

Atheist Ireland



To: Evelyn O'Connor

cc Deirdre Shanley, Paraic Joyce, Dalton Tattan
Patrick O'Sullivan, Anette Honan

5 December 2022

Dear Evelyn,

We met you on Friday 6 May regarding the misuse of public funds, and we agreed to meet again after you had considered our points. We followed up with a letter responding to your request that we outline what we want you do. We said we wanted you to:

1. Acknowledge and positively vindicate the inalienable Constitutional rights of parents with nonreligious philosophical convictions to parental authority and freedom of conscience.
2. Acknowledge and positively fulfil your duty to abide by the Constitutional conditions of the funding of schools under Articles 42.4 and 44.2.4 by: (a) Having due regard to the rights of parents in religious and moral formation, which includes but is not limited to the Department not deciding and announcing for parents what is suitable for their conscience; and (b) Giving practical application to the right to not attend religious instruction, which includes but is not limited to the right to physically leave the classroom and either be supervised or given an alternative subject.
3. Use High Court and Supreme Court judgments when defining Constitutional terms, rather than other definitions based on other criteria.
4. Put in place an Administrative Scheme or Schemes to implement all the above, that abide by the Constitution and does not exceed Constitutional limits.
5. Directly ensure that any Administrative Scheme is implemented consistently across schools, and that patron bodies, schools, teachers, or the NCCA, are not permitted to decide how to define and administer Constitutional rights and the Department's Constitutional duties.

We reminded you on 28 June that it was then seven weeks since our meeting, and we asked when would suit you for the follow-up discussion we agreed to have.

It is now seven months since our meeting, and we again ask when would suit you for that follow-up discussion?

Yours sincerely,

Jane Donnelly
Human Rights Officer

Michael Nugent
Chairperson

Chris Hind
Teachers Officer