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5th November 2025

**To: Parents of Children attending Catholic Primary Schools
in the Dioceses of Achonry and Elphin**

Dear Parents,

As you are probably aware from media reports, the Department of Education has initiated a consultation of parents of children in Primary Schools throughout the State. It involves completing a short online survey, which will take very little of your time, but may be quite important. The survey asks you to state your preference:

- for co-education or for a single-sex school
- for a denominational (religious) patron, or for a multi-denominational (non-religious) patron
- for education provided primarily through the English language or through the Irish language

As Patron of the Catholic Primary Schools in the Dioceses of Achonry and of Elphin, I welcome the survey, and I encourage you strongly to participate. Follow this link to take part:
www.gov.ie/primaryschoolssurvey

Perhaps it may be helpful if I share a few thoughts with you.

- Catholic Schools are managed “on behalf of the Patron”, by Boards of Management, which include elected parents, elected teachers, elected community representatives and members appointed as “patron representatives”. It is a voluntary commitment, which requires considerable generosity on the part of those involved. This has been going on now for fifty years.
- People choose to send their children to Catholic schools for a variety of reasons. You will not be asked for your reasons in the survey, but it may be helpful all the same, if you consider whether or not it is important to you that your child goes to a Catholic School. If you had a variety of suitable options in your locality, would you still be inclined to choose a Catholic School?
- The Church has no particular desire to manage schools “just for the sake of it”. Our purpose in being involved is to assist parents who want a Catholic (or religious) education for their children, whether or not they themselves are Catholic. We seek to do this through the work of highly qualified teachers who provide a good quality education, in an environment which is inspired by the spirit of the Gospel.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these few thoughts. I hope you may have found them helpful.

Yours sincerely,

+Kevin Doran
Bishop of Achonry and of Elphin

*In Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.
We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. (Rom. 12)*