**Inter-Authority SEN Top-up Funding**

**Guidance Notes for Special Schools in Oxfordshire**

This guidance relates to pupils with High Needs who are the financial responsibility of other local authorities.

Background Information

In previous years the recoupment of SEN funding has been done by the SEN Business Support Team at County Hall. However, due to the changes in SEN Funding, from April 2013 schools will be directly responsible for claiming SEN Funding for High Needs pupils who are the financial responsibility of other local authorities, for example, a statemented child who lives in Berkshire and attends an Oxfordshire special school.

The funding allocations for all children (Oxfordshire and non-Oxfordshire) have previously been included in your budgets. At the end of each financial year the Finance team have worked out the daily rate for each Oxfordshire special school. The SEN Finance team then sent funding schedules based on these daily rates to the other local authorities and recouped the total cost of a child’s placement for the previous financial year plus a 5% administration fee.

From April 2013, Special schools will receive the place funding (£10,000) for all children attending the school (Oxfordshire and non-Oxfordshire), and the Department for Education (DfE) expects each Special School to negotiate top-up funding for non-Oxfordshire pupils directly with the local authority responsible for those pupils. Schools will need to consider their estimate of the actual costs of provision for particular pupils when negotiating top-ups with other local authorities, but may wish to use the average top up rates calculated for Oxfordshire pupils as a starting point. Details of these average top up rates have been provided in the funding statements issued on 8th March 2013. (Funding statement enclosed.)

The top up rates calculated for 2013-14 have been calculated as simple average rates designed to give the school a similar amount of funding as they received in 2012-13. Considerable further work is required during 2013-14 to develop more sophisticated calculations of top up rates, taking account of the different costs for different types of pupils and the interaction of fixed and variable costs of provision. This review will also consider whether top up rates need to include some flexibility around temporarily empty places.

For more details on these changes please refer to:

<http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/sen-funding-april-2013-and-notional-budgets>

Recommended Process 2013-14

Schools will have to:

1. Check the funding status of your pupils to confirm which LA is responsible for them. The funding LA can be checked by using the DFE local authority finder. This automatically finds a child’s local authority based on the child’s home postcode. Follow the link:

<http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRedirect/Start.do?mode=1>

1. When a new pupil is placed in your school check that the school’s SEN Officer has sent a copy of the letter from other local authority, which confirms that they accept the financial responsibility for that child. An example of this letter is in Appendix 1. For existing pupils copies of these confirmation letters from the LAs can be obtained from the SEN Finance Team (contact details below).
2. Prepare a Payment Schedule for each separate local authority. (Example in Appendix 2). Schools will need to consider what an appropriate top up rate is for the pupil concerned, depending on their relative support needs, and include this in the recoupment schedule. The average rates shown in the indicative budget allocations issued to Special Schools on 8th March are recommended as a starting point in considering what an appropriate top up rate should be. This may involve some negotiation with the other LA.
3. Send the Payment Schedule to the contact officer in the local authority. (see Appendix 4) with a covering letter (Appendix 3). The letter should ask for the schedule to be checked and returned to you by a specified date with the approver’s signature.
4. If necessary, chase the request with a reminder letter. Raise an invoice, if required by the local authority, when the approved schedule has been signed and returned. Please note that some local authorities require you to quote a purchase order number or credit number on the invoice. It may be best to agree with each LA that they set up a regular payment plan for an agreed monthly amount for the total number of pupils on the original schedule, and that this will be revised if the pupil leaves the school or a new pupil joins.
5. The DfE has said that, when making top-up payments to institutions for high needs pupils, the authority must make the payments in a timely fashion on a basis agreed with the institution, which should be monthly unless otherwise agreed. In order to reduce the administrative burden of doing this on a monthly basis, Oxfordshire is planning to make top up payments once in each of the six Oxfordshire terms. Schools should agree with neighbouring LAs a reasonable timescale for payment of top-ups as part of the process of agreeing the funding to be reclaimed. Academies should review their profiled cash flow for the year in considering the timing of top-up payments.
6. Schools may wish to consider including a small administrative charge in the top up rate requested, to cover the additional costs of carrying out the process.

**QUERIES**

If you have any queries or would like some assistance with this new process please contact:

Karen Delahunty on 01865 810639 or email: [Karen.delahunty@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Karen.delahunty@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Yvonne Ruscoe on 01865 810604 or email: [Yvonne.Ruscoe@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Yvonne.Ruscoe@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

**Appendix 1**



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| **Appendix 2**  **\*** ***Amount on 8th March letter. Can be varied by the school on an individual pupil basis***.  **Inter-Authority SEN Top-up Charges 2013/14**  **Payment Schedule for: Reading** | |  | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Name of pupil** | **Date of Birth** | **NCY** | **Responsible LA** | **Start Date** | **End Date** | **Total Annual Top-up funding for student**  \* | **Monthly payment required** | **No of payments** | | Pupil 1 | 30/06/01 | 7 | Reading | 01/04/2013 | 31/03/2014 | £11,610 | £967.50 | 12 | | Pupil 2 | 15/05/00 | 8 | Reading | 01/04/2013 | 31/03/2014 | £11,610 | £967.50 | 12 | | Pupil 3 | 06/03/01 | 7 | Reading | 01/04/2013 | 31/03/2014 | £11,610 | £967.50 | 12 | | Pupil 4 | 02/04/99 | 9 | Reading | 01/04/2013 | 31/03/2014 | £11,610 | £967.50 | 12 | | Pupil 5 | 03/10/97 | 10 | Reading | 01/04/2013 | 31/03/2014 | £11,610 | £967.50 | 12 | | Pupil 6 | 04/12/00 | 7 | Reading | 01/04/2013 | 31/03/2014 | £11,610 | £967.50 | 12 | | Pupil 7 | 05/07/99 | 9 | Reading | 01/04/2013 | 31/03/2014 | £11,610 | £967.50 | 12 | | Pupil 8 | 24/06/00 | 8 | Reading | 01/04/2013 | 27/07/2013 | £3,870 | £967.50 | 4 | | **Total amount** |  |  |  |  |  | **£85,140** | **£7,740** | **88** | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I confirm that **Reading** LA accepts financial responsibility for the above named pupils and agrees to meet the charges on a monthly basis unless other | | | | | | | | | | | | |  |
| payment terms are agreed |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Name: ……………………………..** | | |  |  |  | **Position: …………...…….……………** | | | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Signed: ……………………………** | | |  |  |  | **Date: ….…………….………..…...** | | | |  |  |  |  |
| **Please confirm if you require an invoice □** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Please sign and return one copy to: Name, Address, Postcode | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| telephone: | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Email: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix 3**

Example of an SEN Top-up Payment Letter

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| Name of Local Authority Recoupment Officer  Address of LA Recoupment Officer | | Bishopswood Special School  Grove Road  Sonning Common  Reading  RG4 9RJ |
| My ref: SEN/ … |  | Date: 5 April 2013 |

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| --- | --- |
| This matter is being dealt with by: | Direct Line: 0118 972 4311 |
| Email: office@bishopswoodschool.net |  |

Dear Colleague

# **Re: Inter-Authority Special School SEN Top-up Charges 2013-14**

Please find enclosed two copies of a schedule of pupils, who I believe are resident in your authority, who are attending Bishopswood School and are intending to receive education during the period specified in the schedule. (Modify if a young person is expected to leave at the end of the academic year).

I would be very grateful if you could sign and return one copy of the schedule to confirm that your authority accepts the financial responsibility for the costs of the education provided and the suggested method of payment.

If a child or young person leaves during the academic year we will invoice you up tol the end of the month of the leaving date.

Please reply by Monday, 6 May 2013, otherwise I will assume you are in agreement with the schedule and monthly payments.

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any queries concerning the schedule, please contact me as soon as possible, so that any discrepancies can be resolved.

Yours sincerely

Name

Position

Encl: 2 x Special School Recoupment Schedule

**Appendix 4**

**SEN Local Authority Finance Contacts for Schools – April 2013**

For contact details of other LAs please contact: [Yvonne.Ruscoe@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Yvonne.Ruscoe@oxfordshire.gov.uk) telephone: 01865 810604

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** | **Contact name and Address** | **Phone number** | **email** |
| Birmingham | Rebecca Powney (Becci)  Business Support Unit (DCSC/SENAR)  PO Box 16289  1 Lancaster Circus  Birmingham  B2 2RZ  Make sure you print the budget code quoted by Birmingham on any invoices raised | 0121 675 0463 | [Rebecca.Powney@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Rebecca.Powney@birmingham.gov.uk)  [CWCNBU@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:CWCNBU@birmingham.gov.uk) |
| Bracknell Forest  Pre 16 | For pre 16 pupils  Amanda Wilton  Head of Targeted Services | 01344 354198 | [Amanda.Wilton@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:Amanda.Wilton@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) |
| Bracknell Forest  Post 16 | For post 16 pupils  Steve Lambert  Learning, development and commissioning manager | 01344 354034 | [Steve.Lambert@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.Lambert@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) |
| etc |  |  |  |