



 *Diocese of
Brentwood*
Education Service

**BECOME A GOVERNOR
IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

1. What do Governors do?

Governors in our Catholic Schools play a vital role in ensuring the mission and vision is upheld and delivered in an authentic and genuine way. They set the strategic direction of the school and they also hold the headteacher and leadership team to account and oversee the financial performance of each school through managing budgets and appropriate recruitment.

They will help schools to review policies, set budgets and conduct self evaluation procedures.; this is especially useful, but not restricted to preparing for school inspections.

Foundation governors are appointed by the Bishop and represent his policy and vision for education in Catholic Schools in the Diocese. They act on his behalf to ensure the quality of education in our Catholic schools and all that it encompasses.

2. What skills would I need?

Within a governing body there are a range of committees including, finance, safeguarding, site management, pupil progress and achievement. Experience in these areas would be highly regarded.

Governing bodies are made up of people from a wide range of professions and experiences, some with little or no education background – this diversity and objectivity allows governors to operate in a fair and unbiased manner.

General skills include professionalism, ability to hold others to account, support and challenge are also really helpful. Just like schools, governing bodies are best when they are diverse and represent a range of skills; experience in the area of education is certainly not a requisite – everyone has gifts to share with the leadership and governance of schools.

3. What is asked of me...

Time and Commitments?

The average Foundation Governor role can take up to 12 hours a month, but this varies on the school, the specific events encountered by the school and the individual role held by the governor.

There is an expectation that each foundation governor will attend **three** full governing body meetings a year and sit on at least one committee. The committee they sit on will be carefully linked to their area of interest and/or experience. To support, there are training sessions and courses delivered by the Diocese and beyond.

4. Can I 'make a difference'?

Yes! School governors can make a profound difference by driving school improvement, ensuring financial stability and holding leadership to account. A strong board supports and challenges headteachers and senior leadership so that schools work effectively for all pupils.

An existing chair of governors highlights the benefits of becoming a governor:

**"You become part of the school community;
you can bring a skill set from outside of education which is invaluable;
you can and will help to shape what happens in your school"**

A photograph of three children in school uniforms standing outdoors. On the left is a young girl with dark skin and braided hair, wearing a blue school uniform. In the center is a girl with light skin and dark hair, also in a blue school uniform. On the right is a boy with light skin and short brown hair, wearing a blue school uniform. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows green foliage and a wooden fence.

5. FAQs

a. What's the difference between a foundation governor and a co-opted governor?

A foundation governor is one who is appointed by the bishop, is a practicing catholic and who is in post to preserve the Catholic Nature of the school regardless of their area of governance; for this reason, foundation governors always outnumber any other governors. A co-opted governor is one who is appointed directly by the schools for a particular skill set they can provide.

b. How do you define a practising Catholic?

A practising Catholic is defined as someone who keeps the precepts of the Church, as summarised in the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

c. What are safeguarding checks?

As a requirement of the appointment process, all governors, regardless of category, will be required to consent to the carrying out of any appropriate checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks (previously Criminal Records Bureau Checks), in respect of eligibility/suitability to be appointed as a school governor.

d. How long does the process take?

After you have submitted your application form the collecting of references and safeguarding checks could take up to two months.

A Message from our Director

Foundation Governors play a crucial role in the success of our Catholic schools. Working alongside school leaders, they help shape the strategic direction of the school, support and challenge leadership, ensure effective stewardship of resources, and safeguard the Catholic mission and ethos that lie at the heart of our educational communities.

You do not need to be an education expert to become a Foundation Governor. We welcome people from a wide range of professional and personal backgrounds who are committed to serving their local community and helping our schools provide the very best education for every child. By becoming a Foundation Governor, you will have the opportunity to contribute your skills, develop new ones, and play a meaningful part in ensuring that our schools continue to flourish for future generations.

If you are passionate about Catholic education and would like to make a positive impact, we encourage you to consider this rewarding and influential role.



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