

A Letter from The Vaughan Parents' Action Group

Dear Parent

You will have received an e-mail today from John O'Donnell, whom the Diocesan appointees recently elected as Chairman of Governors of the Vaughan. He has made it clear that the Diocese intends to press ahead with the appointment of a new Head despite the fact that the Parent Governors – elected by you – are waiting for:

- a legal decision on their application for leave to appeal;
- a legal judgement on whether the Governing Body should cease to meet until the Appeal is heard.

The need for action to protect the Vaughan from being changed unrecognisably and irrevocably is now greater than ever.

In this letter we are outlining the ways in which we now need your help.

The VPAG is up and running. Parents are being kept informed of the details of our dispute with the Diocese by email and through our website [here](#). We will be in contact with the press and we are co-ordinating a letter writing campaign.

Most importantly for now, we have planned a Candlelit Vigil at the School for 2nd February. The Vigil is crucially important because this is the date of the next Governors' Meeting. We intend to demonstrate to the Governors a huge level of parental concern. It is entirely possible that this will influence at least one or two Governors.

Action is needed to ensure that parents' views are heeded by the Diocese. We need you to do a number of things:

1. If you have not done so, please write a letter to Archbishop Vincent Nichols. Send a copy of this letter to all Governors. With your permission we would like to put copies of your letters on the website.
2. Come to a Candlelit Vigil on 2nd February starting at 6.15pm. This is the date of the next Governors' Meeting. It is essential we have a massive turnout for this. We need a full show of parental support. Invite grandparents and friends of the Vaughan, pupils etc.
3. Please contact at least five other parents and encourage them also to write letters. Look at the list of objections below and prepare your answers in advance so that you can persuade them that this situation is CRITICAL. Refer them to the information on the website if they have questions.
4. Tell these five parents about the Candlelit Vigil on 2nd February and stress the importance of attending this event.

Please engage **at least** five other parents and discuss the issues involved

- Tell them that the future of the School is at stake
- Tell them that the new Diocesan Governors are now trying to rush through the appointment of a new Head.
- Tell them that the new Diocesan Governors are not prepared to wait for the outcome of the Appeal before appointing a new Head.
- Tell them that this dispute is not about admissions, but about the nature and direction of the school. We are fighting to preserve academic standards, music, and the School's distinctive Catholic ethos and identity.
- Tell them that the things which make the Vaughan special are under very serious threat.

Ask the Question

Why would the Diocese, in an unprecedented move, impose its own Director of Education as a Foundation Governor and refuse to appoint current parents as Foundation Governors if they were not intending to make changes to the School?

Possible objections

“This is a dispute about admissions. It doesn't affect me. In any case the School can still be a good school with a different catchment area.”

This is not about admissions. This dispute is about an incorrectly constituted Governing Body, dominated by new Governors who have been imposed to ensure they follow the Diocese's directions. Their first important job will be to appoint a new Head. The Diocese has shown it is not happy with the School's reputation for musical excellence; it appears unimpressed by the School's academic excellence and strong Catholic ethos. They wish to appoint a new Head who will ensure the Diocese's vision for the School is implemented.

“There is no point doing anything. The situation is hopeless”

Not true. The parents' action was successful in the 1980's. Parents lost the initial court case to retain their Sixth Form but won on appeal. They held candlelit vigils and lobbied very successfully to win hearts and minds.

“We cannot go against our bishops”

As faithful Catholics we are aware that this is one of the most painful aspects of the dispute. We must remember that we are campaigning to preserve a school that does much more than most to promote the Catholic Faith. What other Catholic school can claim vocations from both staff and pupils in the last two years? How many pupils at other Catholic schools say the Angelus every day and go to Mass weekly?

As faithful Catholics, we are not blindly to obey our bishops. Canon law specifically allows us to make known to them our legitimate wishes and concerns. There are times – and this is

one of them – when we must take robust and direct action to defend our Church and the institutions we love and value from those who threaten them.

Your role is pivotal.

The success of this campaign depends upon you.

PLEASE JOIN US AT THE SCHOOL

CANDLELIT VIGIL

2ND FEBRUARY at 6.15pm

Please use our contact form [here](#) so that we can be sure that our message is getting through.