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**Catholic Schools**

**Foundation Governor on a Local Academy Committee**

**Role Descriptor**

***Purpose of this document***

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a foundation governor. The Church’s mission in education is of paramount importance and your service in this ministry is valued.

This document has been produced by the dioceseto assist you in understanding the basis of your appointment and the requirements of the role. It also provides some basic information about the constitution of Catholic schools and colleges which you may find useful, particularly if this is your first appointment or if you are new to education.

Please read this guidance alongside any other guidance produced by the diocese and the induction pack provided to you by your school. If you have any questions, please contact Diocesan Schools’ Department or the chair of your board of governors.

**Role:** Foundation Governor

**At:** [Insert name and address of Catholic school/college]

**Term of office:** [Insert]

**Appointed by:** Bishop of Hallam, Right Rev Ralph Heskett

**Accountable to:** Bishop of Hallam, through his authorised officers

**Time commitment:**

As you will know from the guidance for nominees, serving as a foundation governor requires a significant time commitment and you were asked to ensure that you will have sufficient time available to fulfil the role. We estimate that you will need to set aside around 10-12 hours per month to carry out the role effectively, but more time may be required in the first academic year whilst you familiarise yourself with the requirements of the role.

You will be required to prepare for and attend at least one Local Academy Committee meeting per term and it is important that you are familiar with all of the documentation circulated prior to meetings so that you can play a useful part in the discussions.

You may also be appointed to one or more committees, and you may be asked to take on a “Link Governor” role which means that you will be responsible for overseeing a particular area of school life. It is important that you take an active role in the life of your school and you may therefore be asked to participate in recruitment or be required to visit the school to see it at work.

It is important that you attend all necessary training, particularly safeguarding training, and you should engage with the training offered by your diocese as well as the training recommended to you or required by your school. **[**

**Essential Reading:**

It is important that you are familiar with the sources of guidance and support available to you.

You must familiarise yourself with the diocesan protocols as these set out the principles for the committed working relationship which is required between governing bodies and the diocese.Please ask your chair of governors to provide you with access to a copy of the protocols if you have not already been provided with them.

There are resources available on the Catholic Education Service website [www.catholiceducation.org.uk](http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk) and the Department for Education also issues guidance on many aspects of school life. The Department for Education’s website is not easy to navigate and the search function is not particularly effective. Therefore, the best way to find guidance on a particular topic is by a google search of the subject with the words “department for education” in the search terms. As a starting point, you should familiarise yourself with the Maintained Schools Governance Guide and Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Your chair of governors may also recommend further reading to you and your school may also subscribe to services that provide guidance on various topics.

**Your Legal Responsibilities as a Foundation Governor:**

Your primary duty is to ensure the preservation and maintenance of the Catholic character of the school. Your Diocesan Bishop through his officers may require compliance with certain requirements in order to ensure that this duty is being fulfilled. The Diocesan Protocols provide further information which will enable you to ensure that this important legal responsibility is complied with.

You must also ensure that the school is conducted in accordance with its Trust Deed and Instrument of Government.

You must ensure that the school is accountable to the **Trustees of the Diocese** and that it complies with its canon and civil law obligations which include ensuring that the school’s religious education curriculum is in accordance with the Religious Education Directory issued by the Bishops’ Conference.

**Other key responsibilities:**

In addition to the legal responsibilities set out above, there are also other key responsibilities which can be summarised as follows. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of all of the key responsibilities of a governor, but it is a list of the other key responsibilities for foundation governors specifically:

* To always act in accordance with the will of the Diocesan Bishop;
* To know, support and implement the Diocesan Bishop’s policies on education, including religious education, and any directives issued by the Diocesan Bishop, and to represent those policies to the Local Academy Committee;
* To ensure that Gospel values and the Catholic faith permeate every aspect of life at the school, including in relationships with staff, pupils, parents and the wider community;
* To act for the good of Catholic education as a whole within the diocese, considering not only the interests of the school you govern, but the interests of all other Catholic schools and Catholic education as a whole throughout the diocese;
* To attend relevant training, including foundation governor induction training, as soon as possible and, in any event, in accordance with diocesan policy;
* To understand and promote the distinctive nature of Catholic education;
* To develop relationships between the school and local parish communities; and
* To advocate positively for Catholic education whenever possible.

**Your additional key responsibility as a Foundation Governor:**

Your Diocesan Bishop has canonical responsibility for the strategic oversight of schools in his diocese and as such you may be asked to assist in the implementation of the Diocesan Bishop’s vision for the future. This may include attending relevant training as directed, engaging in discussions, participating in mindful and constructive consideration of any proposals set out, and implementing such proposals following consideration.

Where proposals are made by the Diocesan Bishop these will be for the furtherance of all the schools/academies within the diocese and for the preservation and furtherance of Catholic education as a whole and you will be expected to consider them in that light.

**The role of the Local Academy Committee as a whole and what is expected of you in your role as a Foundation Governor:**

* Local Academy Committee’s Core Functions

The Local Academy Committee as a whole, leads on the strategic operation of the school. The headteacher/principal is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school.

The core functions of the Local Academy Committee are as follows:

* To preserve the Catholic vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school;
* To secure local accountability for the school’s leadership team
* To monitor the effectiveness of the use of resources of the school\*
* To support the Trust Board in reviewing and implementing policies and procedures

\*Note that the Trust is directly responsible for setting the budget, monitoring spend and ensuring good financial control through an audit programme. The role of local governors here is to focus on the impact of the use of time and money in the school and how decisions translate to the quality of Catholic education and care for our pupils.

The main focus of the work of the Local Academy Committee is to secure school improvement. Governors must create robust accountability for senior leaders and be well equipped to ask the right questions. Governors need to have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, they need to be influential in determining priorities for school improvement and have a clear role in monitoring progress and evaluating impact.

You must carry out your responsibilities in ensuring the core functions are met, in the light of your statutory and other key responsibilities. For further information about the statutory responsibilities of governors generally please read the Department for Education’s Maintained Schools Governance Guide.

* Admissions

The Trust Board is responsible for the admissions arrangements for the schools in the Trust, subject to the guidance issued by the Diocesan Bishop. The Trust may delegate responsibility for setting admissions arrangements in a school to the Local Academy Committee. All faith-based oversubscription criteria must be drafted in accordance with any guidance issued by the Diocesan Bishop and where questions arise as to the application of the over-subscription criteria these should be referred to the diocese. As the local ordinary, it is for the Diocesan Bishop to decide how membership and practice is to be demonstrated for the purposes of admission.

The diocese will have provided the Trust with model admission arrangements which should be followed. You might want to ask the admissions committee at your Trust or Local Academy Committee to explain to you how your school’s admission arrangements operate. You may also wish to review the School Admissions Code and the School Admissions Appeals Code which you will find on the Department for Education’s website.

The Diocesan Bishop has canonical responsibility for ensuring that there is a sufficiency of places, and it is therefore important that any guidance issued by the diocese in relation to admissions is followed. No Catholic school should be competing unnecessarily with another Catholic school for pupils, we are all part of the same mission.

* Employment of Staff

The Trust is the employer of teaching and support staff at the school. The Trust **must** comply with the Bishops’ Memorandum on the Appointment of Staff in Catholic Schools which you will find on the Catholic Education Service website.

The Local Academy Committee may have roles delegated by the Trust Board in relation to recruitment and application of Trust HR policies. You may be required to participate in the recruitment of staff to the school, particularly in respect of senior leadership vacancies. There may also be instances where you are involved in disciplinary, grievance or other hearings relating to staff.

* Land and Buildings

All Catholic schools are under the supervision of the Diocesan Bishop. The Catholic Multi Academy Trust occupies and conducts schools on behalf of the diocesan or religious order trustees who own the land and buildings.

The Local Academy Committee must assist the Board of Directors in ensuring that the land and buildings are used in accordance with the permission granted by the trustees and appropriate consents must be sought where necessary for maintenance and repair works. The Board of Directors and the Local Academy Committee must also ensure, that as part of their stewardship of the land and buildings, they are reflecting on Catholic Social Teaching in relation to Care for Creation.

* Curriculum

The Board of Directors is responsible for the curriculum in schools across the Trust. Setting and monitoring curriculum policy may be delegated to Local Academy Committees. This responsibility includes ensuring compliance with both the National Curriculum and RE requirements set by the Diocesan Bishop. Religious Education is the core of the core curriculum and all curriculum content must be rooted in the Gospel.

* Inspection

The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that every school in the Trust receives a denominational inspection (often referred to as a Section 48 inspection) which will assess the quality of RE and collective worship. You should review your school’s most recent inspection report as this will give you valuable information about what your school/college does well and where improvements are required.