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The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley AMICE MP
Secretary of State
Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 3EB

25 February 1988

Dear Nicholas,

STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY CHARGE

I have seen your letter of 17 February to Kenneth Baker on this subject.

As you know, the issues considered in recent correspondence relating to registration arrangements for students and the provision of certificates by educational establishments are covered in the consultation paper which I recently issued to interested Scottish bodies. In the light of responses received I will consider whether Scottish amendments to the Local Government Finance Bill, to parallel those you propose for England and Wales, should be prepared.

On the question of payment arrangements for students, I am content, as you propose, that the issue should be discussed further at official level. I should say however that if a requirement is to be imposed for students to pay the personal community charge in three instalments at the beginning of each term, this will require amendment of our 1987 Act through the Local Government Finance Bill, since I do not have any equivalent of the wide-ranging powers in this area which are already included in the Bill in relation to England and Wales. I hope therefore that official discussion of the issue can proceed as quickly as possible.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, the Lord President, Members of E(LF) and Sir Robin Butler.

Yours ever,
Malcolm Rifkind

MALCOLM RIFKIND

