



# Newtownhamilton High School

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BT35 ODG

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Friday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing to make you aware of a serious and significant development in education, which will impact on the future of Newtownhamilton High School and other controlled schools. Currently a private member's bill, the 'Integrated Education Bill', is progressing through the Northern Ireland Assembly, which gives preference to integrated schools above every other type of school. If this bill is passed, in its current form, it means that integrated schools will have advantages and will benefit from more opportunities for extra places, additional schools and resources including funding. Newtownhamilton High School and controlled schools in Northern Ireland will not benefit from this. Details of the bill can be found at <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/non-executive-bill-proposals/integrated-education-bill/>.

As you know our school is well established and has been part of our community for many years. It is open to all young people to be educated together as are schools across the controlled sector. There has been no direct consultation with schools, parents or the community. There are a number of different school types in Northern Ireland, and it is important that each type of school has equal access to resources, funding and opportunities and that one school type is not elevated above another. We firmly believe that all children and young people should be educated together. This is happening in Newtownhamilton High School and across controlled schools every day. This bill ignores that fact, is inequitable and prioritises one type of school.

Our support body, the Controlled Schools' Support Council, has provided evidence to the Assembly Committee for Education stating the above and continue to talk to individual assembly members and local councillors, raising our concerns: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyi\\_hpmSV\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyi_hpmSV_c). If you share these concerns, we would ask you to do likewise to ensure that all our local Assembly Members (MLAs) are aware of this, as a matter of urgency. The bill reaches its final stages in the Assembly on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> February. It is important that the wider community is aware of our concerns around the impact of this bill.

I have attached to this correspondence the email addresses of the MLA's who represent our constituency. Your local Councillors can be found on the Council webpage.

I thank you for taking the time to read my concerns and would encourage you to act if you share them.

Yours sincerely

*Neil Megaw*

Principal

Constituency	Candidate	Party	CONTACT
Newry and Armagh	William Irwin	DUP	<a href="mailto:willian.irwin@m1a.niassembly.gov.uk">willian.irwin@m1a.niassembly.gov.uk</a>
Newry and Armagh	Justin McNulty	SDLP	<a href="mailto:justin@mcnulty@m1a.niassembly.gov.uk">justin@mcnulty@m1a.niassembly.gov.uk</a>
Newry and Armagh	Cathal Boylan	Sinn Féin	<a href="mailto:cathal.boylan@m1a.niassembly.gov.uk">cathal.boylan@m1a.niassembly.gov.uk</a>
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