



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Stephen Morgan MP
Minister for Early Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

28th November 2024

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for meeting with me last week to discuss the implications of the proposed policy to tax independent schools in Bedford Borough. I appreciated the opportunity to raise concerns and explore potential impacts on our local education system. During our discussion, I highlighted several critical issues:

- **Secondary School Places:** Bedford Borough currently faces a shortage of secondary school places.
- **Population Growth:** The area is experiencing significant population growth due to housing developments, with rates 3–5 times above the national average.
- **Independent Schools:** Bedford Borough has a higher concentration of independent schools compared to other areas, amplifying the potential effects of this policy.

I referred to your previous correspondence and noted the funding figures. In October, you stated that Bedford Borough's funding for the next year would be £15.1 million, but in November, you indicated a two-year allocation of £42.6 million. I asked whether this amount accounts for the potential migration of independently educated pupils into the state sector or whether it solely reflects the anticipated growth from housing development and general migration. Could you kindly confirm what assumptions underpin these figures? I am happy also to meet with your officials to discuss the pressures on the availability of secondary school places in the Borough.

We also discussed the proposed free school in Biddenham. While the land for this project falls within Mohammad Yasin MP's constituency, its impact extends to neighbouring villages within mine, where families rely on it for access to education. I understand a free school review is currently underway. I would be grateful if you could keep me informed about its progress and any updates.

Thank you again for your time and attention to these matters. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the points raised.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Fuller MP