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Dear Mr Downey

CURRICULUM SPORTS PROGRAMME

Thank you for your letter of 12 October requesting a meeting to discuss the Curriculum Sports Programme.

Due to ongoing budgetary constraints the Department of Education wrote to the Gaelic Athletic Association and the Irish Football Association on 27 July 2017 to inform them that funding for this Programme would cease on 31 October 2017. However, I can advise that, following an allocation of an additional £10m to the Department in the latest Monitoring Round, funding for this Programme has been secured until the end of the 2017-18 financial year.

I must stress, however, that the pressures that the education budget will face in subsequent years will mean that the Department may not be in a position to offer funding beyond 31 March 2018.

It is important to highlight that a key objective of the Curriculum Sports Programme is to raise the confidence of, and provide support to, primary teachers in delivering Physical Education. The schools taking part in the Programme were allocated coaches on the understanding that the class teacher would be present at all times to assist in the delivery of the sessions, to support their own knowledge and development and to enable them to follow up as appropriate in their own teaching. Teachers in participating primary schools have benefited from involvement in the Programme for 10 years and the skills and confidence of those involved should therefore have improved significantly over this period.

Given that funding for the programme has been restored for this financial year I would suggest that the rationale for a meeting with the Council no longer exists. Perhaps you would let me know if a meeting is still requested.

Yours sincerely

D A Baker

DEREK BAKER