



**ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL**

**RELIGIOUS REFERENCE REQUEST: APPOINTMENT AS A FOUNDATION GOVERNOR**

Dear Rev Father

**[Name of Applicant]**

The above named has applied to serve as a foundation governor in a Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

As you know, it is a requirement of the Archbishop that foundation governors should be practising Catholics.

Your name has been given as a referee who will testify that the applicant is a practising Catholic. I would therefore be grateful if you would complete the following pro forma and return it to:

Fran Coldicutt  
LACE  
Croxteth Drive  
Sefton Park  
Liverpool L17 1AA

Yours sincerely

Fr Michael O'Dowd  
Episcopal Vicar for Schools and Colleges

**APPLICATION TO SERVE AS A FOUNDATION GOVERNOR IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL**

[NAME OF APPLICANT]

This applicant is known to me and is a practising Catholic

This applicant is known to me but I cannot confirm his/her Catholic practice

This applicant is not known to me

**SIGNED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please print your name clearly** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of parish or parish stamp** \_\_\_\_\_



## **ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL**

### **RELIGIOUS REFERENCE REQUEST: APPOINTMENT AS A FOUNDATION GOVERNOR**

#### **GUIDANCE FOR PARISH PRIESTS**

##### **Purpose of this Guidance**

This guidance is to assist Parish Priests in understanding their vital role in the process of the potential foundation governors nominating themselves.

In this guidance, references to schools include references to academies and sixth-form colleges (unless stated otherwise).

##### **Requirement for skills based governing bodies**

Governing bodies<sup>1</sup> are required to ensure that they are no bigger than they need to be to have all the skills necessary to carry out their functions. Those that appoint governors must be satisfied that the particular governor has the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

In relation to foundation governors it is the responsibility of the Episcopal Vicar for Schools and Colleges to determine whether a potential foundation governor (or indeed an existing foundation governor) has the necessary skills and commitment to Catholic education, and this judgment will be assisted by the reference that you provide during the nomination process.

##### **Nomination and Appointment of Foundation Governors**

You must ensure that you are aware of the Nomination Form being used by the Archdiocese as well as where it can be accessed e.g. on the website/hardcopy from LACE, from schools or from the parish. This is so that you are able to encourage suitable persons to nominate themselves and advise where they can access the applicable documents.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "governing body" in this guidance includes the Board of Directors and/or local governing body of an academy trust.

Once an individual has submitted his or her application to serve as a foundation governor, it will be considered in two stages:

1. First, the Episcopal Vicar determines whether the nominee will make a suitable foundation governor. At this stage the nominee's references and any additional Archdiocesan criteria will be taken into account; and
2. Second, if the nominee is considered suitable, he or she will be added to a pool from which appointments will be made when vacancies arise and by matching the knowledge, skills and experience of the nominee to the needs of the school where the vacancy has arisen.

### **Nomination of Foundation Governors - the Parish Priest's Role**

You are encouraged not only to consider persons who are known to you who may, in your opinion, make good foundation governors, but also to encourage a wider positive perception of governorship in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese generally. The CES has produced resources to assist you, particularly in respect of Education Sunday, which is a good time to draw attention to the good work carried out by Catholic schools and the need for committed governors from the Catholic community.

A person wishing to be considered for appointment as a foundation governor will be required, as part of the nomination process, to provide the name of a Priest who can verify their Catholic practice.

If you are nominated as a referee you will be contacted by your diocese for a reference. You do not need to provide a reference at the nomination stage.

If you *are* contacted to provide a reference your role as referee is to verify that the nominee is a practising Catholic, who gives clear witness to the Gospel message and the Church's teaching.

Where you provide a reference verifying the nominee's Catholic practice (or not, as the case may be), you should be prepared to provide any further information or assurances to support your original reference as required by the Archbishop, whether by way of written or oral representations.

### **Appointment of Foundation Governors – the Episcopal Vicar's role**

In making his decision *where* to appoint a suitable foundation governor, the Episcopal Vicar will carry out an exercise to match the skills, knowledge and experience of the foundation governor with the skills needed on a particular governing body. As part of this process, the Episcopal Vicar will liaise with the Head Teacher or Principal and Chair of Governors of a school with a vacancy *and* a potential skills match. It is likely that the local Parish Priest(s) (or Dean) relating to the particular school(s) concerned will also be involved in these discussions to assist in determining whether the nominee is a suitable match. In this context, the Parish Priest is *not*

being asked to verify the nominee's Catholicity; a reference verifying the nominee's Catholic practice will have been provided by the Parish Priest in which the nominee regularly worships. Clearly, if the Parish Priest of the school is the Priest of the parish in which the nominee worships, he will be required to verify Catholic practice *and* assist in determining the skills match between the nominee and the particular governing body.

You should note that no appointment has any effect until the point where the Episcopal Vicar has formally notified the nominee that the appointment has been made and the nominee has accepted the appointment. Before that point no actions should be taken which give the impression that an appointment has been, or will be, made.

It is important to understand that the appointment of foundation governors is at the absolute discretion of the Episcopal Vicar. Because of the nature of the decision-making process, the Episcopal Vicar will not normally be able to engage in any discussion or correspondence with you, or any other person(s) including the nominee and schools, where a nomination has not resulted in an appointment.