



The Priory School

Headteacher: A Pope BA (Hons) PGCE MSC NPQH
Longden Road, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, SY3 9EE

01743 284000

pri-info@pri.318education.co.uk

www.tpstrust.co.uk

2nd July 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

As many of you will be aware under the current funding formula schools nationally are facing difficult financial decisions to ensure we continue to deliver a high-quality education but also ensure budgets balance. As an academy we cannot run in a deficit position and over the past few months I have had to make some difficult decisions. This is an issue facing schools nationally, not just The Priory. Although there is abundant messaging around improved funding per pupil this does not cover rising, real term costs around running a building and organization of our size – energy costs, resources, maintenance, to name a few.

As a school we are oversubscribed and sitting in a socially affluent area so I understand there may be an assumption that school is financially stable. We already run a very efficient curriculum and staffing model. Our position within a Multi-academy Trust means we are already able to benefit from cost reduction in IT, EP, HR, School Improvement and Safeguarding support. However, due to the fact we have low levels of deprivation within our cohorts, we sit at the bottom of Shropshire's per pupil funding allocation for all secondary schools, this is further exacerbated by a down turn in government funding which does not cover the real costs of running a school of our size, as mentioned above. Unfortunately, therefore, I have had to make a number of cuts in specific areas and felt I needed to be open and transparent about these changes.

As a priority, in all decisions I have tried to preserve our teaching staff allocation, curriculum model and class sizes.

Changes moving forward:

- 1) We will no longer be employing English and Maths Intervention mentors. These mentors worked within the English and Maths departments to support identified pupils with small group sessions. These roles have not always existed and were only added when funding allowed. We already provide an increased number of Maths and English classes at Key Stage 4 and hope that these reduced class sizes can continue to support pupil progress.
- 2) We have reduced departmental capitation (money for subject resources).
- 3) We have reduced our premises budget, which with a mainly 1930s build was a difficult call.
- 4) We have undertaken a review of staffing and curriculum across the school to maximise the capacity we already have.
- 5) The reduction of our Student Support team structure by one student support mentor and reallocation of job roles within the existing team.
- 6) The reduction in hours for staffing in our D4 area, to support bespoke timetables for those pupils who are struggling to attend school full time.
- 7) All government funding for post Covid recovery plans has now ended so we will not be able to run as many after school homework support sessions or school led tutoring programmes.

We will still meet our legal requirement to support pupils with SEND but the way in which we allocate staff will need to be reviewed. Your child may have benefitted from sessions with intervention mentors and student support which will either no longer be possible or will now be subject to a longer waiting list. I have been told it is highly unlikely that The Priory will receive any capital funds to improve our school infrastructure.

I have not taken these decisions lightly but they have been necessary to avoid further changes which would affect the range of subjects we are able to offer as well as increased class sizes.

I know that the information above may come as a surprise but I felt you needed to be aware of the pressures school is under, currently. The core curriculum and pastoral model remain unchanged, as does our extra-curricular offer as this largely rests on the goodwill of staff volunteering their time.

Staff in school are, first and foremost, committed to ensuring they do the very best for your child and we will endeavour to continue to do so. My staff are passionate about working with young people and see their job as an absolute priority. We could not do this without your support and commitment to school; we are incredibly appreciative of this.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Mrs A Pope
Headteacher