

Dear Minister Haughey:

We are writing to you in your capacity as Minister of State in the Department of Education and Skills with special responsibility for School Transport. We refer to the following facts:

**pre-2010** - Majority of girls in Kinvara area attend Seamount College; All boys (and some girls) in Kinvara area attend Gort Community School

**2009 to present** - Shared Kinvara/Gort catchment area created

**March 2010** - Seamount College in Kinvara became a coeducational secondary school

**May 2010** - By your order, the shared catchment area would be abolished: children in the Kinvara catchment would no longer be entitled to school transport to Gort as of September 2011

**13th December 2010** - Parents of Gort Community School, with the support of the Board of Management and the school administration, passed a motion asking you to reverse your decision of May 2010 and extend the shared catchment area for Seamount College and Gort Community School through 2011-12.

We request this change in order to avoid several problems:

1. **CAPACITY** - Gort Community School has the capacity to accommodate additional students, in excellent facilities. Seamount College is near capacity; prospective students and parents have been told that portacabins will be in use to accommodate increasing student numbers.

2. **SUBJECT CHOICE** - Currently, Gort Community School offers an extensive range of subject options. Both Seamount College and Gort Community School provide an excellent education, however, fewer subjects are offered at Seamount due to its smaller size. In the past, girls have been able to transfer from Seamount to Gort (or attend Gort from 1st year) to avail of the wider range of subject choices, e.g. Woodwork, Metalwork, Technical Graphics, Physics, Engineering, Applied Maths. If the school population at Gort Community School is significantly reduced, the subject offerings for ALL students, girls and boys, in BOTH catchment areas, Kinvara and Gort, will be reduced. This would be disastrous.

3. **DIVIDED SIBLINGS** - If the shared catchment area is not continued, we will have the anomaly of younger siblings not being able to avail of school transport with their older brothers and sisters in order to the same school.

You should know that many parents in the Kinvara area are happy to send their children to Seamount College: it is an excellent school and it is nearby. However, for the reasons outlined above, some parents in the Kinvara area wish to send their children to school to Gort Community School.

We request that you allow the continuation of the shared catchment area until such time as Seamount College resources are increased in order to cater for large numbers of new students, or until a new secondary school is built in Kinvara.