**Diocese of Leeds – Vicariate for Education** 

**Offer to Serve the Church as a Foundation Governor**

**Guidance for Nominees**

Thank you for your interest in serving as a Foundation Governor at a Catholic school or college in the Diocese of Leeds.

Because of our Baptism, all Catholics are called to serve the Church’s mission. So lack of experience is not a bar to appointment; all that is required is a wish to serve the mission of the Church in this particular way. Training will be provided for Foundation Governors by the Vicariate for Education and it is expected that each Foundation Governor will attend induction training and at least one session of diocesan training per academic year to keep up to date with relevant changes within education and governance.

The ministry of a Foundation Governor is a carrying out of your Catholic vocation by collaborating with the Diocesan Bishop in the great work of Catholic education therefore you must be a practising and committed Catholic, in communion with the Church.

Foundation Governors are appointed by the Bishop (where there is no Diocesan Bishop and the See is vacant, the Diocesan Administrator has the role of the Bishop with respect to governor appointments) and form the majority of the governing body. They have a legal duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of diocesan schools and to ensure that the school is conducted in accordance with the diocesan trust deed. This includes:

* being familiar with, and supportive of, the policies and procedures of the diocese;
* representing those policies to the governing body;
* attending appropriate diocesan training – at least one session per year;
* considering not only the interests of the individual school or college, but the interests of other schools and colleges and of Catholic education throughout the diocese;
* responding to the needs of the Catholic community as a whole as represented by the Bishop.

All those appointed as a Foundation Governor are required to sign an undertaking to this effect.

Appointments are entirely at the discretion of the Bishop or his delegate. In reaching a decision about your appointment the Bishop or his delegate will consider, amongst other things, the need to have a balanced range of governors on each governing body, both in terms of particular skills and in terms of their overall representation of the Catholic community. The Bishop or his delegate may consult whoever he feels appropriate in order to reach a decision. The decision is his alone and there is no right of appeal. Offers of appointment are normally made for a term of office of four years.

The office of school governor is an exempt position in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders act and is a regulated position under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000. Therefore all criminal convictions (including ‘spent’ convictions) must be disclosed. Providing false information on this form will result in any appointment being terminated.

To be eligible for appointment, you must not be disqualified by law from being a governor, and you must fulfil the diocesan criteria (see below), both generally and specifically with respect to any particular school or college where you are being considered for appointment. Many of the questions on the form are designed to check whether you are eligible for appointment.

**Diocesan Criteria for Appointment as a Foundation Governor**

In order to be appointed or re-appointed as a Foundation Governor in the diocese, the following norms apply.

1. To become or remain a Foundation Governor, a person must be and remain:
* A practising Catholic
* Providing education for his or her children, if of school age, in a Catholic school or college (unless exceptional circumstances apply)
* Able to give priority of attendance at meetings of the governing body to ensure representation of the Bishop
* Attend appropriate diocesan training – at least one session per year
1. To become or remain a Foundation Governor, a person must not be disqualified from becoming or remaining a governor in accordance with:
* The current School Government Regulations (or the college’s Instrument of Government)
* The Charities Act
* The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
1. In respect of the school or college for which a person is or is to be a Foundation Governor, he or she must not at any time be:
* Related to any member of the school or college staff, teaching or non-teaching
* Related to any governor whether elected, appointed, or ex-official of the school or college
* Employed, teaching or non-teaching at the school or college
1. Applications will not normally be approved from those over the age of 75 at the date of appointment. Serving Foundation governors will not normally be reappointed at the end of their term of office beyond the age of 75.

**Termination of Office**

If criterion 2 ceases to apply during the term of office of a governor, the term of office comes to an end automatically by operation of law.

Should criteria 1 or 3 cease to apply to a Foundation Governor during his or her tenure of office, the governor would be expected to offer his or her resignation to the Bishop or his delegate and this may be asked for.

**Term of Office**

The term of office for a Foundation Governor is four years. At the end of the term an individual can be re-appointed to serve a further term (subject to completing the relevant paperwork and continuing to meet the eligibility criteria). A governor would not normally be reappointed after serving the maximum of three terms of office on the same Governing Body/Academy Council.

**Safer Recruitment of Foundation Governors**

Foundation Governor appointments are subject to safer recruitment protocols therefore two references will be obtained prior to appointment. We cannot accept references from family, relatives, parish priest or members of your diocesan/religious safeguarding team.

To be eligible for appointment you must, when requested, agree to a DBS check being undertaken and must be willing to freely give the information needed. Any refusal would result in immediate removal from the governing body.

If you wish to know more about being a Foundation Governor before filling in this form, please contact **Vicariate for Education 0113 2618034 or visit our website at** [**www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/education**](http://www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk/education)