

## **St Malachy's College Response to Equality Impact Assessment**

The College welcomes the invitation to comment on the Equality Impact Assessment document. In this our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, the College is committed to the future development of North Belfast as we have been throughout this period.

The current and future significant needs of the College have been recognised by the Department of Education, and initial plans drawn up for the future development of the site. A feasibility study has been completed and submitted to the Department, reviewing and analysing the options for development, and a preferred development agreed by Trustees.

The size and age of the facilities require major refurbishment of the existing listed building and the construction of a new extension to create a modern, fit for purpose, 21<sup>st</sup> Century campus. In tandem with this planned on-site development, additional playing field facilities are sought from the Crumlin Road Gaol/Girdwood Barracks site.

In order to meet the future educational needs of the surrounding community the College hopes to further embed and enhance our strong commitment to collaboration which has been a hallmark of the College. Currently, up to 250 children and young people from other Primary and Secondary level Schools attend the College for collaborative onsite cross community classes and sports activities through initiatives such as our Sharing Education Programme, and Music Specialist Community and School partnerships. The College plays a vital roll in North Belfast and will continue to provide leaders at all levels of society in Belfast and further a field.

The existing College site area is significantly below the standard recommended by the Department of Education (approximately 66% below the standard). As a result the College Governors and Trustees have concerns about the perceived adverse impact that the Masterplan could have on accessibility and safety, particularly in relation to plans for the removal of the recently completed all weather sports pitch and an access road through the site which will effectively split the the College campus. The College has grave concerns regarding the safety of pupils and community access. We are however keen to ensure that our services and facilities are used by the whole community on an ongoing basis and that safe access is facilitated outside normal school hours.

The vision of St Malachy's College is to continue to develop in many particular ways to promote North Belfast both nationally and internationally. The College's aim is to continue to attract students to North Belfast as a School committed to whole community achievement and learning.