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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

On 6th June 2022, I wrote to you all explaining that the formation of Catholic Academy Trusts across the Archdiocese was being reconsidered in the light of the Government's White Paper on Education. I am pleased that at yesterday's meeting of the Diocesan Trustee Board there was an opportunity to discern further the academy conversion challenges based on a paper from the Education Commission.

As a result I now recommend to you a set of approved principles that will guide your thinking in deciding the way forward as to what a distinctively Catholic Trust must achieve. It is my hope that this will establish a focus for productive conversations with governing bodies and colleagues in local schools in forming a framework of a small number of Catholic academy trusts across the Diocese in the coming months and years. I urge all of you to engage in discussions with an open heart to do what will strengthen Catholic education here in the Archdiocese of Southwark. To aid such discussions, the Education Commission will hold a series of online briefings this term, to discuss the paper with you. Details of these meetings will be made available very shortly.

A key issue for school leaders to be aware of is my decision that we should endeavour to reflect the minimum criteria of 10 schools or 7,500 pupils in a Multi Academy Trust. Consequently the expectation is that the optimum number of MATs across our Archdiocese will be 6.

As the term draws to a close, I am sure that you will be continuing to work hard and take time to reflect on the successes of the year. The last few years made everyone realise the importance of supporting pupils and students as they move on to the next stage of their lives - something missed during the pandemic. I hope the events you have planned with pupils and parents celebrate the time they have been part of your Catholic school community ably supported by the nurturing from your staff.

With an assurance of my prayers and blessing.

Yours sincerely in Christ

The Most Reverend John Wilson
Archbishop of Southwark