

Policy on Foundation Governors in Church of England Voluntary Aided (VA) and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools

Rationale for this Policy

This policy explains the process by which foundation governors are appointed to Church of England VA and VC schools within the Diocese of Hereford. This policy is to be implemented from 16th June 2021 following ratification at the Diocesan Board of Education meeting.

Educational Context/ Terminology used in this Policy

Foundation governors serve in Church of England Voluntary Aided (VA) and Voluntary Controlled (VC) maintained schools.

The Hereford Diocesan Board of Education (HDBE) Strategic Plan states that the HDBE: *Provides proactive support to Church school governing bodies to enable effective governance, strategy, succession planning and recruitment.*

It is the statutory responsibility of the HDBE to appoint foundation governors to all maintained VA and VC church schools.

This policy applies to the appointment of foundation governors in Church of England maintained VA and VC schools.

There are separate but parallel policies for the appointment of foundation governors, Trustees and Members of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) and of Single Academy Trusts (SATs).

The Role of Foundation Governors

The inclusion of foundation governors on the governing boards of both Voluntary Aided (VA) and Voluntary Controlled (VC) church schools is one of the distinguishing characteristics of church school education. Foundation governors represent the historic link with the original church establishment (the 'founding' establishment, hence the term 'foundation') of the school. As such, they are the custodians of its distinctive Christian ethos.

In most ways, foundation governors have the same objectives as other governors. Along with their fellow governors, they are entrusted with responsibility for the core roles of governors, set out in the Department for Education's 'Governance Handbook' namely:

- setting vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding the Headteacher to account for teaching, achievement, behaviour and safety, and challenging and strengthening their leadership
- ensuring finances are managed well leading to probity, solvency and effective use of resources

In addition, as representatives of the church's role in the school, foundation governors must:

- fully support, cherish, preserve and develop the distinctive Christian ethos of the school, ensuring that the school has a distinctive Christian vision and values which lead to effective practice and outcomes
- preserve and strengthen the links between church, school and diocese
- take an active role in the school's self-evaluations of progress against the 'Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools' (SIAMS) schedule
- monitor the collective worship and religious education at the school
- monitor that the distinctive Christian ethos of the school is encouraged and supported throughout its local community and is reflected in its policies, protocols, curriculum and activities
- ensure that their own attitudes and behaviour in relation to the school reflect its distinctive Christian ethos
- inform the Hereford Diocesan Board of Education (HDBE) when the school leader's post becomes vacant and, in partnership with the Chair of Governors, invite a representative of the Diocesan Board of Education to advise, support and attend the appointment procedure to support and challenge the leadership within the school in their links with the wider parish(es) and community and to promote support for school activities and initiatives relating to its Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness

The Appointment of Foundation Governors within Church of England VA and VC Schools

The number of foundation governors which serve a school is specified in the 'instrument of government'. When a foundation governor vacancy arises at a VA or VC school the Chair of Governors must:

- instruct the Clerk to the Governors to inform the HDBE and ensure that a recruitment and appointment process is underway to fill the vacancy
- send a copy of the resignation letter to the HDBE and the date the governor is expected to leave
- ensure that there is a description of the skills identified as being required on the governing board (following a [skills audit](#) as appropriate)

The governing board may nominate prospective candidates for the vacancy by providing the Parish Church Council (PCC) / Hereford Diocesan Board of Education (HDBE) with a candidate profile and contact details.

The information provided to the PCC and HDBE must include:

- the names of the current foundation governors for the school and the name of the outgoing foundation governor
- a description of the skills identified as being required on the governing body (following a [skills audit](#) as appropriate).
- the date when the outgoing foundation governor stepped down (or is expected to)

- the name and contact details (telephone, e-mail and postal address) of the person/s with whom HDBE and the PCC should liaise (this should be the clerk / person employed by the school to administer Governance)
- The essential requirement in fulfilling the vacancy is to ensure, across the breadth of foundation governor appointments, that the full governing body is able to be faithful to the Anglican heritage and to deliver those specific characteristics detailed in 'The Role of Foundation Governors' above.
- Once provided with all required information by the Chair of Governors, the Chair of the PCC must, over an appropriate period of time:
 - Inform the Incumbent of the parish.
 - Publicise the foundation governor vacancy within the local community.
 - Request that all nominees complete Form
- The governing body may nominate prospective candidates for the vacancy by providing the PCC with a copy of the Application Form for Foundation Governors

All nominees will need to complete the appropriate [foundation governor application](#) form and return this to HDBE.

HDBE will make the final decision over whether to approve the nomination and appoint, but will liaise with the Chair of Governors as part of this process. An appointment /reappointment welcome letter will be issued to the new or renewing foundation governor upon their approval by HDBE, explaining their appointment. A copy will be sent to the clerk to governors. A copy should be retained by the clerk for your records. The appointment will depend upon the completion of a satisfactory enhanced DBS check and declarations and adherence to the applicable Code of Conduct. It is a requirement that the foundation governor attends HDBE Church School Governor training within two terms of appointment. Governors. Reappointments are also expected to attend the Governor training within two terms of reappointment.

Criteria for Foundation Governors

The HDBE asks PCCs to consider and nominate candidates who meet the 'HDBE Requirements of Foundation Governors' detailed in this policy.

- ✓ A Foundation Governor should be a current member of a Church of England church, or of a Church which is not in communion with the Church of England but subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. This is to be agreed to by the Incumbent giving their approval on the Foundation Governor Appointment Form.
- ✓ By exception, an individual may be appointed as foundation governor who does not fulfil the requirements above, but a person who is committed to uphold the Christian Ethos of the school.

The following should be noted:

- school staff (where possible) should not be appointed as Foundation Governors for the school in which they work
- spouses and partners should not be appointed to the same governance board but can be considered for a neighbouring school if there are vacancies
- governors should not be appointed to more than two governance boards at any one time

Foundation governors will not be considered for re-appointment after 4 years if the foundation governor induction or refresher training has not been completed.

Ex-Officio Foundation Governor

All church schools have an ex officio foundation governor seat on their governance board which is reserved for the incumbent of the parish. This is confirmed by the 'instrument of government' of the school. This document will specify the parish concerned. The ex officio foundation governor remains a governor of the school for as long as he/she is in post.

It is the role of the archdeacon to appoint a substitute foundation governor if the incumbent chooses not to take up the role or there is a vacancy in the parish. The HDBE therefore requires incumbents, who, for any reason, do not feel able to take up the ex officio post on a school's governance board, to inform the archdeacon and the HDBE so that the archdeacon can seek to appoint a suitable person in place of the incumbent. Enhanced DBS checks are applicable to ex officio incumbent foundation governors in the same way as to all other governors.

Policy implemented: September 2021

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