

Advice Note For Incumbents Of Multi-Parish Benefices With More Than One Church School

In almost all circumstances an incumbent is ex-officio a foundation governor of any Church school in their benefice. This is a significant and integral part of the ministry of a parish priest and our expectation is therefore that where there is a Church school in a benefice the incumbent will fulfil this role.

However we recognise that it is not good practice for any one individual to be a governor at more than one (or just possibly two) school(s) and this note therefore provides guidance for such circumstances.

First you will need to decide which school(s) in the benefice you would wish to be a governor for. This will require a judgement on where your presence can be best used. So it might be for example if at one of the schools the Christian distinctiveness and church-school partnership needs strengthening you might decide to be a governor there, or it may be that one school is in an Ofsted category or facing other challenges and you should therefore be a governor there. It is certainly worth taking the advice of the Education Department who will know the local context well.

It will be important in this process to explain to those school(s) and to their headteacher(s) where you have decided not to be a governor that while you cannot be a governor the church remains committed to the schools and that:

1. A substitute ex-officio governor will be appointed (see below), and
2. You, with the parish, will ensure that while not a governor you will do all you can to enable a good partnership with the school and that you will remain a visible presence in the school through leading and enabling others to lead collective worship, pastoral care and generally maintaining good contact with the school

Having come to a decision you must contact the principal advisor for governance at the Education Department at College Green in Gloucester (contact details below) requesting the appointment of a **substitute ex-officio foundation governor**. The responsibility for agreeing to this appointment rests with the archdeacon but the principal advisor will manage this on your behalf.

It will help very much if you, in consultation with the local PCC, can make a recommendation for who this substitute governor should be. In particular they should be someone who has the skills and experience to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school and as a foundation governor are committed to securing and developing the school's Christian character and maintaining close links with the local church. It will be important also in doing this to speak with the headteacher and chair of the governors to establish if there are any particular skills gaps on the governing body that you may be able to help fill.

It will also be essential that your substitute governor agrees to keep you informed of any particular needs or issues at the school, especially those that might impact its Christian character, and that a mechanism for good communication is agreed.

Once everyone is content the nomination is submitted via a completed foundation governor application form with a covering note from you to the Diocesan principal advisor for governance, who is then responsible for liaising with the relevant archdeacon for the school to secure agreement, and issue an appointment letter. Substitute ex-officio foundation governors are given a four-year term of office to enable the situation to be kept under review.

Once an appointment has been made there should be a conversation that brings you together with the headteacher and the new governor to explore how they will fulfil the role.

You may take back your role as ex-officio foundation governor at any point by informing the clerk to governors and principal advisor for governance in writing. The substitute would then step aside.

If you would like to explore the possibility of nominating a substitute ex-officio foundation governor or have any questions, please contact the Diocesan principal advisor for governance, Roland Roberts (rroberts@glosdioc.org.uk).

+Robert

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