



**Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School**  
**Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig Bendigaidd Edward Jones**  
**Cefndy Road**  
**RHYL**  
**Denbighshire**  
**LL18 2EU**

**Tel/Ffôn: 01745 343433**  
**Headteacher / Pennaeth**

**Mr D Tobin, BSc Hons NPQH**

Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Dear brothers and sisters,

On the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 there will be a brand new Catholic school opened in Rhyl. That is the plan. This school will be an English medium, voluntary aided Catholic school for children between the ages of 3 and 16. This project has been developed between the Diocese of Wrexham and Denbighshire County Council since about October last year and on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017 Denbighshire's Cabinet approved plans to proceed to formal consultation.

As a foundation governor of Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School I would encourage you to consider and respond positively to the consultation when it is launched. As I indicated, the Bishop, the Catholic Education Service, and the governing bodies of both Ysgol Mair/St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Blessed Edward Jones are involved in and fully behind this project.

You will be aware over the last 4 years or so there have been informal consultations on the future of faith based education in North Denbighshire. This project is entirely new but builds on the desire of various stakeholders to invest in and support our mission of Church education.

Both schools have of course provided education to children for 60 and 50 years. I personally benefitted from what I regard as an excellent foundation of primary education in Ysgol Mair and since my involvement with Blessed Edward Jones, I have seen and been proud of what that school does to educate, form and enrich the lives of its pupils and the community. We want to build on this good provision and produce something transformational for the next 50 years.

This is not a merger or joining of the two schools. The vision of the New School is clear, it will be an all-through school, nurturing and supporting children through the phases of formal education and teachers in their professional development. The New School building will also be built on the sites of the existing schools it will replace. Otherwise, the plans are in their infancy and subject to consultation. Your views on the shape and design of the New School are going to be welcomed.

Why then should I be encouraging you to support this proposal? The first reason must be to consider why Catholic schools are established in the first place.

It is appropriate therefore to remind ourselves of two precepts of canon law: (1) The Church has the right to establish and direct schools of any discipline, type, and level, and (2) The Christian faithful are to foster Catholic schools, assisting in their establishment and maintenance according to their

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means. Canon law also sets out the rights and responsibilities of parents with regard to Catholic education. That of course is a starting point and we should still ask the questions why and how.

The four key reasons for the Church providing schools are as follows:

1. to be part of the Church's mission in education, to place Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church at the centre of people's lives;
2. to assist parents in the education and religious formation of their children, recognising that parents are the primary and principal educators of their children;
3. to be at the service of and integrated in partnership with the local Church - the diocese, the parish and the Christian home; and
4. to contribute to the creation of a society that is highly educated, skilled and cultured, in other words to contribute to the Common Good.

The Church has a proud history as an educational provider of different types of Catholic school. Our Diocese and the parishes surrounding and including Rhyl have of course supported our two schools here in different ways for many years. The local authority recognises, as do we, that there is a need to modernise our educational provision. It is now time to develop that for the future.

In the Catholic Trust Society's document 'Christ at the Centre', we are told, "As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century progresses, envisioning what Catholic schools will look like in the future requires openness and imagination." I believe we are most fortunate that the local authority and Welsh Government are prepared to invest, between them, £23.8m. in a Church school. This significant investment is a sign of faith, hope and possibly love towards our Church schools in this area of our Diocese. Please with us the governing bodies of the school reciprocate that by engaging in the consultation.

The formal consultation commences on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and ends on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017. Although the Diocese of Wrexham is a partner in this proposal 'the Diocese' will also receive the formal consultation document and so the Christian faithful, perhaps in parish groups might consider responding in a positive way. In the same way other Catholic schools in Conwy and Gwynedd, feeder schools for the secondary element of the New School, will be asked to respond. The Bishop recognises of course the needs, rights and responsibilities of Catholic children and parents from across the Diocese. The size of the school must reflect this and we will want to ensure that children entering the New School in a larger secondary element will be adopted and recognised as full members of the New School.

There is a great deal to consider in this proposal. It goes to the heart of why we agree to act as foundation governors for our schools. It is exciting. The children in years 7 and 8 of Blessed Edward Jones will be able to complete their options and GCSEs in the New School, those in year 4 and below in Ysgol Mair and in other schools, could complete their entire secondary education in the New School should their parents choose that for them, and of course our 2 year olds in Rhyl and neighbouring areas could start and finish their statutory education in the New School.

The primary focus of the governing bodies of both Ysgol Mair/St Mary's Catholic Primary School and Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School now and in the next two and a half years, will of course be on the education and formation of the children in the schools now. However, we have been uplifted by the opportunity to be involved in this project and will do all we can to promote it.

Yours faithfully,

Matthew Curtis  
Chair of Governors