LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE NON-DOMESTIC RATES (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM ANONYMOUS

Over the last five years my children have benefitted tremendously from St Marys in a way that they would not have done in their previous school, Lilliesleaf Primary School. We could not have attended the school without the tremendous and generous bursaries that have been afforded to us by St Marys. Over that period I have been able to increase my personal earning capacity by working harder, employing more staff and generating more service through my own small business; that I have subsequently been able to afford a greater percentage of the fees.

We started sending our daughter only as she was failing to thrive at our local school, had become very insular and begun to isolate herself away at home. We discovered that she was struggling to fit in at Lilliesleaf. We moved her and her life immediately began to open like a flower. She has subsequently grown confidently and purposefully and been able to express herself though debating, drama, public speaking, academics and more. Our eldest son followed midway through the next term on a 75% bursary and thrived in away that he had not done to date. Finally, our youngest son followed 2 years later on a 40% bursary. The decision to send him was prompted by the Learning Support provision at Lilliesleaf being absent for a period of 12 months. Our children are all dyslexic but have benefited tremendously at St Marys.

Between 2009 -2011 we were entirely reliant on benefits to survive as we built up what is now a very successful local business. We could never have given our children the advantages they have received through attendance at an independent school without making it a very high value to us and also because of the generous bursaries we received. Because we value this education for our children, we have worked harder to be more successful than we ever would have done. We no longer use the state system which is a huge financial saving to the state. I am an immigrant and arrived in this country with nothing, no silver spoon and if the fees are hiked to a point that we cannot achieve the school, what incentive do we have to increase our productivity, to employ people and to drive our business? Perhaps this is a perverse incentive to do just that. It is a terrible shame that the benefits we have had, have had to be paid for. We are NOT rich but prioritise our children’s education over everything else and by sacrifice are just achieving it.