



The Methodist Church In Ireland

FETO

The Methodist Church in Ireland (MCI) is wholly supportive of furthering equality of opportunity in teacher recruitment and is opposed to unfair discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. The Board of Education for the Methodist Church recognises that, for historic reasons, the FETO teacher exception has been regarded as important in attempting to maintain a balance in the religious composition of the teaching workforce. School governors, including those representing the Transferor Churches, receive guidance and training from the Education Authority on the recruitment and selection of teachers to ensure adherence to all appropriate legislation and good practice.

We understand the reasoning behind the proposal to remove the teacher exception but would need clarity about how the ethos of schools can be protected. The ethos of any organisation cannot be sustained without the support of its staff, and it is generally held that staff can be expected to support an organisation's aims and ethos. Controlled schools have a warm, open, non-denominational Christian ethos that is enshrined in legislation and we believe that it is reasonable to ask potential employees of Controlled schools to uphold this ethos.

Certificate in Religious Education

The Methodist Church in Ireland is not opposed to the retention of a requirement for a Certificate in Religious Education and welcomes the fact that Stranmillis University College now provides all undergraduate students with the option to take the RE Certificate, in collaboration with St Mary's University College, as part of their timetabled classes.

The Church urges that Religious Education be regarded with much greater importance. RE helps pupils to comprehend our society and through the study of other religions, RE also helps pupils to develop understanding and appreciation of the religious lifestyles and practices of people of other religions in NI. We therefore believe very strongly that all those teaching RE should be adequately prepared to do so.