



Rt Hon Ed Balls MP
Secretary of State

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The Editor
Parliamentary Year Book
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15 November 2007

Dear Mr O'Connell

I am writing further to your telephone conversation with Penny Jones on 1st November.

We have now received a significant number of complaints from schools and colleges relating to telephone calls they have received from Stephen Green or David Newman purporting to be from Blake's Parliamentary Yearbook. In each call :

- the school or college has been given the impression that the caller is somehow linked with the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, and
- the school or college is informed it is potentially the recipient of substantial sums for educational/sporting purposes provided that the school/college sends a fax to Blake's agreeing to commit a sum (usually several thousands of pounds) either towards a bid for the funds or in respect of advertising in the Parliamentary Yearbook.

I understand that your investigations revealed that some members of staff had been making calls in the manner alleged and that you were taking appropriate action, including contacting the Independent Schools Council.

Since your conversation with Penny Jones it has appeared the scale of the operation is larger than first thought and that maintained schools and colleges have also received similar calls.

I am writing to ask for your assurance that you will use your best endeavours to ensure that no representations are made to any school or college to the effect that the Parliamentary Yearbook is linked with this Department or any other government organisation concerned in education. I also ask you similarly to ensure that no representations are made as to the involvement of the Secretary of State or any of the Ministers in the Department with any initiative related to funding or with any request for financial contributions from schools or colleges.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mel Watts', written in a cursive style.

MELA WATTS
PRINCIPAL PRIVATE SECRETARY