



Bishop Stopford's School

Governors' Maintenance Scheme – Frequently Asked Questions

Why has there been such a huge rise in the cost of the Governors Maintenance Scheme this year?

The answers below aim to provide you with all the detailed information you need. It is essentially due to the massive increase in the cost of insuring and maintaining our buildings.

What does the Scheme cover?

The scheme primarily covers three things, which are not met by the School's delegated budget (this is the money provided by Central and Local Government):

1. The insurance costs for all of the buildings and some of the contents.
2. Contributions to the London Diocesan Board for Schools Maintenance Scheme.
3. Provision of Sports Insurance to cover students seriously injured during games activities.

Why do we have to pay to insure the buildings and some contents?

As a Voluntary Aided School, we own our buildings and are legally obliged to insure them, even though we receive no funding for this.

Until this year, we only had to insure for 10% of the buildings value, however, due to changes in the way any claims will be funded, we now have to insure them for 100% of their value. In addition we will have several new buildings, from our £10 million scheme. When we last changed our maintenance payment, in 2004, our buildings were valued at £17,619,305 and our 10% insurance cost £2,907. With rising building costs and the additional buildings the value has risen to £30,177,574. We have been fortunate in obtaining a very reasonable premium for the 100% cost, even so at £14,599 it is still £11,692 more each year than we were previously paying.

Most contents in the School are deemed to be the property of the Local Education Authority and the cost of their insurance is therefore met by the delegated budget. However some items are the property of the School and have to be insured separately. Again, we receive no funding for this.

Why do we have to pay for Sports Insurance?

The simple answer is we don't, but it makes sense. Our delegated budget makes no allowance for insurance cover to provide support and compensation for students seriously injured during games activities.

Following a number of cases around the country, where some seriously injured students received no financial support; the Governors decided it was essential that some provision be made. As the cost of this is not provided for by the delegated budget, it is fully met from the Governors Maintenance Scheme.

Why do we contribute to the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) Maintenance Scheme?

This is a very good question, as it is by far the largest cost met by the Governors Maintenance Scheme, but it is absolutely vital for the well being of the School that we continue to be members of it.

What does it cover?

The scheme covers all repairs costing more than £2,000. The Governors are responsible for the external fabric of the buildings and internally for such items as the heating system, electrical wiring and the networking and security systems. The scheme also provides us with expert support and advice with both building maintenance and with the provision of new buildings. This support has proved invaluable with our current building scheme, both in expertise for securing the 90% grants and in liaison with builders, architects, surveyors, the local authority and countless others.

What are the benefits of the Scheme?

It enables us to plan for large scale maintenance, which we would otherwise be totally unable to finance.

In recent years we have been funded for work costing in excess of £100,000 a year. Benefits have far exceeded the sums we have paid in to the scheme. Examples of the works that have been made possible by our membership of the scheme include, replacement of and repairs to roofs, gutters and chimney stacks, new windows, new doors and the refurbishment of toilets.

How many schools are in the LDBS Scheme?

Membership is voluntary, but 148 out of the 151 Church of England Schools in the Diocese of London participate. The remaining 3 schools have their own trust funds with sufficient resources to fund repairs.

Have costs of the LDBS Scheme risen? If so, why?

Yes, the costs of the LDBS Scheme have risen. As previously mentioned and as we all know, costs for building and maintenance have risen substantially over recent years, in fact far beyond the rate of inflation. The LDBS has been absorbing a great deal of these increased costs by using their reserves, however, they have no choice other than to pass on some of the costs via their maintenance scheme, if it is to continue.

This is a Church of England School, why don't they pay?

We have in fact been protected from the major effects of increases for some time now by support from the Church of England, via the Diocese of London, the London Diocesan Board for Schools and local parish churches. The Diocese makes a substantial annual grant towards the cost of the LDBS.

Local Church of England parishes have been supporting us for many years. Last year they made a contribution of £7,553 towards the maintenance scheme at Bishop Stopford's. They also provided financial support to the schemes for all of the Church of England Schools, within the Deanery of Enfield.

Why doesn't the School pay from its budget?

The School meets its costs from an allocated budget, known as the delegated budget; this provides funding for most things but does not include funds for anything other than minor maintenance.

If the delegated funds were used, the money would have to be taken from elsewhere. This could only realistically be taken out of the staffing budget, which would inevitably mean we would have insufficient teachers.

Why don't the Governors pay?

The Governors have no independent source of income to meet these costs other than parental contributions.

The Governors (all unpaid volunteers) willingly give up a great deal of their time for the benefit of the School and the Students, they also personally meet most of their expenses. It would be unrealistic to expect them to be able to fund these costs.

Why should parents contribute?

Contributions from parents are the only way these costs can be met. Without your support, we simply would not be able to maintain and insure our buildings or provide the sports insurance cover. The support of every parent and guardian is vital in ensuring our children have a safe and secure environment in which to work, learn and grow.

What if I simply cannot afford to contribute?

If you are in this position, please write annually to the Treasurer to the Governors, at the School, giving a brief outline. Your situation will be handled confidentially. We would expect parents in this situation to be registered for free school meals.

What if I do not want to pay?

We would urge you to think very carefully about what this would mean. All research shows sub-standard school buildings have a detrimental effect on student achievements. Although we cannot force anyone to pay, without your support economies would have to be made. We would almost certainly have to cancel the Sports insurance and may be forced to leave the LDBS Scheme. These really are unthinkable options and would result in a substantial decline in the level of maintenance we would be able to undertake. We are seeking your support, we really do need it and it is essential.

I have more than one child at the School, why do I have to pay for each of them? Why not have a cost per family?

The payment to the LDBS Maintenance scheme is based on a cost per student; we therefore believe it is necessary and fair to ask for contributions for each student.

If we were to set a cost per family, the amount would have to be substantially higher as we have a very large number of siblings attending the School. This would be unfair to parents with only one child at the School, who quite often have children at other Schools or Universities.

What if I simply cannot afford to contribute for more than one child?

Again, if you are in this position, please write annually to the Treasurer to the Governors, at the School, giving a brief outline. Your situation will be handled confidentially. We would expect parents in this situation to be registered for free school meals.

Can I give money to the School in a tax efficient manner?

Yes. Church Schools have charitable status and, if you pay income tax, you can make a gift aid declaration, if you have not already done so, which allows the School governors to obtain £2.80 of tax relief for each £10 you contribute.

What if I have other questions?

Please send your question to the Governors of Bishop Stopford's School, Brick Lane, Enfield, EN1 3PU