

2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2024

Ms. Holly Cairns, T.D.,  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ ref 18378/24**

**"To ask the Minister for Children; Equality; Disability; Integration and Youth if his attention has been drawn to issues facing students in a school (details supplied); whether the requirement for students to live in the CDNT area of the school in order to avail of supports can be lifted; if additional working hours for school therapists can be provided; and if he will make a statement on the matter."**

**Details Supplied: Carrigaline Special School engaged with Minister Rabbitte and the HSE on providing SNT, OT and psychologists to the school. This came into effect in September 2023, but due to a requirement for the students to live in the CDNT area where the school is located (CDNT 13), only 4 of 48 students are eligible for support. The therapists are also only assigned 11.5hrs work per week each.**

Dear Deputy Cairns,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for response.

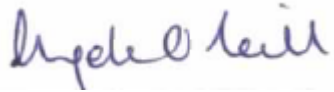
Health and Social Care services for children with disabilities are provided based on need rather than a child's diagnosis or where they go to school. Children's Disability Network Teams (CDNTs) provide supports for children with complex disability needs. Other children with less complex disability needs access the necessary supports from Primary Care services. It is important to clarify that not every child in a special school requires support from a CDNT.

Further to a discussion with the Minister of State for Disabilities, it was agreed that CKCH Disability Services would provide a grant of €50,000 to Carrigaline Special School to enable the school to procure its own therapy supports to the end of the current school year (31<sup>st</sup> August, 2024) as a pilot initiative. This funding will be provided through a Grant Aid Agreement. The detail of this agreement was discussed with the Cork ETB on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024. It should be noted that governance for this initiative is outside of the CDNT and is a matter for the incoming provider. As agreed with Minister Rabbitte, this grant is in lieu of the current on-site supports provided to Carrigaline Special School.

In addition, CKCH Disability Services are in the process of updating the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for supporting children with complex disability needs who attend special schools in Cork and Kerry. The children with complex disability needs should, for the majority of cases, access the CDNT closest to the school. However in line with the core principles of Family Centred Practice the revised SOP will offer a choice whereby families can still opt to attend the CDNT closest to their family home address if this arrangement would most suit their family needs.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely,



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**Ms. Angela O'Neill,  
Head of Disability Services,  
Cork Kerry Community Healthcare**

