Department of Education

Shane McAteer
Clerk of Standards
Committee on Standards and Privileges
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[redacted]
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21st April 2026

Dear Mr McAteer,

COMMISSIONER FOR STANDARDS REPORT ON COMPLAINTS BY MR OISIN MCKIBBIN AND MS AINE MCELHINNEY AGAINST MR PAUL GIVAN MLA

Thank you for your letter and for sharing a copy of the Commissioner for Standards' report in advance of the Committee on Standards and Privileges' consideration.

I acknowledge receipt of the report and note the Committee's process and the restrictions placed upon disclosure of its contents.

At this stage, I do not wish to make substantive comments on the matters raised within the report. However, I would like to draw attention to one important issue.

The correspondence contained from pages 42-67 has been sought by a range of individuals and media outlets. To date, the Department has not placed any of this material in the public domain, including in response to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act, as it has been withheld under Section 35(1)(d) – Operation of a Ministerial Private Office. This exemption applies to information relating to the internal operation, organisation and day-to-day functioning of a Private Office, including material that reflects the advice, support and administrative arrangements provided to a Minister.

I would therefore ask that you give careful consideration as to whether the material should be published.

The report also contains personal data, including sensitive personal information such as my date of birth and passport details. The inclusion and circulation of these details are disproportionate and contrary to the data-protection requirements of GDPR legislation. I therefore request that if the documents are being published, such information should be redacted from any version of the report shared with the Committee or published thereafter.

The names and contact details of junior civil servants and officials from the Israeli Government should also be redacted in accordance with standard practice and data-protection requirements.

I note that personal information relating to the complaints has already been redacted, and it is my understanding that concerns relating to my personal data were also raised with the Commissioner by the Permanent Secretary on 16 March.

I would therefore be grateful if this concern could be noted and the appropriate redactions applied to ensure that personal data is handled in accordance with relevant data protection requirements. If necessary, I can ask my office to resupply the information with the redactions made.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Paul Givan MLA
Minister of Education