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PRIME MINISTER

Discussed with the Prime Minister 4/11,  
Approval to DBS telephoned, Pa now.  
DBS 4/11

Midday Supervision

FILE WITH MEA

1. I am grateful for your general welcome for my proposals on midday supervision set out in my minute of 21 October and for the helpful comments of colleagues.
2. Subject to the views of colleagues I would like to make an initial announcement tomorrow when I am due to speak at the annual conference of the ACC. It will be welcome news to this local government audience and there are strong political and presentational reasons for being seen to act quickly and decisively. I would follow the announcement with a Parliamentary written answer later in the week announcing the legislation in the coming session. A draft announcement is attached. I shall need to have the agreement of colleagues by close of play today.
3. I have looked again at the possibility of acting in 1985-86. Time is short to get a scheme mounted soon enough to affect the spring term but I believe that, if we were to offer extra financial help up to a maximum of £10m in 1985-86 within this year's Education Support Grant, we shall achieve some worthwhile results. I therefore propose to proceed with the necessary Regulations.
4. There are two other points raised by colleagues. First, there is Nigel Lawson's suggestion of imposing a new statutory duty on local authorities in respect of midday supervision. I doubt the advantage or the need for such a step. Local authorities' present statutory obligations already put them under a duty to make adequate arrangements for the supervision of pupils. If we were to impose a new duty, local government would strenuously oppose us - indeed the local authority associations have already told us that such a duty might further hinder efforts to end disruption - and we should significantly reduce local government's

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good will and support for our objectives and complicate an otherwise uncontroversial Bill which we need to pass quickly. Although the local authority associations have in the past objected to new specific grants, all the evidence suggests that in this case they are enthusiastic about making changes in midday supervision arrangements and, given the assurance of new money, will cooperate with us in a specific grant for this purpose. There are no grounds for thinking that, beyond perhaps a few ritual noises, they would resist the legislation that I propose. Finally, it seems clear that many LEAs will be ready to act anyway, particularly those under Labour control: NUT pressure is more than nullified by the desire of non-teacher unions to see new arrangements which offer their members the prospect of more jobs.

5. Second, I see merit in adopting Kenneth Baker's suggestion to combine the new legislation with a public commitment that, pending the outcome of the Government's review of specific grants I would not allow the amount of education expenditure attracting ESG support, other than that on midday supervision to rise beyond the present 0.5% ceiling. It will offer further positive reassurance to local government and will help to facilitate the rapid passage of the Bill. I shall offer such a commitment either on introduction or at second reading of the new Bill. We shall of course need to return to the general issue of specific grants for education in the light of our review of specific grants and reactions to Kenneth Baker's Green Paper.

6. I am sending a copy of this minute to the members of (E(PSP)), to Willie Whitelaw, John Biffen, John Wakeham, George Younger, Nicholas Edwards, Tom King and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

KJ.

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4 November 1985

KJ

Department of Education  
and Science

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## Draft Announcement of Midday-Supervision

1. Earlier this month I announced that the Government would be ready to make available additional resources for midday supervision of schools on condition that the money would be used for and achieve its intended purpose. Nine out of ten teachers are now refusing to supervise at lunch-time, a duty which they deem to be voluntary, and very few schools are unaffected by the disruption. That disruption hits directly at parents and their children and is virtually cost-free to the teachers. It puts intense stress on Heads. Our purpose is to put LEAs in a position to secure and pay for effective alternative supervision on a permanent basis. The extra resources would come from within the £1250m conditionally available from 1986-87 for a reform of the pay structure and teachers' conditions of service.

2. I have already had a first discussion of this initiative with your representatives and those of the AMA. They responded positively. They told me that LEAs are ready to act and to act quickly. I know that a few are already planning to introduce the new midday supervision arrangements that do not depend upon teacher cooperation but pay for separate midday supervisors under separate contracts. It is clear that on this matter there is broad agreement between us on the action now required. I therefore intend to make available additional resources to support expenditure of upto £10m in this financial year and £40m in 1986-87 on new arrangements to enable LEAs to keep their schools supervised in spite of teachers' attitudes.

3. For 1985-86 the additional money will be made available through Education Support Grants, subject to Parliamentary approval for the necessary Regulations. I shall be consulting the associations as a matter of urgency to work out the details. For 1986-87 and subsequently the Government is considering how best to proceed and I hope shortly to announce our conclusions. We need to work out acceptable arrangements which can have an early impact on the schools. With the

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assurance of new money that I have announced today I hope that LEAs will not delay but move swiftly to take action in the interests of pupils and their parents.

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