

## **Joint statement from the Trustees of St Louis Grammar and St Columban's College.**

The Trustees of St. Columban's College, and St. Louis Grammar School Kilkeel, with CCMS, welcome the decision by the Department of Education to approve development proposals 533 and 534 for the closure of St. Columban's College and expansion of St. Louis' Grammar School Kilkeel (see below). The decision represents the culmination of a period of joint planning by all parties involved.

The vision informing this proposal is the desire of the Trustees and CCMS to continue to provide high quality Catholic education for all pupils in the catchment area. The expansion of St Louis' Grammar School to become a bilateral Voluntary Grammar School will guarantee access and provision for all local pupils, for whom it is their nearest Catholic managed post-primary provision, regardless of ability. It will continue to also welcome pupils from the wider region through the bilateral process.

The Trustees of St. Louis Grammar School recognise the contribution St. Columban's College has made to Catholic education over many years and the high standards of educational provision that it has provided. There is already a long tradition of successful transfer to St. Louis of pupils from St. Columban's post Year 12, for A/S and A level studies. St. Louis Trustees look forward to supporting the development of the new arrangements for Catholic Post-primary provision, in Kilkeel and the wider Mourne area.

The purpose of these developments, in Kilkeel and the wider region, is to sustain and develop provision of high quality education that is responsive to pupils' best interests into the future.

The Trustees of the schools and CCMS have worked closely together to advance the project to this stage and will continue to provide support to the staff, governors and parents of both schools to take this decision forward.

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### **Development Proposals**

#### **Proposal No 534**

St Columban's College, including the Learning Support Centre, will discontinue with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter.

#### **Proposal No 533**

St Louis' Voluntary Grammar School, Kilkeel will increase admissions and enrolment numbers from 80 to 130 and 570 to 860 respectively, with effect from September 2018, or as soon as possible thereafter. St Louis' Grammar School will continue with the use of academic selection criteria as part of a bi-lateral approach to admissions.