

Dear Reverend Fathers,

In 2010 the Coalition Government placed a faith-based admissions cap on new schools. In practice, this means that only 50% of oversubscribed places can be allocated on the basis of faith. This has precluded the opening of new Catholic schools as it would require Catholic schools to turn away Catholic pupils in favour of other applicants. The Government has acknowledged that this policy discriminates against Catholics and it is vital that the Catholic community makes its voice heard on this issue.

The Church has been working with Parliament and the Government on this issue since 2010. The Prime Minister reiterated her belief that the cap should be removed in 2016, and the 2017 Conservative Party manifesto promised to do so. However, the Secretary of State for Education may be about to reverse this decision. If this is allowed to happen, it will restrict the right of parents to give their children a Catholic education, and of their children to receive one.

In an effort to show the Secretary of State that this is a deeply important issue to the Catholic community, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales recently agreed that we would ask all parish

priests to raise this urgent issue in their parishes. Below is a text for your parish newsletter and I ask that you draw specific attention to the online form which can be used to send an email to the Secretary of State, registering a parishioner's concern and asking the Secretary of State to rethink this policy.

Parish Newsletter Text:

ACT IN SUPPORT OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION Do you support Catholic schools and the right of Catholics to send their children to them?

Then we need you to make your voice heard. The Government is making a critical decision on whether to overturn the admissions cap which prevents new Catholic schools from allowing all Catholic pupils to attend.

The Prime Minister has acknowledged that this policy discriminates against Catholics and had promised previously to abandon it. Now the Government may decide to keep this discriminatory policy in place instead of removing it. We need you to tell the Government not to discriminate against Catholics and to remove the admissions cap on new faith-based schools.

Visit <http://catholicnews.org.uk/education-cap> to write to the Government and urge them to drop their policy which bans new Catholic schools.

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