

Significant Growth Funding Policy for primary and secondary schools 2025/26

1. Introduction

This document sets out Sheffield City Council's (SCC) policy for funding significant pupil growth in schools to support them financially.

The pupil growth fund is established by top-slicing the individual school budget and the overall amount is agreed annually by the Education Funding Forum. Funding allocations will be made from this fund during the year. Any resulting overspend / underspend will be adjusted from the following year's allocation.

SCC does not receive any additional funding from the Department for Education (DfE) towards in-year growth until the subsequent financial year.

2. Principles of Growth Funding

- i. To ensure a fair, simple and transparent funding mechanism to Sheffield schools.
- ii. That funding covers appropriate additional costs for schools.
- iii. That planned growth allocations are published annually.

3. Types of Growth

The following types of growth funding will be funded.

- i. Planned Basic Need Growth in the city as published on the 2025/26 growth funding schedule produced by the Education and Childcare Commissioning Team by individual school or area.
- ii. The cost of new schools (including preopening, diseconomy and reorganisation costs) will continue to be calculated in accordance with national recommendations.
- iii. Breaches in Infant Class Size Regulations.

4. Growth Funding Criteria

4.1 Planned Basic Need Growth in the city as per the published list will be funded at the relevant key stage AWPU rate:

- i. Primary = £3,847 x pupil numbers x 7/12ths (academies will receive a further 5/12ths in the next financial year to cover the period April 2026 to August 2026).
- ii. KS3 = £5,422 x pupil numbers x 7/12ths (academies will receive a further 5/12ths in the next financial year to cover the period April 2026 to August 2026).

4.2 **The cost of new schools** (including preopening, diseconomy and reorganisation costs) will continue to be calculated in accordance with national recommendations. SCC will work in collaboration with schools encountering additional set up costs for new classes and or year groups to ensure they are not placed at financial detriment.

4.3 **Infant class size** funding is payable to schools who through no fault of their own, may breach the Infant Class Size Regulations. These will apply to schools, who are required to set up an additional classes, compared to the previous year, as they cannot accommodate all the additional reception and Key Stage 1 pupils in classes of 30 or less i.e. the total number of pupils in the three year groups exceeds a multiple of 30. (see Appendix 2 for examples).

4.4 To qualify for the additional funding, the school must have set up an additional class and employed an additional teacher, and must not have exceeded its admission number unless requested to by the LA.

4.5 Due to the reduction in funding for 2025/26, depending on the total number of successful Infant Class Size claimants, funding may be reduced to a specific percentage of the total cost of a main scale 5 teacher.

4.6 Successful Infant Class Size claims will be paid based on the incremental cost model for a teacher at main scale 5 for 7/12ths (and for academy schools a further 5/12ths in the next financial year to cover the period April 2026 to August 2026 at the current rate for the financial year).

4.7 Before setting up an additional class and employing an additional teacher, schools should be aware that this additional in-year payment is temporary one-off funding for the remainder of the financial year in order to meet the pupil's basic need until full per pupil funding is received the following April (September for an academy). Schools will be required to meet the costs of the additional class from their formula pupil funding and lump sum from the following year. Schools accessing the infant class size funding where pupil numbers are just 2 or 3 above the limit, should carefully consider the longer-term financial implications of employing an additional teacher.

5 Applications for Growth Funding

Growth Funding Applications should be made by the Head Teacher by 30 November 2025 (applications received after this date will not be considered) and claims should include the following information:

- i. Details of what the Head Teacher feels the pressures are and how these will be addressed if growth funding is successful.
- ii. The current class structure/organisation plan (including staffing). Planned proposed class structure/organisation plan (including staffing). Schools will be expected to move to mixed staged teaching if not already utilising this method, no claims will be funded unless this structure has been addressed within the claim.
- iii. Current year group numbers across the school.

- iv. Anticipated year group numbers across the school from September 2025.
- v. For claims outside basic need growth, schools should include the school's or academy's latest closing revenue reserves. These should not exceed 8% for Primary schools and 5% for Secondary schools of their published budget share in S251 (for the 2025/26 financial year) or GAG allocation for 25/26 academic year and any claim must be signed off by either the LA maintained school Head Teacher or Trustees of academies.
- vi. If a trust tracks individual revenue reserves for each school within the trust, those individual reserves will be taken into consideration.
- vii. Where Academy Trusts pool the revenue reserves for their schools, an apportioned balance must be provided for the school making the claim.
- viii. Governor Approved Spending Plan (GASP) OR for an academy the latest quarterly forecast outturn report.
- ix. FR2 return (Financial Return) or equivalent for an academy.

Applications can be made by email to:

Email: Richard.hudson@sheffield.gov.uk

Examples of Infant Class Size Additional In-Year Funding

Example 1

	October 2024 Census	October 2025 Census
Reception Pupil Numbers	23	31
Year 1 Pupil Numbers	20	25
Year 2 Pupil Numbers	22	20
Total Pupil Numbers	65	76
Number of Classes run by school	3	3

Although pupil numbers have increased by 11, and the reception class exceeds 30, under infant class size regulations the school is still only required to run 3 classes, therefore no additional in-year funding will be payable. Total pupil numbers would need to exceed 90 to trigger the requirement for a 4th class.

Example 2

	October 2024 Census	October 2025 Census
Reception Pupil Numbers	20	21
Year 1 Pupil Numbers	20	20
Year 2 Pupil Numbers	19	20
Total Pupil Numbers	59	61
Number of Classes run by school	3	3

Total pupil numbers have increased by 2 taking the total over 60 and requiring 3 classes. However, the school is already running and funding 3 classes within their existing budget, so no additional in-year funding will be payable – their budget requirement for the year has not changed by the admission of these 2 pupils.

Example 3

	October 2024 Census	October 2025 Census
Reception Pupil Numbers	20	21
Year 1 Pupil Numbers	20	20
Year 2 Pupil Numbers	19	20
Total Pupil Numbers	59	61
Number of Classes run by school	2	3

Same pupil numbers as the above example, except the school were operating with 2 classes. The school is therefore eligible for additional in-year funding if they operate a third class. However, if their budget with just 2 extra pupils would not sustain the cost of an additional teacher beyond the following April, then they would need to carefully consider the implications of accepting an additional pupil taking them over 60 (unless exceptions to the regulations apply, such as pupils with a statement of SEN naming the school or pupils moving into the area outside the normal admission round).

Example 4

	October 2024 Census	October 2025 Census
Reception Pupil Numbers	20	30
Year 1 Pupil Numbers	20	20
Year 2 Pupil Numbers	19	21
Total Pupil Numbers	59	71
Number of Classes run by school	2	3

The school were running and funding 2 classes before the September admissions took them over 60 pupils. Additional in-year funding would therefore be payable for the additional class, and the additional 12 pupils will generate enough funding to sustain the cost of the additional teacher from April 2026.