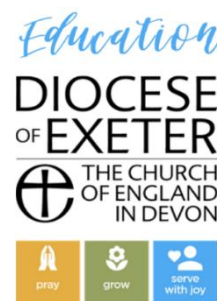


Exeter Diocesan Board of Education Committee (EDBE) Policy on the Appointment of Foundation Governors in Church of England Voluntary Aided (VA) and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools, and Federations.



To enable all, through the love of God in Jesus Christ, to 'live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10b)

Nurture vision-inspired education; **Nourish** personal and spiritual growth; **Enable** connected communities that **flourish**

Rationale for this Policy

This policy explains the process by which foundation governors are appointed to Church of England VA, VC schools and federations within the Diocese of Exeter. **This policy is to be implemented from 1st August 2026.**

The Role of Foundation Governors

The inclusion of foundation governors on the governing boards of both VA and VC church schools and federations is one of the distinguishing characteristics of church school education. Foundation governors represent the historic link with the original church establishment (the 'founding' establishment, hence the term 'foundation') of the school. As such, they are the custodians of its distinctive Christian ethos.

In most ways, foundation governors have the same objectives as other governors. Along with their fellow governors, they are entrusted with responsibility for the core roles of governors, set out in the Department for Education's 'Governance Handbook' namely:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

In addition, as representatives of the church's role in the school, foundation governors must:

- fully support, cherish, preserve and develop the distinctive Christian ethos of the school, ensuring that the school has a distinctive Christian vision and values which lead to effective practice and outcomes
- preserve and strengthen the links between church, school and diocese
- take an active role in the school's self-evaluations of progress against the 'Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools' (SIAMS) schedule
- monitor the collective worship and religious education at the school, ensuring its impact is evaluated
- monitor that the distinctive Christian ethos of the school is encouraged and supported throughout its local community and is reflected in its policies, protocols, curriculum and activities
- ensure that their own attitudes and behaviour in relation to the school reflect its distinctive Christian ethos
- inform the EDBE when the school leader's post becomes vacant and, in partnership with the Chair of Governors, invite a representative of the Diocesan Board of Education to advise, support and attend the appointment procedure

The Appointment of Foundation Governors within Church of England VA, VC Schools and federations

The number of foundation governors which serve a school or federation is specified in the 'instrument of government'. When a foundation governor vacancy arises the Chair of Governors, with the clerk, must:

- inform the EDBE and ensure that a recruitment and appointment process is underway to fill the vacancy
- send a copy of the resignation letter to the EDBE and the date the governor will finish their term of office
- ensure that there is a clear understanding of the skills required on the governing board (following a skills audit as appropriate)

The governing board may nominate prospective candidates for the vacancy by providing Exeter Diocesan Board of Education (EDBE) with a candidate profile and contact details. The parish church incumbent or PCC (parochial church council) where there a stand-alone VA or VC school is located should be consulted. Where a governing board serves a federation, there should be liaison with the incumbents or PCC in all areas where a church school is located.

All nominees will need to complete the appropriate foundation governor nomination form and return this to EDBE. If there are more candidates with appropriate references than there are vacancies, the EDBE will consider the skills and experience of each candidate against the skills audit provided by the school.

EDBE will make the final decision over whether to approve the nomination and appoint, but will liaise with the Chair of Governors as part of this process. A welcome letter will be issued to the new or renewing foundation governor upon their approval by EDBE, explaining their appointment. A copy will be sent to the clerk to governors. A copy should be retained by the clerk for your school / federation records. The appointment will depend upon the completion of a satisfactory enhanced DBS check and declarations and adherence to the applicable Code of Conduct – this must be progressed by the school / federation and any concerns raised with the Diocesan Education Team. It is a requirement that the foundation governor attends EDBE Church School Governance Induction training within twelve months of appointment. Governors re-appointed are expected to attend refresher training.

Criteria for Foundation Governors

The EDBE asks schools, in liaison with parish incumbents / PCCs to consider and nominate candidates who have the skills required to fulfil the role effectively and are able to be described as one of the following:

- I am an active communicant member of the Church of England and commit to and uphold the DBE vision.
- I am regular worshipper in an Anglican Church and commit to and uphold the DBE vision.
- I am a regular worshipper in a Christian denomination (other than the Church of England) and commit to and uphold the DBE vision.
- None of the above, but I consider myself a Christian and will commit to and uphold the DBE vision.

On each governing body, the intention is for there to be foundation governors who are active in their faith.

A reference from the relevant church leader must be provided by everyone putting their name forward for consideration as a foundation governor. It is expected that any nominee will either be known by the incumbent, or will meet with them or a Diocesan Education Team officer to discuss the requirements of the role. It is important that the incumbent / PCC work with the school / federation to ensure that the makeup of the governing board includes sufficient foundation representation with the necessary skills and commitment.

The following should be noted:

- School staff cannot be appointed as Foundation Governors for the school in which they work
- Spouses and partners should not be appointed to the same governance board but can be considered for a neighbouring school if there are vacancies
- Governors should not be appointed to more than two governance boards at any one time

- Governors should consider for themselves whether they continue to have good perspective around a school / federation to enable them to both support and hold leaders to account if being re-appointed for more than two terms, or whether they could usefully bring experience to a new governing board.
- The Chair of Governors, in consultation with the headteacher and/or governance clerk, should review the contributions governors have made and consider whether their skills meet the needs of the school before any request for re-appointment is made. Automatic re-appointment must not be assumed.

Foundation Governors will not be considered for re-appointment after 4 years if the foundation governor induction or refresher training has not been completed.

Governors seeking re-appointment must do so at least one month in advance of their term finishing. If a governance term has expired, the EDBE will not backdate the appointment and a new application will be required.

Ex-Officio Foundation Governor

All stand-alone church schools have an ex officio foundation governor position on their governing board which is reserved for the incumbent of the parish. This is confirmed by the 'instrument of government' of the school. This document will specify the parish concerned. Where the board serves several schools within a federation, the incumbent to serve as the ex-officio governor should be agreed between all eligible. Where more than one wishes to serve the Archdeacon will decide who should take this role. The ex officio foundation governor remains a governor of the school or federation for as long as he/she is in post as the incumbent or chooses not to take up the role.

It is the role of the Archdeacon to appoint a substitute foundation governor if the incumbent chooses not to take up the role or there is a vacancy in the parish. The EDBE therefore requires incumbents, who, for any reason, do not feel able to take up the ex officio post on a school / federation governing board, to inform the Archdeacon and the EDBE so that the Archdeacon can seek to appoint a suitable person in place of the incumbent. Enhanced DBS checks are applicable to ex-officio incumbent foundation governors in the same way as to all other governors.

Policy implemented:	Policy to be reviewed:	Policy approved:
1 st April 2024	Autumn 2026	SOGG: 10 th January 2024 EDBE: 13 th March 2024
1 st August 2026 <i>(Minor changes and the addition of bullet point - Chair to review contributions of governor before request for re-appointment)</i>	Autumn 2028	EDBE: 2 nd July 2026