Minister Norma Foley

Department of Education

Marlborough Street

Dublin 1

D01 RC96

[*date*]

**Re: [*name of school]*, obligation under section 62(7)(n) of the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018 (“the Act”)**

Dear Minister Foley

We are the parents of [*x child/children*] who attend[s] our local Catholic primary school [*name of primary school*].

We [are a non-religious/other faith family and] wish for our children to have an education without religion, as is their constitutional right under Article 44.2.4 of the Constitution.

Our child attending [*name of school*] is “opted out” of religious instruction, to the limited extent that this is possible in an Irish Catholic primary school.

Our child first started in [*name of school*] in [*date/year*]. At the time, the school provided no details of arrangements for opted out children in its admissions policy. That position persists to this day: [*name of school*] admissions policy is silent on arrangements for children opted out of religious instruction.

This is a breach of its legal obligation under section 62(7)(n) of the Act.

Section 62(7)(n) of the Act provides that:

*An admission policy shall provide details of the school’s arrangements in respect of any student, where the parent of that student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction at the school (which arrangements shall not result in a reduction in the school day in respect of the student concerned)*.

The effect of the school’s failure to comply, is that parents applying to [*name of school*] have no information as to the position they or their children are in if they wish to opt their children out of religious instruction. Parents are operating in an information vacuum, such as we were, which leads to a pressure to “go along with it” even when this goes against their conscience.

This breach by the school of its legal obligation under section 62(7)(n) of the Act is discriminatory and hampered our efforts to opt our child[ren] out effectively.

[*optional: include details of the practical effects on your child*]

Other non-Catholic parents with children attending the school are in the same position as us.

We understand that this practice is widespread in Catholic primary schools across Ireland.

We request that you as Minister for Education compel the school to comply with its obligations under section 62(7)(n) of the Act.

We await hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[*name/address*]