

**Foundation Governor Appointments in the Diocese of Chester**

**Introduction**

Governors are the largest voluntary body in the country. They provide a valuable service to the community and help to influence the work of schools and the future of young people.

Foundation governors are important members of governing body teams in church schools with a specific responsibility in terms of monitoring and developing the Christian distinctiveness of our church schools as well as a concern for standards.

In the Diocese of Chester there are three types of foundation governors apart from the ex officio: those appointed by a charitable trust; those elected by the PCC of the attached parish; and those appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE), generally based on the nomination of the local clergy or PCC.

This means that the appointment of both PCC and DBE governors is an important responsibility for clergy and as such this pack is designed to help clergy understand the needs of governing bodies and provide guidance in appointing effective foundation governors. The procedures set out below for the appointment of DBE governors is a requirement and is offered as guidance for PCCs, however, we strongly recommend that PCCs follow the procedures in order to best serve their local church school and reassure themselves that they are fulfilling the current regulations around the appointment of foundation governors.

The current government is looking to governors more consistently to provide challenge and support in terms of standards and it is important therefore that the skills of any proposed governor or current governor due to end their term of office are considered prior to appointment. A skills audit will highlight any skills that may be lacking on the governing body and as such would be a priority for consideration when appointing governors. A great deal of commitment is required and it is also important, therefore, to be honest when approaching possible candidates about the expectations and the importance of the role.

This may make some reluctant to take it on, however, it is preferable to have a committed governor with the required skills and passion rather than someone who took on the role without fully understanding the implications. For those that do choose to serve our schools as governors, there are the benefits of developing governor skills and knowledge as well as the satisfaction of knowing that they are making a difference to the lives of young people as part of their Christian service.

The importance of effective Christian governors in our church schools cannot be underestimated, especially in the current educational climate. We would therefore urge all churches to look at governance as a form of Christian service, ensuring God’s love is shared with the young people of the local community through church schools. We would encourage clergy to celebrate such service and include governors as part of the church ‘team’ and its ministry.

The appendices include all the relevant paperwork required during the appointments process. This includes:

Appendix 1 – Foundation governor expectations

Appendix 2 – Expressions of interest form

Appendix 3 – Governor nomination/appointment form

Appendix 4 – Governor Declaration form

Appendix 5 – Example governor skills audit

Appendix 6 – Example vacancy advert

If you have any questions about the role of the governor, skills audits, the process or any other queries then please contact either Sue Noakes (sue.noakes@chester.anglican.org) or Sandra Reynolds (sandra.reynolds@chester.anglican.org).

**The Role**

Governing bodies have overall responsibility for schools and the DFE states that their core functions are:

(a) ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined;

(b) ensuring that the head teacher performs his or her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school; and

(c) ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school’s financial resources.

The foundation governor has the additional responsibility of ensuring that the Christian foundation of the school is preserved and developed, in the light of which, those nominating foundation governors are asked to consider whether the person nominated:

* Has the relevant skills and experience which will give breadth and strength to the governing body for the benefit of the school.
* Has the energy for the job and an interest in the task.
* Will be committed to the Christian and pastoral support and the wellbeing of the school.
* Will be committed to ensuring the school’s Christian distinctiveness is constantly developed and addressed during governing body discussions.
* Will complement the background, experience and skills of the other governors and the type of people needed to obtain a balanced governing body – a skills audit should be undertaken to identify gaps in the expertise and skills of the governing body (an example is included).
* Will be both challenging and supportive of the school and the professionals within it.

It may well be that a difficult decision has to be taken when considering appointing a foundation governor for a further term of office if they no longer fulfil the requirements above. The skills audit and expression of interest form will ensure that the process is as objective as possible and will allow PCCs and clergy to make a decision based on evidence rather than familiarity or emotion. However, in all cases the duty of care for individuals must be considered and any difficult message given in a spirit of love and grace.

**Procedures**

**Chester Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) appointed Foundation Governors**

**Procedure for appointment**

Governor’s term of office is due to expire:

1. The annual skills audit of the governing body is consulted and any skills gaps identified in consultation with the headteacher, chair of governors and relevant clergy. If an annual skills audit is not undertaken (governing bodies are strongly recommended to undertake this annually) then a skills audit takes place as above prior to appointment.
2. The local incumbent[[1]](#footnote-1) will (if appropriate) contact the governor and ask if they wish to stand for a further term.
3. If they do not wish to stand or it is decided that the governor does not have the required skills and/or commitment, the vacancy should be advertised to the local congregation (an example advert is available in the appendices) and applications encouraged. It may be also appropriate to advertise the vacancy in neighbouring CE and other Trinitarian churches or on the SGOSS website. The ‘foundation governor expectations’ information should be shared with any potential candidates.
4. The proposed governor (both those standing for reappointment or for the first time) fills in the application form and has their faith commitment confirmed by their local church.
5. In consultation with the headteacher and chair, a decision is made as to whether to nominate the governor. If more than one person applies for the vacancy than the decision should be made based on the skills audit and the expression of interest form as to who best fulfils the current needs of the governing body.
6. The forms are then sent to Sandra Reynolds at Church House.
7. The DBE make a final decision as to whether to accept the nomination (clergy may be contacted to confirm details).
8. A letter is sent out from Church House formally appointing the governor to the post and the Local Authority informed for LA maintained schools.

**Parochial Church Council (PCC) appointed Foundation Governors**

**Recommended procedure for appointment**

Governor’s term of office is due to expire:

The above procedures are followed to number 4.

1. In consultation with the headteacher and chair, a decision is made as to whether to nominate the governor to the PCC. If more than one person applies for the vacancy than the decision should be made based on the skills audit and the expression of interest form as to who best fulfils the current needs of the governing body.
2. The nomination is made to the PCC
3. The PCC make a final decision as to whether to accept the nomination and ratify the appointment.
4. The forms are then sent to Sandra Reynolds at Church House.
5. A letter is sent out from Church House welcoming the governor as a PCC appointment and the Local Authority informed for LA maintained schools.

The procedures above should also be used following any governor resignation.

**Further considerations**

**Resignations**

If a foundation governor tenders their resignation it is important that this information is sent to the office so that our records are kept up to date and the Local Authority or clerk informed.

**Children at other schools**

If a potential governor lives within your school’s designated area but has chosen to send his/her child to another school, please consider carefully whether it is appropriate for that person to be nominated as a foundation governor of your school.

**Members of the same family**

It is not advisable for two members of the same family (or two people living together) to serve on the same governing body.

**Difficulty in filling vacancies**

Foundation governors are essential to a church school, it is therefore imperative that there are no foundation governor vacancies. If there are difficulties in filling the posts please contact the DBE office to discuss the situation as there may well be suitably skilled, faithful and enthusiastic members of neighbouring congregations who may be able to fill the vacancy.

The DBE is in the process of collating a register of church members interested in becoming foundation governors who have the necessary skills and commitment. If you have more applications than vacancies then please encourage the unsuccessful candidates to apply to the register as they may be able to support another school. The register will also be a resource for schools struggling to fill vacancies.

In addition we have set up a partnership with SGOSS (the national body that recruits governors) and schools can use this service in two ways. SGOSS now have a form to be sent out to potential governors that asks about their faith commitment so that they can be considered for foundation governor vacancies. Additionally schools can advertise vacancies on their website. With the addition of the faith commitment form it will now be possible to advertise foundation governor vacancies on the website. **However this must only be done with the approval of the PCC/ex officio governor.** When a vacancy is placed on the site, in the ‘additional information’ section indicate that the school is based in the diocese of Chester and that you would like the faith commitment form to be completed.

**Foundation governor expectations**

**Personal**

As a foundation governor you will be expected to be:

* an active member of a Christian worshipping community;
* committed to the work of education within a Christian context;
* enthusiastic and active in promoting school and parish links;
* willing to uphold the Church of England foundation.
* willing to undertake any required safeguarding checks;

**General**

As a governor you will be expected to:

* take a full active role in the work of the governing body;
* attend all full governing body meetings and committee meetings as necessary;
* act as part of a corporate body;
* be prepared to challenge professionals as appropriate to ensure the best outcomes for the children in the school;
* know the school in terms of its strengths and weakness and be able to articulate this;
* attend Diocesan and Local Authority training in order to develop governor skills and knowledge;
* ensure confidentiality and act at all times with integrity;

**Specific responsibilities**

As a foundation governor you will be expected to:

* ensure the Christian ethos of the school is preserved and developed;
* ensure reports are regularly provided for the PCC on the work of the school (PCC governors), with particular regard to the development of its Christian foundation and to encourage church/school links;
* report back to the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE governors) any issues that may arise in the school;
* ensure that the school provides an act of collective worship for **all** children every day and that it is in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England;
* in aided schools encourage the development of the RE syllabus based on Diocesan guidelines;
* inform the full governing body of any Diocesan advice and guidance;
* ensure that the School Development Plan includes strategy for the development of areas reflected in the SIAMS inspection schedule;
* inform the Diocese when headteacher posts become vacant and invite a representative of the Diocesan Director of Education to attend the appointments procedure;
* be prepared to offer challenge and support to the school and parish as they strengthen their links;
* regularly promote the school through the parish events/magazines/newsletters and promote the parish through school newsletters/events etc;



**Appointment as foundation governor to ……………………………………….. CE School**

In order to achieve the best outcomes possible for the children who attend our school it is essential that the governors appointed to the governing body have the commitment and skills to lead the school forward.

To ensure the best mix of skills and experience we ask that you complete this expression of interest form detailing the reasons for your application and any skills, experience or training that you feel is relevant to the needs of the governing body of our school.

In order to help with this, a list of skills and experience is found overleaf. No governor will have all of those listed but it is hoped that as many as possible will be found within the whole governing body. Training will also be provided to help develop skills and knowledge.

Foundation governors are specifically appointed in church schools for the purpose of ensuring that the ‘religious character, is preserved and developed’ and so we ask that you consider the ‘Foundation governor expectations’ prior to completing the form. You will also need the nomination/election form signed by your minister or other church officer to confirm your church commitment.

We thank you for your interest and look forward to receiving your form.

Please return your form to …………………………………………………………………

**Governor application form**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name: |  |
| Address: |  |
| Email: |  |
| Tel: |  |

Why do you wish to be a member of the Governing Body?

|  |
| --- |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Have you experience of being a school governor? |  YES / NO |

If ‘yes’, please give details and any particular experience (such as chairing subcommittees)

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**[A] Skills required by all governors**

* A commitment to the education and personal development of children
* An commitment to support the Church foundation of the school/academy
* A commitment to give time to the school/academy in terms of attendance at meetings, preparation for meetings, visiting the school and attendance at training
* Good interpersonal skills
* The ability to work as part of a team
* The ability to plan carefully and manage time
* The confidence to ask challenging questions and hold professionals to account

Please comment on any skills listed above in [A] that you feel you have

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**[B] Knowledge or experience in some of these areas:**

* **Church school ethos (Please ensure this area is referenced in your response)**
* Current education legislation
* The Primary Curriculum
* Christian worship
* Religious Education
* Special Educational Needs
* Early Years’ Education
* Self-evaluation and the ability to assess impact
* Data analysis and statistics
* The Ofsted inspection process
* The Denominational inspection process
* Project management
* Financial procedures
* Determining best value
* Human resources/personnel
* Performance management and appraisal
* ICT
* Communication
* School buildings and maintenance
* The ability to chair effective meetings

If you have any of the knowledge or experience or training in the areas listed above in [B], please give details.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Are you willing to be considered for assessment and training as a National Leader of Governance (NLG)

**YES/NO (please delete as appropriate)**

***Please continue on a separate sheet if required***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signed |  |
| Date |  |

** Incumbent to complete and sign this form**

**FOUNDATION GOVERNOR - (nomination/election notification form)**

|  |
| --- |
| **School:**  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Governor** whose term of office is expiring |  |
| **Type of Governor** (DBE or PCC elected) |  |
| **Date** of end of term of office |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **The person nominated (DBE) or appointed (PCC).** **Please complete this even if it is a reappointment** |
| **Name** *(including Title)***:** |
| **Address** *(including postcode)* |
| **Church Involvement**Which Church does the nominee/governor attend?Is the nominee “regular and supportive”?This to be signed by another church officer if the proposed governor does not attend worship at the nominating body’s church. | **YES / NO** **Signed:****Role:** |
| **Has the governor filled in an expressions of interest form (please attach)** **Has the skills audit been consulted prior to nomination?****Have the chair of governors and headteacher been consulted?** | **YES / NO** **YES / NO** **YES / NO** |
| **(PCC elected governors only)**Date of PCC Meeting at which the governor was appointed: |  |
| **To be signed by Incumbent:** | **Office Held:** |



**GOVERNOR’S DECLARATION FORM**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:** |       |
| **Address:** |       |
|  |       |
| **Postcode:** |       |
| **Tel:** (home) |       |
|  (work) |       |
| **Name of School:** |       |

I declare that I am not disqualified from serving as a school governor and that:

**I am** aged 18 or over at the date of this election or appointment;

**I am not** the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order, debt relief restrictions order, an interim debt relief restrictions order, a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, a disqualification order under Part 2 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, or an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order);

**I have not** been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body;

**I am not** included in the list of teachers or workers considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people;

**I am not** disqualified from being the proprietor of any independent school or for being a teacher or other employee in any school;

**I am not** disqualified from working with children or from registering for childminding or providing day care;

**I have not**, in the five years prior to becoming a governor, received a prison sentence, suspended or otherwise, for a period of not less than three months without the option of a fine;

**I have not**, in the twenty years prior to becoming a governor, received a prison sentence of two years or more;

**I have not**, at any time received a prison sentence for a period of five years or more;

**I have not** been fined, in the five years prior to becoming a governor, for causing a nuisance or disturbance on education premises;

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When completed, this form should be returned with the application form to Church House

**XXXXXXX School - Governor Skills Audit**

Name: ………………………………………………………………………………………..

An annual skills audit enables a governing body to explore its skills and knowledge base, as part of an overall assessment of GB effectiveness. The information obtained will be of use in organising committees, delegation of specific tasks, appointment of governors and will help to identify future training and information needs.

***This exercise will be most effective if everyone takes part.***

**[A] Skills and Experience**

Do you have any of the following skills or experience? (tick if applicable)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Strategic Planning |  |  | Financial planning |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Catering |  |  | Contracting services |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Mediating |  |  | Premises Maintenance |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Innovation |  |  | Marketing |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Research |  |  | Project management |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Working with children |  |  | Public relations |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| ICT |  |  | Human Resources |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Legal Knowledge |  |  | Health and Safety |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Planning/Leading worship |  |  | Working with the church community |  |

**Are there any other skills or experiences you have gained in a work, voluntary or home environment that you could bring to the governing body?**

**[B] Knowledge**

How would you rate your understanding of the following? (circle)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The distinctiveness of church schools | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Foundation Stage/Early Years  | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Key stage 1 (primary) | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Key stage 2 (primary) | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Key stage 3 (secondary) | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Key stage 4 (secondary) | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| School financial management | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Best Value | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Personnel Management - general | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  - performance  management | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  - recruitment/  interviewing | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Equal Opportunities | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Awareness of sources of information about the school ie School Self-Evaluation, School Improvement Plan, RAISEonline, SIAMS School Evaluation | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Special Educational Needs | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| The strengths and weaknesses of the school | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| School buildings and maintenance | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Health & Safety - legal responsibility and policy | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| The short and long term priorities of the school | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| The Ofsted Inspection Process | poor | adequate | good | excellent |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| The SIAMS inspection Process | poor | adequate | good | excellent |

**Training**

Please give brief details of courses you have undertaken in the past 3 years - include governor training, work based training and evening classes.

**Foundation governor vacancy at ……………………………….. CE School/academy**

We are looking to appoint ….. foundation governor/s at the school and would like you to consider whether you could serve God in this way.

Governors play a key role in ensuring that the children of our community develop both academically and spiritually within a distinctive Christian ethos. We are looking for people who are able to support the school in its understanding and development of the Christian aspects of its work and are willing to commit time and effort to supporting the educational development of the children in the school. You do not have to be an educational expert as you will be given help in developing such skills, and training is available on all aspects of school governance. What is important is a willingness to commit to the role and an ability to ask questions whilst working with others to ensure the best outcomes for the children by challenging and supporting school leaders in equal measure. School governance uses the experience of people from many walks of life and if you work in business, have an interest in finance or have experience of working in a variety of situations then you could make a valuable contribution to the work of the school governing body.

Governing body meetings take place (*every 6 weeks/twice a term*) at *(time)* with smaller subcommittees held ……………. Membership of any committee will be based on your interests and experience. If you would like further information please contact ………………………… who will be willing to talk through with you what it’s like being a governor and how it all works.

Christian ministry can take many forms and we strongly feel that church school governance is an important part of the church’s mission. Currently there are …….. children in the school, which represents ……….. families and thus provides an opportunity to share the Christian message with many who may not have any experience of the Christian faith. We would therefore encourage you to ask God if this may be the work that He is calling you to do.

If you would like someone to pray with/for you then please speak to …………………..

If you feel that you could take on this very important role then all we ask is that you fill in a form which is available from ……………… and who will discuss this with you further.

1. For some schools the local minister may not be in a position to take on this role or the foundation governors are appointed through a different route. In these cases either another church officer will be contacted or the DBE office will make the arrangements. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)