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Sent: 17 June 2026 10:35
To: Corporate Services <Corporate.Services@fingal.ie>
Subject: DES-CU-03582-2026

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Ms. Aoife Sheridan

Corporate.Services@fingal.ie

PLEASE QUOTE REF NUMBER ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE

Our Ref: DES-CU-03582-2026

Dear Ms. Sheridan,

The Minister for Education and Youth, Ms. Hildegard Naughton TD, has asked me to thank you for your correspondence and to respond to you on her behalf regarding additional schools for Donabate - your ref: ACM/BRLS/ITEM58/June2026.□

In order to plan for school provision and analyse the relevant demographic data, the department divides the country into 314 school planning areas and uses a geographical information system, using data from a range of sources, including CSO census data, child benefit and school enrolment data, to identify where the pressure for school places across the country will arise and where additional school accommodation is needed at primary and post-primary level.□ □

The department also conducts granular analysis below the level of a school planning area, particularly where a school planning area encompasses both high growth urban settlement areas and a more rural hinterland. □ Our analysis of school place demand in urban areas experiencing high population growth has indicated that demand in the urban area can be 10-20% higher than the school planning area as a whole.

Major new residential developments have the potential to alter the demand for school places at a local level. In that regard, as part of the demographic demand analysis, the department monitors planning and construction activity in the residential sector.□

This involves the analysis of data sources from local authorities and the CSO along with the engagement with local authorities and the construction sector. In this way, up-to-date information on significant new residential developments is obtained and factored into the demographic analysis exercise. □

This is necessary to ensure that schools infrastructure planning is keeping pace with demographic changes, at a local level, where there is a constantly evolving picture with planned new residential development.

Where demographic data indicates that additional provision is required, the delivery of such additional provision is dependent on the circumstances of each case and may, be provided through:

- Utilising existing unused capacity within a school or schools,
- Extending the capacity of a school or schools,
- Provision of a new school or schools. □

If additional accommodation is required, the aim to try and facilitate this, as much as possible, by way of expansion of existing schools rather than establishing new schools.

□ The expansion of existing schools is consistent with wider Government objectives under Project Ireland 2040 for an increased emphasis on compact growth. □

In respect of post primary schools, new post primary schools must have a student enrolment capacity of 600-1,000 students and must be co-educational. A lower threshold of 400 students may apply to gaelcholáistí, having regard to the alternative of establishing an Irish-medium unit (aonad) in an English-medium school. □

It must be noted that the demographic data of school going and pre-school children aged from 0 to 18 living in Donabate shows that, while the demand for school places remains strong, there isn't a significant increase in demand. This will be kept under review.

The development of a two-school primary school campus on lands in Corballis, Donabate forms part of the department's school building programme. This will provide additional primary school capacity to cater for the increasing demand for school places associated with the new residential developments. In addition, there is available capacity in the existing post primary school that will cater for increased demand for post primary school places.

The pace of delivery of additional residential development in the Donabate SPA, along with updated enrolment data and demographic data will be kept under review and this will inform the timing of further school requirements in the area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Eimear Kavanagh'.

Eimear Kavanagh

Private Secretary