21st January 2020

Dear Politician / Local Representative

We are writing to you from Bennekerry N.S. to bring to your attention the overwhelming challenges we are facing in the provision of education for our children with special needs. We are asking you to stand with us in support of the national campaign for **The Right Inclusion Model for Every Child.**

The campaign for **The Right Inclusion Model for Every Child** calls for the State to provide for the rights of every child to an education. To respect the rights of all of our children, sufficient resources must be provided to those who have special educational needs.The Proclamation of our Republic promises to ‘cherish all the children of the nation equally’. Under the current model, inadequate resourcing means that children with additional needs are not guaranteed their right to equal access to education.

The goal of our campaign is to achieve cross-party support for **The Right Inclusion Model for Every Child** ahead of the General Election and to have the principles of this model included on the next Programme for Government.

We assert that **The Right Inclusion Model for Every Child** must include;

1. **SNA allocation to match the needs of the children**
2. **Transparency in the Process**:
	* There are currently not enough SNAs in the system to match the need**s** and the appeals process is not fit for purpose. Based on school figures we have gathered to date, of the **129** reapplications, appeals and new applications made since May 2019, **only 4** applications or appeals have been successful with0.5 of an SNA post being granted equating to **just 0.125** per application.
	* The proposed General Allocation Model cannot match the needs going forward, given that current needs are not being met. Furthermore, the NCSE cannot know what number of SNAs is sufficient when schools are no longer to apply and parents are not to get a diagnosis. There will be no concrete information to inform accurate figures. **SNAs are being allocated by budget rather than by need.**
	* Meaningful consultation with schools, parents and children’s advocacy groups is necessary to inform the right inclusion model.
3. **Multi-Disciplinary teams**: Immediate removal of waiting lists for Assessment of Need to ensure timely, appropriate access to multi-disciplinary services. This will require considerable increases in staffing and resourcing of the various services.
4. **Options for children and their families**: To have options of placements in mainstream school, special units in schools, and special schools according to each child’s needs.

We are writing today to all of our TDs and our Councillors, and to all General Election candidates who will be standing for a seat in our constituency.

We are asking for every representative and candidate to sign up to our campaign and to pledge to deliver **The Right Inclusion Model for Every Child** as a matter of priority in the next government.

Any queries may be directed to *info@kidsbehindthecuts.org*

We look forward to hearing from you,

Parent/ Guardian Name