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**Interested in becoming a Foundation Governor**

**at a Catholic School?**

***Purpose of this document***

Thank you for considering the important role of foundation governor. The Church’s mission in education is of paramount importance and your service in this ministry would be highly valued.

This document has been produced by the dioceseto assist you in understanding 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 would be your first appointment or if you are new to education.

If you have any questions, please contact Diocesan Schools’ Department.

***Foundation Governor Role***

Foundation governors are entrusted by the Bishop with the ministry of school governance to act in recognition of the love of Christ for all members of the school community and one another.

They have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education, acting as ‘critical friends’ for the school leadership team and setting the strategic direction of the school.

Being a governor is immensely rewarding. It is a joy and a gift to the ministry of the Church by making our schools successful and ensuring that children are provided with a supportive environment within which they can learn and grow in their relationship with Jesus.

**Time commitment:**

You will be required to prepare for and attend at least one governing body 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 the diocese as well as the training recommended to you or required by your school.

**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.

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

They 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 governing body;
* 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 governing body as a whole and what is expected of a Foundation Governor:**

* Governing Body’s Core Functions

The governing body 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 governing body has three core functions:

* To preserve the Catholic vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school;
* To hold the headteacher/principal to account for the educational performance and Catholic character of the school; and
* To ensure the financial viability of the school.

Governors must carry out their 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.

**Summary**

Hallam Diocese is very grateful for the role played by those who volunteer to be foundation governors, and welcomes the wide range of skills, experience and background that they bring to the role.

To get a better picture of the role, talking to those who are already foundation governors gives the best insight, as well as talking to a school’s headteacher. The application process is handled via the Hall Diocese Schools’ Department. Amanda Bramall at the diocesan office ([abramall@hallam-diocese.com](mailto:abramall@hallam-diocese.com); 0114 256 6440) will answer any further queries, and will guide you through the application process.

All applications are subject to a supportive reference from another person who knows you well, and the support of your parish priest. The final step in appointment is made by the Bishop.