

Diocese of Westminster Education Service

The Role of the Foundation Governor in a Catholic School

All Catholic schools seek to provide an education in which *"whole lives may be inspired by the Spirit of Christ"* (**Gravissimum Educationis paragraph 3**). The Area bishop or Episcopal Vicar has pastoral responsibility for all the Catholic schools in his area. For Voluntary Aided schools, in Diocesan Trusteeship, the Area bishop or Episcopal Vicar will recommend to the Archbishop of Westminster those to be appointed as foundation governors.

Foundation Governors form the majority of a school's governing body. They are appointed for the purpose of securing that the religious character of the school is preserved and developed. (See the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 reg.9. Recent legislation makes it absolutely essential that only Catholics be appointed as foundation governors. By their standing in the local Catholic community they will give clear witness to their faith as individuals and in their corporate action, to the Gospel message and the Church's teachings. Voluntary service as a governor is an important share in the Church's ministry in education and requires:

Commitment to the responsibility of Diocese of Westminster to provide, through a network of schools, educational opportunities for all Catholic children.

Genuine interest in the school, its pupils, staff and parents and a commitment to promoting its well-being.

Readiness to share skills with, and learn from, fellow governors and school staff and parents.

The ability to work as a team with fellow governors, including non-foundation governors, maintaining fidelity to the task of Catholic Education.

Time to prepare for, and attend governors' meetings (at least two a term).

In times of rapid change, all governors, however long they have served, are on a "learning curve". New applicants should not be deterred by lack of experience in education if they have a genuine desire to serve the mission of the Church.

By way of support governors have access by telephone and by correspondence to advice and guidance from the offices of the Diocese of Westminster Education Service at Vaughan House, 46 Francis Street (**020 7798 9005**) and are advised to attend, as their time allows, governors' training sessions provided by both the Diocese and the school's Local Authority.

If you can offer to serve please return the completed application form to your Area Bishop or Episcopal Vicar at the address on the top of the form. Consideration will be given by the Area Bishop or Episcopal Vicar to all applications from practising Catholics who have a clear commitment to the Church's teaching and to the education of children in Catholic schools. The following additional criteria apply:

- **Applicants' children (if any of statutory school age) are being educated in Catholic schools (other than in exceptional circumstances);**
- **The applicant does not work in the school for which the application applies and is not closely related to any member of the staff at that school;**
- **The applicant does not work at another Catholic school in the same LA or deanery as the one for which service as a governor is offered;**
- **The applicant is not closely related to an existing governor (whether elected or appointed) of the school for which service is offered**

When a governor has received the deed of appointment and the clerk written confirmation of the appointment, the governor may commence service from the date indicated on the deed.

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