

Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland
Communications Office B4
Parliament Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast BT4 3XX

04 February 2021

Dear Committee

The Integrated Education Fund (IEF) in Northern Ireland welcomes the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland and the opportunity to respond to the public consultation.

In short, the IEF believes there should be an unfettered right for parents in Northern Ireland to be able to choose an integrated education for their children; where Protestant, Catholic, and those of other faiths and none are educated together at school, and their schools are not managed by partisan boards of governors.

The IEF would like to highlight the statutory duty to “*encourage and facilitate integrated education*” within the 1989 Education Reform Order, a commitment which is reinforced in Article 13 of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and reiterated in Article 69 of the 2014 Stormont House Agreement and the 2015 Fresh Start Agreement.

Moreover, in 2020 the New Decade, New Approach Agreement stated that the Northern Ireland Executive ‘*will support educating children and young people of different backgrounds together in the classroom*’.

The unfettered right for parents to choose an integrated education reflects the ‘*particular circumstances*’ of Northern Ireland, and the ‘*principles of mutual respect for the identity and ethos of both communities and parity of esteem*’ as stated in New Decade, New Approach.

Yours sincerely



Paul Caskey
Head of Campaign