



APPOINTMENT OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

Procedures & Guidance

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

Archdiocese of Birmingham Registered Charity No 234216

Making Christ Known Today

PROCEDURES & GUIDANCE FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

(Please read this guidance carefully, based on frequently asked questions, BEFORE completing the forms)

WHO IS THIS GUIDANCE FOR?

This guidance is for Applicants, School or Parish Child Safeguarding Representatives and Priests in regard to the procedures to be followed for the appointment of foundation governors.

Prospective foundation governors (Applicants) will need a Foundation Governor Application Form which is available from the Diocesan Education Service (DES) website at www.bdes.org.uk

WHY DO I NEED TO COMPLETE THESE FORMS?

- As a volunteer and someone who is willing to give up your time and energy to serve the Church and your local school, you may be asking why such a detailed appointment procedure is necessary. The main reason is that the post of foundation governor constitutes a category of volunteer whose work may bring them into contact with children as part of an agreed role.
- The Archdiocese of Birmingham is responsible for verifying the suitability of potential foundation governors. Therefore, all applicants are required to have obtained an enhanced DBS certificate before submitting an application. The Disclosure and Barring (DBS) check was previously known as a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

IS THERE ANYTHING I NEED TO KNOW BEFORE COMPLETING THE FORM?

- It is important to read the additional information contained in the document *Catholic Schools and the Definition of a Practising Catholic* by Father Marcus Stock, which we have enclosed for you to read; we wish to draw your attention to this extract from page 6:

“Therefore, for appointment to the office of foundation governor or to key posts in a Catholic school, a ‘practising Catholic’ is to be defined as someone who has *been sacramentally initiated into the Catholic Church and who adheres to those substantive life choices which do not impair them from receiving the sacraments of the Church and which will not be in any way detrimental or prejudicial to the religious ethos and character of the school. Inspired by the Gospel and sustained by God’s grace, a ‘practising Catholic’ will give sincere external expression to their interior faith through specific religious, moral and ethical behaviour which is in accordance with the teaching of Christ and the Catholic Church.*”

- Appointments are not made where:
 - An application indicates that the applicant is an immediate relative (husband/wife, father/mother or father/mother-in-law, sister/brother or sister/brother-in-law, son/daughter, or son/daughter-in-law) of another governor or member of staff.
 - An applicant is a paid employee at the school.
 - The applicant has not obtained verification of a current, valid DBS certificate from the Head Teacher, School Business Manager or Clerk to the Governing Body.
 - The application has not been validated by a priest signatory.

These objective criteria used to determine appointments ensure that there is as wide a range of representation as possible from the local community.

- The following are very important 'Do's' and 'Don'ts' when completing the *Application Form*:

IMPORTANT 'DO'S' AND 'DON'TS' – PLEASE:

- **DO** always use a **BLACK** biro-pen or roller-ball pen
- **DO** always write clearly in **BLOCK CAPITALS** only. If you make a mistake, put a line through it and write the correction clearly, if possible to the right, or as close as possible to the error. Please, feel able to ask the DSC for a new form if necessary.
- **DO** mark all choices with an not a tick
- **DO NOT** strike out a section of the form or state a field is not applicable. If it is not relevant to the application then please leave blank
- **DO NOT** staple any attachments to the form.

CAN YOU HELP ME TO COMPLETE THE FORMS CORRECTLY?

- This guidance is designed to assist you with the application process so that when your application is received it can be processed swiftly. Incorrectly completed forms result in a delay in a foundation governor being appointed as the form must be returned to the applicant to verify any query.

FOUNDATION GOVERNOR APPLICATION FORM – Guidance for Applicant & Priest

- The Applicant must complete **Sections 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6** of the *Foundation Governor Application Form*. If applicable, you must also ensure that **Section 8** is completed.
- Priests must not sign the certification in Section 7 (or complete Section 8 if applicable) until the applicant has completed Sections 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 as detailed above.
- If you are applying to be appointed to a Primary School, then Section 8 must be completed by the parish priest of the school that the application is being made for, if this is different to the priest who signed section 7.

Note: Where sections are not completed fully or correctly, the form will be returned to the applicant for further clarification which can significantly delay appointments.

GUIDANCE FOR EACH SECTION OF THE FORM

Section 1 – Please ensure that all parts of this section are fully completed and are clearly printed. Please take particular care when inserting your email address.

Section 2 – Ensure that you identify the specific school for which you wish to be considered. Please ensure that you tick Yes or No to each of the four questions asked below the school details and if you have answered Yes to the last question that you detail the year group(s) that your children are currently in.

Section 3 – This section **MUST** only be completed by the school's **HEAD TEACHER, SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER (OR EQUIVALENT)** or the **CLERK TO THE GOVERNING BODY**. You will need to present your DBS certificate to one of these three individuals who will complete this part of your form and sign to confirm that they have seen your certificate.

If you do not currently hold a DBS certificate, please contact the Head Teacher of the school who will arrange for you to call in to complete a DBS application. Your foundation governor application form should not be submitted until the certificate has been issued to you.

Section 4 – It is essential that governing bodies have sufficient range of skills across all governors to ensure that they can carry out work effectively. It is not a requirement that all individual governors have all required skills, but where a governing body lacks individuals with certain skills, this skills audit can help to make sure that governors with the required skills are appointed.

Section 5 – Please tell us a little about yourself, your reasons for applying to be a governor and how you feel the school to which you have applied would benefit from your appointment.

Section 6 – Please read this section carefully and answer Yes or No as appropriate to each question. Make sure that you sign and date the declaration at the bottom of the form.

If you have answered Yes to any of the four questions in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act section, please provide further details. Any information provided will be treated sensitively and securely and a disclosure from yourself does not automatically result in your application being refused. Any disclosure made is considered on a case by case basis and if necessary, we will contact you to discuss it further.

Section 7 – This section should be completed and signed by the parish priest who can confirm that you are a practising Catholic.

Section 8 – This section only needs to be completed if you are applying for a primary school and the priest who signed Section 7 is not the priest of the parish that the school serves. If this is the case, the priest of the school's parish needs to sign Section 8 to confirm that he endorses your application for his parish school.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I HAVE FINISHED?

- You should send the completed forms to the Director of Education, Diocesan Education Service, Don Bosco House, Coventry Road, Coleshill, Birmingham B46 3EA.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN THEN?

- The DES will send an official Letter of Appointment as a Foundation Governor to you (if appropriate). Copies of this Letter of Appointment will also be sent to the Clerk to the Governors of the relevant school. You can then begin your work as a foundation governor.
- Please note that these procedures may take over a month to be completed.
- The completed *Foundation Governor Application Form* will be retained in safe and secure storage at the DES.

WHAT DO I DO IF I AM UNSURE ABOUT ANYTHING CONCERNING THE FORMS?

- If you need to contact someone about completing the *Foundation Governor Application Form*, please contact Rebecca Tonks at the DES: Tel 01675 464755 or email: r.tonks@bdes.org.uk

FINALLY

- We would like to thank you for taking the time and effort to read this documentation and thus complete the forms correctly.
- The accurate completion of forms is vital and there will be delays to the appointment process if forms are not completed properly.
- It is worth sharing with you that we have one officer at the DES who undertakes all the administrative work, including offering guidance and support to individual applicants and schools.
- The officer concerned has to deal with applications from new and existing foundation governors who are due for reappointment and keep a database of over 4000 governors in over 240 schools, as well as other duties.

- We hope that this helps you understand the nature of the task internal to the DES office; consequently, we appreciate your support in getting the application right first-time which prevents you having to repeat the task and enables our officer to process the application first-time too.
- We appreciate your offer of service to one of our schools and your willingness to support Catholic education and contribute to its improvement and sustainability. We are all about securing the future for our Catholic schools, children and their families.

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