



# Northern Saints Catholic Education Trust

Chief Executive Officer: Mr T.B Tapping

Registered Office:  
St. Wilfrid's R.C. College  
Temple Park Road  
South Shields  
Tyne and Wear  
NE34 0QA

E-Mail: [admin@st-wilfrids.org](mailto:admin@st-wilfrids.org)  
Tel: 0191 456 9121

[www.northernsaintscatholiceducationtrust.org](http://www.northernsaintscatholiceducationtrust.org)

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Dear Parent/Carer

The following statement from the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, the Most Rev. Robert Byrne, will be included in all parish newsletters on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2019.

## **Revised Diocesan Academy Policy.**

"The Diocesan Academy Policy has been revised with the aim that our diocesan schools will become academies within one of four Diocesan education trusts by July 2022. Underpinning the Diocesan Academy Policy is the desire and need to ensure the promotion, preservation, protection and future development of Catholic education within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle so that it is fit for the mission of the Church. There are 156 schools in our diocese educating 53,600 children. 45 of our schools are currently academies. The implementation of this policy will happen in two stages:

Stage 1: consolidation of existing academies and trusts into one base trust

Stage 2: conversion of voluntary aided schools to academy status within their regional trust

Whenever voluntary aided schools convert to academy status, they will join their single regional trust as equal partners with all schools within the trust. All schools in the region will be included in the process from the outset. In establishing these trust structures and having a single system in our Diocese, we aim to ensure that the children and young people in our schools will continue to receive the very best educational opportunities and life fulfilling experiences, within communities which have the teachings of Christ and his Church at the very centre. A Catholic trust model where every school has its place will mean that no individual school will be left isolated or vulnerable in a rapidly changing environment. It will ensure that the uniqueness of each individual school is celebrated and the unique contribution of each is recognised and appreciated. In order for this policy to be fulfilled, the Bishop expects all schools to continue to work together as a Diocesan family for the good of Catholic education in our Diocese. Through the trust structures the aim is to facilitate greater sharing, adding strength and capacity to our system and ensuring that all schools are supported and included. In this way we will better fulfil the mission of Catholic education within the Church".

In summary, this means that Our Lady of Mercy Trust, comprising of St. Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy and St. Aidan's Catholic Academy, will begin the process of merging with Northern Saints Catholic Education Trust.

Yours sincerely

**Mr Brendan Tapping**  
**CEO**