



# Guidance for PCCs and Deaneries Recruitment and Appointment of Foundation Governors in Church of England schools

**School governance is a way for Church members to use their skills and professional experiences to help fulfil the Diocesan Vision 2030, that every Londoner would experience the love of God in Christ.**

## **Appointment of governors by PCCs and Deaneries**

Parochial Church Councils and Deaneries are responsible for appointing governors at local voluntary aided schools and academies. These governors are called *foundation governors*. Details of such appointments, including the number of governors required, are set out in each school's Instrument of Government or Articles of Association.

A *foundation governor* is a person who has the right skills to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school, and who is also appointed for the purpose of securing that:

- the Christian character of the school is preserved and developed, and
- the school is conducted in accordance with its founding documents and trust deed.<sup>1</sup>

All foundation governors serve for a term of four years. They can be reappointed for a further term. It is best practice to appoint for no more than two terms, in line with Charity Commission advice. Governors who want to serve more than two terms should be encouraged to share their expertise and skills with another nearby church school (the LDBS can help to facilitate this).

## **Tips for recruitment of governors**

PCCs and Deaneries take different approaches in the recruitment of new foundation governors. In many cases there is already close liaison with the school and knowledge of governing body strengths and needs.

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<sup>1</sup> *School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012* and *School Governance (Constitution and Federations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014*



For PCCs and Deaneries that are looking to strengthen their recruitment approach, examples of best practice include:

- Clearly define the governor appointment criteria and role, and emphasise the importance of diversity.
- Promote the role of school governors in the wider context of Christian discipleship and the London Diocesan Vision 2030.
- Encourage departing PCC/lay deanery synod members to take up roles in school governance.
- Maintain a list of suitable candidates for school governance, who can be invited to apply when vacancies arise.
- Maintain a register of governor appointments and terms in office, to facilitate advance recruitment.

PCCs may also wish to:

- Dedicate one Sunday per year to celebrate the work of local church schools, to recruit governors, and to encourage and pray for local church school leaders, staff and pupils.
- Use sermons or interviews with existing governors to share their experiences and contribute to recruitment, including through videos that can be posted online.
- Use in-person notices, online or social media adverts and in-church notice boards to advertise and promote the role of school governors. Samples are available in the recruitment pack.
- Partner with other local parishes not linked to schools, to recruit new foundation governors.

Deaneries may also wish to:

- Use Synod meetings, together with online or social media advertising, to promote the role of school governors and the opportunity for every parish church to contribute. Existing governors could share their experiences and contribute to recruitment at a Synod meeting.
- Actively recruit foundation governors from parishes not currently linked to schools.

We have created a recruitment pack for PCCs and Deaneries to adapt for their own use; please see the end of this guidance.

## Tips for appointment of governors

For PCCs and Deaneries that are looking to strengthen their governor appointment processes, examples of best practice include:

- Use an application form for governor candidates and seek impartial references who are not personal friends. Candidates should be asked for a brief description of themselves, including the skills/experiences they would bring to school governance, and how they would support the school's Christian vision and values. PCCs and Deaneries are welcome to adopt the LDBS form and criteria, available [here](#).
- Encourage prospective governors to visit the school and meet with school leaders, including observing a governing board meeting.
- Maintain a register of governor appointments and terms in office. Ensure that the secretary to the PCC/Deanery Synod checks the governor register on a regular basis



to inform recruitment and to advise governors and schools of when terms in office are due to expire.

- Collect and monitor governor diversity data.
- Identify a responsible person to maintain contact with appointed governors (e.g. annually) and encourage them in their role.
- Empower the PCC/Deanery Synod Standing Committee to appoint to fill governor vacancies that arise unexpectedly, to be followed by PCC/Synod confirmation.
- For Deaneries: consider maintaining a pool of already-approved candidates to fill vacancies as they arise.

## What skills are useful in school governance?

Personal qualities:

- Commitment to the Church of England's vision for education
- Commitment to improving outcomes for all pupils
- Willingness to learn and train
- Commitment to Nolan Principles of Public Life
- Communication skills, including being able to discuss sensitive issues tactfully
- Experience of handling confidential information

Vision, strategic planning and holding the headteacher to account:

- Understanding or experience of strategic planning
- Ability to analyse and review complex issues objectively
- Understanding of education policy and regulatory compliance
- Problem-solving skills
- Ability to understand and analyse data (financial, performance)
- Ability to question and analyse
- Experience of being performance managed/ being appraised
- Experience of interviewing others/ appointment process

Useful professional backgrounds include HR, law, healthcare, IT / website design, finance, premises / facilities management, understanding of special educational needs, working or volunteering with young people, community / stakeholder engagement or marketing

## LDBS support for foundation governors

The LDBS provides central governor training to all governors in church schools on topics such as:

- Induction for new governors
- Safeguarding and safer recruitment
- Ofsted and SIAMS inspections
- Headteacher performance management
- Governors' HR responsibilities and panel hearings
- Strategic financial management
- Parental complaints to governors
- Exclusions
- Making a difference for disadvantaged pupils
- Promoting good mental health in schools



Our training offer is here: [Governor Training Courses - London Diocesan Board for Schools \(l dbs.co.uk\)](https://l dbs.co.uk)

*With our thanks to the deaneries of Enfield, St Margaret's and St Marylebone for their contributions of best practice to this guidance.*

LDBS Governance and Admissions  
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## **Recruitment Pack for PCCs and Deaneries**

Contents:

- Adverts for use in services and online
- Questions for governor candidates
- Questions for referees
- Template letters for appointment and end of term in office
- Sample spreadsheet to manage appointments and vacancies

## **Customisable recruitment advert**

You could use this advert:

- As slides to project during services
- On church or deanery social media
- On the church or deanery website
- In printed form as part of pew sheets



\* Please customise with school name and PCC/Deanery details



## Help Us Give Pupils in Our Schools The Best Start in Life!

### Church School Governors:

We are seeking people from a wide range of cultural and professional backgrounds to be governors in Church of England schools

We currently have vacancies for foundation governors at ## school.



“It is wonderful to be able to use my professional experience in a practical outworking of my faith and support the incredible work of our teachers and staff.” *Governor in Enfield*

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“I really enjoy using my strategic and analytical gifts on behalf of pupils and teachers – it’s an expression of my faith to give back in this way, and to see answers to prayer in the life of the school.” *Governor in Hanworth*

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“Being a school governor is a deeply rewarding role. It allows me to combine professional skills with an extension of my faith in supporting children and the adults who care for them.” *Governor in Chiswick*

**[Becoming a Governor - London Diocesan Board for Schools \(l dbs.co.uk\)](http://l dbs.co.uk)**



Or:

## Help us give pupils in our schools the best start in life!

We are seeking people from a wide range of cultural and professional backgrounds to be governors in Church of England schools



We currently have vacancies for foundation governors at ## school.  
For more information on being a school governor, see:  
[Becoming a Governor - London Diocesan Board for Schools \(l dbs.co.uk\)](http://l dbs.co.uk)

## What's it like being a church school governor?

“It is wonderful to be able to use my professional experience in a practical outworking of my faith and support the incredible work of our teachers and staff.” *Governor in Enfield*

“I really enjoy using my strategic and analytical gifts on behalf of pupils and teachers – it’s an expression of my faith to give back in this way, and to see answers to prayer in the life of the school.” *Governor in Hanworth*

“Being a school governor is a deeply rewarding role. It allows me to combine professional skills with an extension of my faith in supporting children and the adults who care for them.” *Governor in Chiswick*



### Questions for prospective governors:

Questions such as these could be part of an application form or set out in an email to prospective governors:

- Please describe your current employment/training/volunteering status
- Why would you like to become a foundation governor in a CE school?
- Please describe the relevant employment/volunteering experience you would bring to your role as a foundation governor
- Foundation governors are tasked with preserving and developing the Christian character of a school. How do you see yourself doing this?
- Please describe your Christian commitment
- What is the name and address of your church?
- Please provide two references who are not your personal friends, and who could answer questions about your suitability to be a foundation governor.
- Please describe the skills and experiences you have that are relevant to the role of foundation governor. These skills could come from your professional or volunteering life.

You may also wish to ask for diversity and equality data, which must be handled anonymously by those who review the application.

### Questions for referees:

- Please describe how you know the candidate and the nature of your relationship with them (e.g. manager at work, clergy at church, volunteering role)
- For how long have you known the candidate?
- Please provide reasons why you believe this candidate would be suitable to act as a Foundation Governor at a C of E school. You may wish to focus on:
  - Their ability to preserve and develop the Christian character of a school
  - Their relevant skills and experience
  - Their ability to provide effective governance and oversight in a school setting
  - Their commitment to children and education



## Template letters for appointment and end of term in office

### (a) Letter to governor upon appointment:

Dear [*name of governor candidate*]

I am pleased to confirm your appointment as a foundation governor to [*insert school name*] on behalf of [*insert name of PCC or Deanery*]. You are appointed to a term of four years. Your term of office starts on [*insert date*] and will finish on [*insert date*], and will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of a DBS check, which will be carried out by the school.

We are delighted that you have taken on this important role. We encourage you to attend training for new governors with the London Diocesan Board for Schools ([Governor Training Courses - London Diocesan Board for Schools \(ldbs.co.uk\)](http://ldbs.co.uk)) or with your school's local authority.

We have sent your name and contact details to [*insert name of the Clerk or Chair*], who will introduce you to the other governors and give you a schedule of meetings.

Yours sincerely,

[*insert name of PCC or Deanery Secretary*]

### (b) Letter to school upon appointment:

Dear [*insert name of Clerk or Chair*]

I am pleased to confirm that we have appointed [*insert new governor name*] as a foundation governor on behalf of [*insert name of PCC or Deanery*]. Their term in office starts on [*insert date*] and will finish on [*insert date*].

I will correspond again six months before the term in office is due to lapse, regarding reappointment.

Yours sincerely,

[*insert name of PCC or Deanery Secretary*]

### (a) Letter to governor regarding reappointment, to be sent three months prior to the end of term in office:

Dear [*name of governor candidate*]

Thank you for serving as a foundation governor on behalf of [*insert name of PCC or Deanery*] at [*insert school name*]. I am writing to inform you that your term in office as a foundation governor is due to expire on [*date*].

If you would like to be reappointed for a further term, and if the Headteacher and Chair of Governors are in agreement, then please advise accordingly.

Yours sincerely,





[insert name of PCC or Deanery Secretary]

**(b) Letter to school regarding reappointment, to be sent three months prior to the end of term in office:**

Dear [insert name of Clerk or Chair]

I am writing to inform you that [insert governor's name]'s term in office as a foundation governor on behalf of [insert name of PCC or Deanery] is due to expire on [date].

If you would like us to reappoint them? for a further term, and if they are in agreement, please advise accordingly. Please also provide confirmation from the Headteacher and Chair of Governors that they agree. I will notify you of reappointment in due course.

Yours sincerely,

[insert name of PCC or Deanery Secretary]



## Sample table / spreadsheet to manage appointments and vacancies

\* to be used by PCC or Deanery Synod secretary

School name	School contact details	Number of governor appointments	Names of appointed governors	Governor's contact details	Term start date	End date	References completed	1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> term?	Confirmation letter sent?

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