



York Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) – Guidance on who can be a foundation governor

This guidance is intended to answer some of the common questions asked about who can become a foundation governor.

<p>Church links <i>Q: Does a foundation governor need to be linked to the local Church of England church?</i></p>	<p>In general, foundation governors will have a link with the local Church of England church. They might serve on the Parochial Church Council, lead/support worship or other church activities or be a regular attender at worship.</p> <p>Whilst the DBE would hope to see foundation governors actively involved in their local Anglican/Christian Church communities, the DBE recognises that this will not be possible in all cases and that there are individuals who don't fit this profile who make excellent foundation governors.</p> <p>In all cases, prior to making an appointment, there are certain confirmations that will need to be given and which should be tested out in the discussions between the individual, the school and the recommending body. This includes confirmation that the individual is committed to upholding the school's Christian ethos and ensuring that the Christian character of the school is secured, preserved and developed.</p> <p>The DBE would ask recommending bodies to be cognisant of the profile of existing foundation governors when putting forward recommendations of those without a link to the local Church and wherever possible to ensure that a majority of serving foundation governors have such a link.</p>
<p>Staff members <i>Q: Can staff members be appointed as foundation governors?</i></p>	<p>Regulations place some restrictions on the number of the school's staff who can be on governing bodies. In the context of co-opted governors, it is not possible to appoint a member of the school's staff as a co-opted governor if the number of co-opted governors who are members of the school's staff, counted together with the headteacher and elected staff governor, would take the number of the school's staff to more than a third of the total membership of the governing body.</p> <p>Whilst these restrictions do not apply to foundation governors, it is unclear why this is not the case, as the policy considerations would appear to be the same. Adding members of the school's staff as governors in categories other than headteacher ex officio and staff governor can set up a wide range of potential conflicts of interest, as well as an imbalance of representation and skills on the board. It can also have an impact on the fair distribution of governor workload, as members of the school's staff who are also governors are restricted from carrying out a number of governor roles. (Staff who are governors cannot be Chair/Vice Chair of Governors or chair a committee. They can't take place in headteacher pay and performance review, nor in certain panels such as exclusions or complaints where there might be a conflict of interest.) As such, we would discourage members of the school's becoming governors other than in staff appointed/headteacher positions, particularly where this would lead to greater than a third of governors being members of the school's staff. We would ask schools and the recommending bodies to work together to ensure that recommendations for appointment of members of the school's staff are only made in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>This is to be contrasted with the position where a member of staff from another school is being recommended for appointment. We have a number of instances where this occurs across the Diocese and feedback received demonstrates the benefits of this for both the school and the individual's professional development.</p>
<p>Parents <i>Q: Can parents of children at the school be appointed as foundation governors?</i></p>	<p>There is no bar on a parent becoming a foundation governor, and parents can be invaluable in giving a unique perspective from their insight of being a parent. However, it has to be recognised that there are potential conflicts of interests and other challenges associated with having too many parents on a governing body.</p> <p>As such, the DBE encourages schools to keep the balance of parents on the governing body under review and to work with recommending bodies to manage the balance.</p>