



Church of Ireland  
Board of Education (Northern Ireland)

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

Dear Ms Treanor

Further to your letter of 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the comments below outline the position of the Church of Ireland Board of Education (NI) on the areas requested.

#### FETO

The Church of Ireland Board of Education NI is fully supportive of equality of opportunity in teacher recruitment and is opposed to unfair discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. The Board recognises that the reason for the introduction of FETO in the past was to maintain a religious balance among teaching staff.

The Board of Education NI understands the reasoning underlying the call for the removal of FETO in regard to the employment of teachers. The Board would wish to engage in dialogue in relation to Fair Employment in schools and to ensure the protection of ethos in all schools including the very small number of schools under Church of Ireland management. Church of Ireland schools are open to teachers from all backgrounds and have found that all staff work hard to maintain our distinctive ethos.

#### Certificate in Religious Education

The Church of Ireland Board of Education does not oppose the use of the Certificate in Religious Education to support teachers. However, the Board believes that every institution that delivers initial teacher education should offer the Certificate in Religious Education to all student teachers on an equal basis. The Board believes provision should be made for those whom historically this was not available, this is to ensure equality of opportunity for all moving forward.

The Church of Ireland Board of Education is supportive of any professional qualification that enhances and promotes the teaching of high quality Religious Education (RE) in schools. RE equips young people to understand the world around them, explore their own faith background, and be more appreciative of all other faiths and those with no faith. The Board supports any work to prepare those who teach RE in a more professional and robust manner, particularly training that enables high quality RE teaching in schools.

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely  
Dr Peter Hamill

Secretary

Chair: Archbishop John McDowell  
Secretary: Dr Peter Hamill

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