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Gavin Boyd  
Chief Executive  
Education Authority  
40 Academy Street  
BELFAST  
BT1 4NQ

31 October 2017

Dear Gavin

## **PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND THE STATUTORY DUTY TO ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE INTEGRATED AND IRISH-MEDIUM EDUCATION**

You will be aware that education legislation places specific duties on the Department of Education to encourage and facilitate the development of both integrated and Irish-medium education. These duties are set out in Article 64 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 (integrated education) and Article 89 of the Education (NI) Order 1998 (Irish-medium education). The Education Authority has a key role in supporting the full and effective delivery of both of these important duties.

All funded pre-school education settings regardless of location and management type are accessible to children from all backgrounds and are subject to the same inspection standards. The purpose of this letter is to highlight to the Education Authority the implications of the statutory duty for integrated education in relation to pre-school provision at integrated primary schools.

It is important the Education Authority and the Pre-School Education Group (PEG) support the department in fulfilling its statutory duty by striving to meet demonstrated parental demand in an area for pre-school education at grant-maintained and controlled integrated primary schools, as well as parental demand for Irish-medium pre-school education.

It is essential that in discharging these duties, the department does not inadvertently constrain the development of either integrated or Irish-medium education. Should any clarification be required on the implications for the allocation of PEG places, then please contact Cathy Galway in the first instance.

I have also written to the Chief Executive of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools in this regard, and copied this letter to the Chief Executives of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tommy O'Reilly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a long, sweeping underline.

**TOMMY O'REILLY**  
**DEPUTY SECRETARY**

cc    Róisín Marshall, NICIE  
      Liam Ó Flannagáin, CnaG