



Catholic Schools and Academies Nomination and Appointment of Foundation Directors and Governors

Guidance for Nominees

Purpose of this Guidance

This guidance has been produced by the Diocese of Northampton to assist those interested in becoming a foundation governor of a Catholic school. This guidance should be read alongside the Nomination Form and application pack. If nominees have questions, they should contact the Diocesan Education Service on 01604 953364.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide an overview of the nomination and appointment process, and the eligibility requirements for foundation governorship. This guidance also provides further information and an explanation of the questions/statements in the Nomination Form to assist nominees to complete the form.

All appointments are made by the diocese and individuals are not able to influence the appointment process. All appointments are made by on the basis of identified skills gaps on particular governing bodies and skills attributable to individual nominees that will enable them to fill those identifiable gaps and only the diocese is able to identify the gaps that need to be filled and determine which nominees should be appointed to fill those gaps.

Requirement for skills based governing bodies

Governing bodies 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 responsible for the appointment of governors must be satisfied that each particular nominee has the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school(s) as well as being a fit and proper person to carry out those duties.

In relation to foundation governors, it is the responsibility of the Ordinary¹ to determine whether a potential foundation governor (or indeed an existing foundation governor) has the necessary skills and commitment to Catholic education, and this judgement will be assisted by the references that you provide during the nomination process.

¹ The term 'Ordinary' means the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf. In Religious Order schools this responsibility belongs to the relevant Religious Superior. For ease of reference, in this guidance they are collectively referred to as 'the Ordinary' and, where appropriate, this term also includes their respective representative officers.

References and Diocesan Eligibility Criteria

In order to be considered for appointment as a foundation governor in a Catholic school in the diocese, you must be a practising Catholic. Therefore, you must have a reference from a Priest who can verify your Catholic practice. You will need to provide the details of the Priest who can verify your Catholic practice on your Nomination Form and the diocese will request a reference on your behalf.

The Bishop considers a person a 'practising Catholic' if they have been baptised (or have been canonically received into full communion with the Catholic Church) and strive to observe the Church's precept of attending Mass on Sundays and holidays of obligation.

We will ask your parish Priest to confirm to the best of his knowledge, that you are a practising Catholic as defined above, and if he considers you to be suitable for appointment as a governor as evidenced by your faith and religious practice.

Procedure: from Nomination to Appointment

If you think that you might make a good foundation governor, you should nominate yourself for consideration for appointment by the diocese by completing a Nomination Form. You may already have been encouraged to nominate yourself by your Parish Priest, a Head Teacher, a Chair of Governors, Chair of a Board of Directors or someone else in the Catholic community. We ask you to indicate a school or Trust as your first choice, however, this is not an indication of the school to which you might eventually be appointed.

If you are appointed, you will be responsible for preserving and developing the Catholic character of the school and you will be responsible for representing the education policies of the Diocesan Bishop. You will also be required to serve the Catholic community as a whole and to act in a way which promotes Catholic education throughout the diocese, considering not only the interests of the individual school you serve, but also the interests of other schools, and to respond to the needs of the Catholic community as a whole as represented by the Diocesan Bishop.

It is also important to appreciate that serving as a foundation governor requires some time commitment and you must ensure that you will have sufficient time available. You may be asked to visit the school during the day and attend meetings either in person or online. On average an academy governor may require 6-8 hours per month, and slightly more in a voluntary aided school.

You can obtain a Nomination Form from [Become a Foundation Governor | Education Service \(northamptondioceseschools.org\)](https://www.northamptondioceseschools.org/Become-a-Foundation-Governor-Education-Service)

Consideration for appointment is a three stage process:

1. First, the Ordinary determines whether you will make a suitable foundation governor. At this stage your references and any additional diocesan criteria will be taken into account; and
2. Second, if you are considered suitable, pre-appointment checks will be carried out and a decision will be made as to which governing body or bodies your particular skills, knowledge and experience is best matched.
3. You will then receive your Certificate which shows your term dates and a link to our online training materials.

The 'Procedural Flowchart: From Nomination to Appointment as a Foundation Director, Governor or Local Governor', which is a useful aid to understanding the process at a glance, can be found at Appendix A.

It is important for you to understand that the appointment of foundation governors is at the absolute discretion of the Ordinary. Because of the nature of the decision-making process, the Ordinary is unable to engage in any discussion or correspondence with you, or any other person(s) including Parish Priests and schools, where your nomination has not resulted in your appointment.

Nomination Form - Supplementary Notes to Nominees

Nomination Form Section	Guidance Notes to Nominee
Particular schools you are interested to serve	You are asked to state which school/s you would be interested to serve. You should note that the diocese does not make appointments on the basis of the preferences of nominees but on the skills required.
Diocesan Criteria and Declaration	The Bishop considers a person a 'practising Catholic' if they have been baptised (or have been canonically received into full communion with the Catholic Church) and strive to observe the Church's precept of attending Mass on Sundays and holidays of obligation.
Diocesan Criteria	The diocese would like to know if you are educating your own children in a Catholic school. This may demonstrate your own commitment to and understanding of Catholic education.
Diocesan Criteria	The diocese operates restrictions on appointments at certain schools where individuals are related to, for example, a member of the school's staff, a governor, director or member of the school or a member of the clergy connected to the school. Please note that if you are appointed you will be required to keep the diocese informed of any relevant relationships. For example, if a member of your family is

	appointed as a member of staff at the school where you are a governor you must notify the diocese.
Declaration	<p>The Declaration includes references to some important legal requirements and documents by which you will be bound if you are appointed. Relevant definitions are set out below:</p> <p>(a) 'Canon law' - means the Canon Law of the Catholic Church from time to time in force.</p> <p>(b) 'Trust Deed' – means the Church legal foundational documents under which the school is established, including Canon law, the objects within which the school is provided and other trust provisions regulating the composition of the governing body or the maintenance, regulation and conduct of the school.</p> <p>(c) 'the Religious Education Directory' – means the current document of the Bishops' Conference setting out the content of religious education to be provided in Catholic schools.</p> <p>(d) 'Instrument (and Articles) of Government' or 'Articles of Association' are documents in which important details of the school's particular constitution are set out. A copy of the Instrument (and Articles) of Government or Articles of Association (depending on the type of school) will be provided to you on appointment to a particular school.</p> <p>(e) 'the Ordinary' - means the Diocesan Bishop and all those exercising Ordinary jurisdiction in his name, including, in the case of a vacant see, those persons upon whom the governance of the diocese has devolved in accordance with canon law.</p> <p>If you would like to see any of the documents listed above or if you have any questions about the Declaration, please contact the Diocesan Education Service.</p>
Religious Reference	It is important that you seek permission to name, in the Nomination Form, the priest you are relying on to provide references, prior to submitting your Nomination Form. Please go and speak to him before submitting your form to the diocese.

Appendix A

Procedural Flowchart: From Nomination to Appointment as a Foundation Director or Governor

Potential Foundation Director or Governor is made aware of a suitable vacancy. This could be via school or parish adverts or an approach from the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or Parish Priest.



Potential Foundation Director or Governor considers the requirements of the role and completes and submits their Nomination Form for consideration by the Diocese (note that it may take 6-8 weeks to receive a response from the date of submission of the Nomination Form). The Nomination Form must include the name of the priest supplying your Religious Reference.



Diocese takes up your Religious Reference



Does Nominee satisfy general Diocesan criteria and are their reference is satisfactory? If "no" then the Nomination should not be taken any further and the Nominee should be informed.



Does the Nominee satisfy any specific criteria relevant to the particular school? If the answer to this question is "no" the Nominee is pooled/placed on a list for future deployment. Nominee is informed.



If yes, the Nominee will receive a letter of appointment and certificate from the Bishop confirming their appointment and the Diocese will inform the school or Trust of the new appointment. Appointee receives an Induction Pack, including details of training and will be contacted by the school or Trust for DBS and other checks.