

**Rt Rev Mark Davies**  
**Bishop of Shrewsbury**



**To All Parishes**

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017

Dear Fathers and Deacons

I write with grave concerns for the future of Catholic Education.

In 2010 the Coalition Government placed a faith-based admissions cap on new free 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 she does, it will rob parents of the right 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, I am asking you to raise this urgent issue in the parishes. Below is a text for your parish newsletter, and I also 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 anti-Catholic policy.

**Parish Newsletter Text**

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 Catholic schools from allowing all Catholic pupils to attend. They have acknowledged that this policy discriminates against Catholics and promised to abandon it, now we need you to tell them not to u-turn on their promise to Catholics.

Visit <http://catholicnews.org.uk/education-cap> or search for 'Catholic Education' in your search engine to write to the Government and urge them to drop their policy which bans new Catholic schools.

With thanks for your help and cooperation in this matter and with every good wish,

Yours sincerely in Christ

*+ Mark Davies*

Bishop of Shrewsbury

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