

# PRESS STATEMENT (Enough is Enough – Every Voice Counts)

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Frustrated parents call a protest outside Dáil Éireann on April 30<sup>th</sup> to demand equal access to education. In a statement Linda Comerford who is the spokesperson for the Enough is Enough Every Voice Counts Campaign outlines “When children start school its usually an exciting and proud time for families watching their children start a new chapter in their lives, but for parents of children who require access to special schools and ASD classes, that offer education to children with autism, intellectual disability and other complex needs, the situation for hundreds of parents is that they are left stressed, frustrated and worried because they are unable to access an appropriate school placement for their children”.

Minister for education Joe McHugh said in a statement “While it is not always possible or practical that a special class-placement would be available in a child’s local school, the NCSE has informed my Department that, in general, they are satisfied that there are sufficient ASD special class-placements to meet existing demand nationally”

The campaign disputes the statements made by the minister, as Linda outlines “it is difficult to acknowledge the parts of the country where there has been improvements, when for many people who will be protesting on April 30<sup>th</sup>, it feels more comparable to the national lottery when being allocated places, and this is not restricted to education when we access the larger demographics accessing disability services, it is totally unacceptable that children with disabilities are required to apply to schools up to 30km away or further, rather than have equal access to local schools that need to be resourced to meet their needs , we need to lift these barriers to create real equality for all”.

The protest will take place on April 30<sup>th</sup> between 11am and 1pm and the campaign invites everyone to attend stating that, “although this can be perceived as an issue for parents whose children are just starting primary education it is also a huge issue for parents of children who are transitioning from primary to secondary level education as even fewer secondary schools have attached ASD classes”.

END

For further comments contact:

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