students in the ten most poorly funded authorities attract an average of just £4200. Unfortunately, Gloucestershire was and is in the latter group of poorly funded authorities, receiving amongst the lowest per student funding and has been part of the f40 group lobbying parliament for a move to fairer funding.

Many of you signed the county-wide petition and we are pleased to say that the government took note and started to consider what a NFF would look like. Consequently in late December 2016 the Department for Education (DfE) released a draft NFF with an indication of how it would affect each county and each school.

Despite everyone's best efforts over a number of years, the proposed National Funding Formula does nothing to help Marling School, or the other secondary schools in the Stroud District. If the formula goes ahead in its current form, 25 of the 39 secondary schools Gloucestershire would lose up to 2.9% of their funding, including Marling School, other grammar schools and many comprehensive schools. This will put increased pressure on existing tight budgets in a county that has already suffered from years of underfunding.

There are two main factors in the proposed formula that contribute to these potential losses:

### 1. The formula does not start from a level playing field

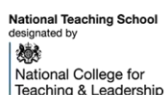
Under the proposed formula, no school can lose more than 3% per pupil of its overall current budget regardless of how highly it is funded. In simple terms this limits the amount of funding that is released from well-funded schools to increase the funding of poorly funded schools. Thousands of well-funded schools nationally will be protected by this measure and as a consequence the overall funding of Gloucestershire secondary schools will actually decrease. The governors of Marling School would argue very strongly that this makes it an **unfair** formula.

### 2. The formula reduces the average baseline funding for students

Under the proposed formula the average baseline funding per pupil for Gloucestershire schools is reduced. A modest rise in KS3 funding of approximately £30 per pupil compared to our 16/17 funding is undone by a significant reduction in KS4 funding of over £200 per pupil. The net effect of this for a school of our size is an overall drop in average baseline student funding of more than £60 per pupil. As a school in one of the lowest funded authorities this is simply unsustainable. The governors believe that this drop cannot and must not happen and that the average baseline funding per pupil needs to be increased urgently, beyond its current level, to ensure that the core curriculum and normal running costs can be met.

*Raising Aspirations, Inspiring Excellence, Succeeding Together*

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The NFF correctly seeks to unwind years of embedded local funding formulae that have led to a very unfair system. A truly fair formula is much needed and should be beneficial to Marling School, and most, if not all schools in Gloucestershire. The governors of Marling School, for the reasons given above **do not** think this is a fair formula. The NFF should be an ideal opportunity to level the playing field and ensure that baseline funding for pupils is adequate. This opportunity has not been taken by the DfE. We have met with Neil Carmichael MP to express our concerns and asked him to lobby on our behalf for a thorough review of the proposed formula concentrating on the areas above. We would ask that you support the school by writing to Neil or your local MP, using this letter if required, to express your concerns and ask for urgent action.

Thank you in advance for any support you are able to offer. Please be reassured that whatever the outcome the Governors are committed to providing the best educational opportunities, and we are confident that the school and its students will continue to thrive and prosper.

Yours faithfully



Mr Nigel Riglar  
Chair of Governors



Dr Stuart Wilson  
Headteacher