



Protocol for the Appointment of Local Academy Councillors

When a local academy councillor vacancy arises or it looks like a vacancy may soon arise, a discussion will take place between the ex-officio academy councillor (usually the parish priest or someone else nominated by the Archdeacon), the Head Teacher and the Chair of the Academy Council to identify whether it is a PCC nominated vacancy (where the scheme of delegation provides for PCC nomination) or a DBE nomination and also to generally discuss any possible candidates who may have the suitable skills and qualities to fulfil the role of foundation academy councillor to fill any skills gaps on the Academy Council.

If the vacancy is a **PCC vacancy** the ex-officio should discuss with the PCC and seek to identify candidates with the relevant skills. As part of this process the ex-officio will keep the Chair of the Academy Council informed of progress and if the Chair of the Academy Council suggests a suitable candidate who is unknown to the PCC the PCC will be given an opportunity to meet that candidate in order to satisfy themselves as to whether they are prepared to appoint them.

If the vacancy is a **DBE vacancy** the ex-officio will still wish to discuss with the PCC and seek to identify candidates with the relevant skills. Again, the Chair of the Academy Council should be kept informed of progress. If the Chair of the Academy Council suggests a candidate he/she should discuss this with the ex-officio in order that the ex-officio can satisfy him/herself that the candidate is a suitable local academy councillor before completion of the relevant forms.

When having the above discussions, the attached document 'Role of local academy councillor' should be carefully considered to ensure any potential candidate meets the requirements of the role. This document should also be shared with the potential academy councillor so they understand the role they will be committing to.

Once an agreement has been reached on who should be put forward for the vacancy, a local academy councillor nomination form should be completed together with a skills audit form. The new governor should complete part A, the Chair should complete part B and **the PCC or ex-officio should complete part C**. In addition, if the new academy councillor is a PCC nomination a copy of the PCC minute confirming this should be sent with the form and part C (referring to PCC approval) completed.

The form should then be submitted either to either Liane Atkin or Suzanne Keenan at the Diocese by email or by post

The nomination then needs to be confirmed by the Diocesan Education Board (either at the Board Meeting or by Chairs Action) before being submitted to the Trust board for approval and it is only when this has been confirmed to you by the Trust that the appointment is official.

For re-nominations of existing academy councillors' new forms will not need to be completed (unless the academy councillors is changing category (for example from PCC to DBE) but it is important to note that being nominated again is not an automatic right and: -

- If the nomination is a PCC nomination the Diocese will need a copy of the minutes from the PCC meeting and an email/note from the ex-officio agreeing to the appointment.
- If the re-nomination is a DBE nomination the Diocese will need confirmation from the ex-officio confirming they and the academy councillor are happy to be nominated again with details of how the academy councillor fits into the academy council skill set





Role of 'foundation' Local Academy Councillors

The inclusion of Local Academy Councillors nominated by the diocese (either by the Diocesan Education Board, the PCC or in some cases as a charitable trust linked to the school) is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a Church academy within a MAT. The Local Academy Councillors represent the historic link with the original establishment of the school and its distinctive religious ethos.

In most ways Local Academy Councillors are the same as other academy councillors and the Diocesan Board of Education wants to ensure its Local Academy Councillors bring valuable skills to the running of the school which is why completion of a skills audit is required. All academy councillors are entrusted by the Trust board with various responsibilities as set out in the scheme of delegation which should be provided to the academy councillor at the start of their term. Their duties can cover monitoring (in line with the Scheme of Delegation) at school level the curriculum, finance, personnel and premises to ensure that the school functions efficiently.

Most Foundation academy councillors are nominated by either the Diocesan Education Board or the Parochial Church Council (PCC). This is in recognition of the fact that the PCC is the voice of the Church in the locality and the Diocesan Education Board has responsibility for formulating policies which affect all Church schools in the diocese. The exact composition of a school's academy council is determined by the Scheme of Delegation agreed by the Trust Board. Local Academy Councillors usually serve a four-year term of office which may be renewable.

In previously Voluntary Aided schools Foundation Academy Councillors will usually form the majority of academy councillors. This reflects the requirement that these schools should provide Christian religious education and worship in accordance with the school's original Trust Deed.

Local Academy Councillors will have a particular interest in ensuring the continuation of the character and ethos of the school. The Church's interest in education stems from a philosophy that education is not just about acquiring knowledge which will enable children to earn a living in a competitive world. It begins from a position that this is God's world and everything in it has value. Religious education is important, but it is not the only subject which reflects spiritual values. The whole curriculum is given value by being considered in this way. To quote Archbishop William Temple – Education is about fullness of life.

Local Academy Councillors should ensure that all people in a school are valued. Church schools do not have a monopoly on caring, but in the Church school community no one, regardless of role, should be undervalued. Particular attention needs to be given to the admission criteria with regard to special needs policies to ensure that the school is reflecting God's love for the whole world. Management policies need to be looked at in this light. Relationships between academy councillors and staff are very important in this context.

For Christians, worshipping together is very important. Because of the nature of their Trust Deeds, Church schools should provide worship which is in accordance with the custom and practice of the Church of England. You cannot make anyone worship, but it seems reasonable to expose children to a variety of forms of worship in a Church school. The aim should be not to produce confirmation candidates or servers for the local church, but to enrich the life of the school and church community.

In previously Aided schools, a diocesan RE syllabus is used. Whether the RE teaching is cross-curricular or separate, Local Academy Councillors can give a lead in seeking to ensure that RE has equal resources of time and money (5% timetable for Aided Schools) and that links with the Church at a local level within the community are preserved and developed.

