

## Issues for Island Schools

Dear Seamus,

Further to our telephone conversation this afternoon, it is my intention to bring the following matters to the attention of Oireachtas Committee Members tomorrow during the informal lunch meeting in the Hall after the morning session:

(1) GSMD requires a PE/ Sports Hall in order to fulfill our commitments as per the Junior Cycle WellBeing Programme. This is mandatory and we need a space for students to engage in Physical Exercise when it is too wet for students to exercise outside on the school's All Weather Pitch.

(2) In addition we need a qualified PE Teacher for the school. This would only be a part time position because of our pupil numbers and an Arrangement whereby we could share a PE Teacher with an(other) school(s) would be very acceptable to us.

(3) The Gaeltacht and Island Allowances for teachers which were cut in 2012 need to be reinstated in order for us to attract high calibre teachers to the school going forward.

(4) There is a Deontas/ Grant €110.50 from the Department of Education payable to pupils who are receiving Irish Medium Education in some schools around the country. However, for some unknown reason, this is not payable to ETB schools. Some Catholic and Comprehensive schools are in receipt of this payment. This needs to be addressed as soon as possible as the current situation is unfair and inequitable

(5) According to the Islands Policy 2023-33, Island schools are entitled to 2 Whole time ( WTE) Additional teachers. The principal of Coláiste Ghobnait on Inis Oírr Island asked me to raise this matter on her behalf as her school is only receiving 1.5 of that Teacher Allocation and they are therefore down 0.5 of a teacher ie 11 hours tuition in their particular case is not being delivered to students.

(6) English Medium schools are receiving additional EAL hours ( English as an additional language) to help them support Ukrainian students. However IAL hours ( Irish as an additional Language) are not available to Irish Medium schools who have a Ukrainian Enrolment. These young people enrolled in Gaeltacht schools are not getting the required irish language supports to which they are entitled.

(7). The future viability and sustainability of all Island schools is a major priority. All Island Communities need to be assured that the current level of services being provided by their schools are maintained into the future regardless of any declining enrolment which may affect these schools going forward. Current levels of Staffing need to be maintained in order for schools to deliver a broad based curriculum to students.

I think these are the main points I would like to raise tomorrow Seamus.

In the event that Ferries do not travel in the morning, I would be grateful if you would bring these matters to the attention of the Oireachtas on my behalf. As a Board of Management Member, you are well placed to represent our school and other island schools.

I hope to see you tomorrow.  
Best Regards,

Mary Doherty.  
Gairmscoil Mhic Diarmada.