

Being a Foundation Governor in a Catholic School

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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 secondary and second 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 Foundat

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 leader-ship.





ion Governor?





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.

Your local diocese manages the process for the appointment of Foundation Governors and 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.

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.

You will also be encouraged to attend free training sessions. These will often be provided by your diocese.







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. As part of the self-nomination process, you will need to give the contact details of your parish priest who can verify this.



The Application Process



If you think you might make a good Foundation Governor, you should nominate yourself for consideration. You may already have been encouraged to nominate yourself by your Parish Priest, a Head teacher, a Chair of Governors or someone else in the Catholic community.

The application forms for nomination can be found on the vast majority of diocesan websites. Simply fill them in and post to your respective diocese.

Your diocese will then process your application and once they have verified that you are a practising Catholic and that you have passed all the necessary safeguarding checks they will allocate you to a school where there is a demand for your particular skill set.

F.A.Qs

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.

Q: How long does the process take

Once you have registered your interest, your diocese should respond quickly. After you have submitted your application form the collecting of references and safeguarding checks could take up to two months depending on your diocese.

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, your diocese will be able to help.

More information can be found on your local diocese's website.

Contact details for all the dioceses can be found on the Catholic Education Website.



"Foundation Governors have a very important role in Catholic schools in which they support the Headteachers, Staff and Pupils by being a regular visitor to the school, by asking questions of members of the school family and by being a link between the school and the wider community.

This also gives me an opportunity to thank you on behalf of the Bishops of England and Wales for the time and commitment which Governors give to our Catholic schools without which the schools would not flourish in the way that they do."

+Malcolm McMahon
Archbishop of Liverpool
Chairman of the Catholic Education Service



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