



Lord Hill of Oareford

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools

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Lord Adonis
House of Lords
Westminster
SW1A 0PW

2nd July 2010

Dear Lord Adonis,

THE ACADEMIES BILL: FAITH ADMISSIONS IN NEW ACADEMIES

During the debate in Committee on Wednesday 23rd June you raised questions about faith admissions in new Academies and I said that I would write further to clarify our intentions.

The Academies Bill makes it possible, for the first time, not only for failing schools to benefit from the freedoms to innovate that Academy status brings, but also for all other schools, starting with outstanding schools, to benefit from these same freedoms. There are many outstanding faith schools and we believe that it is only right that those schools should be permitted to convert to Academy status without any erosion of their existing rights. Consequently, any existing maintained school which is designated as having a religious character will be able to continue to prioritise its admissions by reference to an applicant's faith and, if sufficient children of the faith apply, fill all its places with those children. This maintains the admissions status quo for these schools.

However, as you know, the Academies programme is not solely about allowing schools to convert from maintained status. It will also enable new schools to be set up. In these cases, we will require that new faith schools established as part of the Academies programme will have to balance the needs of children with a faith and those of children with none and admit 50% of their intake without reference to faith. This will also apply to independent schools converting to Academy status. Such schools will continue to be able to operate with a faith ethos and to follow their faith body's religious education curriculum.

I am copying this letter to all Peers who spoke during Committee and placing a copy in the Library of both Houses.

Yours sincerely,

John Hill
LORD HILL

Department for
Education