

February 21, 2018

Dear Dr. Katherine Zappone, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs,

I am writing to you on behalf of our Working Group on a National Strategy for Hunger Prevention in Schools, established since 2014, and comprising of representatives from the National Parents' Council, INTO, IPPN, IMPACT, Focus Ireland and Barnardos, as well as DCU Educational Disadvantage Centre.

To address the vital issue of hunger prevention in schools our group requests that you establish the following (in conjunction with other Ministries where necessary):

- place all funding for food in schools under one Ministry, preferably the Children's Ministry, to address the strategic fragmentation regarding this issue at national level
- a unit in the DCYA with specific responsibility for hunger prevention in schools
- a national working group to develop and oversee the implementation of a national strategy for hunger prevention in schools, including external stakeholders and other ministry representatives, if needed
- a strategy of phased universalism, starting with hot meals in schools and breakfast clubs for a) all children in DEIS schools, b) all children in schools in areas of high poverty, and c) over time all schools, including parental contribution through a nonstigmatising voucher system for meals
- put the resource emphasis on provision of food rather than on employing professionals to make intrusive judgments about children's and families often fluctuating levels of poverty, and in recognition that the stigma of poverty makes hunger in school a hidden problem
- a range of pilot projects across areas of high need to give momentum to this phased universalism
- legislation for a free school meals scheme
- ring fenced funding for school kitchen infrastructure across schools nationally in the new allocation of 4.8 billion euro for school buildings in the National 2040 plan

Looking forward to your response

Yours Sincerely,



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