



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON
EDUCATION SERVICE



CALLED TO SERVE

BEING A FOUNDATION GOVERNOR IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*With Christ at the centre, we lead and serve in partnership
to secure the long-term future of Catholic education.*

FOREWORD FROM BISHOP RICHARD

“THE CHURCH AS A MOTHER IS UNDER AN OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE FOR ITS CHILDREN AN EDUCATION BY VIRTUE OF WHICH THEIR WHOLE LIVES MAY BE INSPIRED BY THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.”

These words, from Decree of the Second Vatican Council on Education, speak of the motivation for our Catholic schools. It is this foundation in Christ that makes our Catholic schools so special, for they offer something to our young people and to their families that goes far beyond the outward signs of curriculum and syllabus. Our schools are places where the relationship with Christ, to which all are called, enables those we educate to take their place in the Church and Society conscious of their dignity as children of God.

Our schools provide the “principal means of helping parents to fulfil their role in education.” In entrusting their children to our schools, parents provide them with the best possible start in life, grounded in the deepening of their faith through prayer and the recognition of the presence of God in all things.

Foundation Governors have a very important role in Catholic Schools and there are various ways in which they do this. There are meetings of the governing body and its various committees, which ensure that the school is being true to its mission as a Catholic school, is maintaining as high as possible a standard of teaching and learning, and is managed efficiently and effectively in accordance with the Church’s teaching and the law of England and Wales.

I am especially grateful to you who take on this great responsibility, confident that you will find joy and fulfilment in this ministry.

With every Blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard", with a small cross or mark above the first letter.

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INTRODUCTION

Are you looking for a way to live out your faith and serve your local community at the same time?

If so, becoming a Foundation Governor could be just the thing for you.

There are more than 2200 Catholic schools in England and Wales, making the Church the largest provider of primary education in the country.

Foundation Governors play an important part in maintaining and developing the Catholic character of these schools.

This booklet will explain the role of a Foundation Governor and how you can go about applying.



WHAT IS A FOUNDATION GOVERNOR?

All schools have a governing body comprising of different types of governors, for example parent-governors, teacher-governors etc.

In addition to these categories, governing bodies in Catholic schools also include Foundation Governors, these Foundation Governors will always form a majority.

The main role of a governing body is to operate at a strategic level, ensuring that the Catholic vision and character of the school is upheld, holding the Head teacher and leadership team to account and overseeing the financial performance of the school.

Governors also set the budget, manage the school's admissions criteria and are involved in the recruitment of senior leadership.



Foundation Governors are appointed by the local Bishop specifically to preserve and develop the Catholic ethos of the school and represent the Bishop's education policy (e.g. worship and religious education) to the governing body.

This is why Foundation Governors will always outnumber other governors.

There is no magic formula about what makes a perfect Foundation Governor, they come from all walks of life and all ages. But it is important that each governing body has a good mix of skills, knowledge and experience.

The Diocesan Education Service manages the administration process for the appointment of Foundation Governors on behalf of the Bishop. The Education service provides support to governing bodies in carrying out their responsibilities.



RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIME COMMITMENTS

The average Foundation Governor role will take up about 10-12 hours per month. However, this can vary depending on the school calendar or by events, such as an Ofsted Inspection or Catholic School Inspection.

This commitment includes the minimum requirement of attending three full governor meetings per year and serving on at least one committee.

The committees will focus on areas such as finance, curriculum, pupil progress and site management.

The Diocesan Education Service provide free training and support in all aspects of school governance, you will be encouraged to attend these training sessions.



DO I FIT THE CRITERIA?

Governors come in all shapes and sizes. But it is important that each governing body has a good mix of skills, knowledge and experiences.

Because not all governing bodies need the same skills, to be successful, it is vital that individuals from all backgrounds volunteer to be a Foundation Governor.

Any practising Catholic over the age of 18 can become a Foundation Governor. A reference from your Parish Priest will be taken up as part of the application process.



THE APPLICATION PROCESS



If you think you might make a good Foundation Governor, you should express an interest by talking to your Parish Priest, the Chair of Governors or Headteacher. Alternatively contact the Diocesan Education Service to discuss further.

The Foundation Governor application form can be found on the diocesan website under 'Education Service'.

www.abdiocese.org.uk

Simply complete and return the form.

When a school has been identified, we will then process your application form, seeking all references and completing safeguarding checks, before passing all the documentation to the Bishop for consideration.

FAQ

Q: How do you define a practising Catholic?

A practising Catholic is defined as someone who keeps the precepts of the Church, as summarised in the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Q: I am not a practising Catholic but I would like to become a governor. What do I do?

If you are not a practising Catholic but are interested in becoming a governor at a Catholic school, you are strongly encouraged to contact your diocese to discuss other options.

Q: What are safeguarding checks?

As a requirement of the appointment process, all governors, regardless of category, will be required to consent to the carrying out of any appropriate checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks (previously Criminal Records Bureau Checks), in respect of eligibility/suitability to be appointed as a school governor.

Checks are carried out by the school concerned and must be complete before any appointment is made by the Bishop.

THE NEXT STEPS

If you are interested in becoming a Foundation Governor but would like some more information about the role generally or specifically in relation to your local area the diocese will be able to help.

Please contact:

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