



CLIFTON DIOCESE



A Guide for Clerks to Governors

February 2021



A FUTURE
FULL OF HOPE
CLIFTON DIOCESE

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Dear Clerk,

Welcome to our 'Guide for Clerks to Governors' for those Clerking in a Catholic School in the Clifton Diocese. Whilst many of the duties of the Clerk to Governors are the same as any other school, there are some significant differences and extra responsibilities for a Clerk at a Catholic school. We have produced this booklet to outline these differences and responsibilities and to highlight some suggested areas of good practice.

We hope that this information is helpful. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Bill McEntee
Governance Officer

1. The Clifton Diocese Schools & Colleges Department

The Clifton Catholic Diocese covers the local authorities of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire

As at September 2020, there are 53 primary schools, 7 secondary schools, 1 Sixth Form College, 2 special schools and 5 independent schools across the Diocese. 16 of the schools have single academy status but there are currently no Multi Academy Trusts. Two schools have established a formal federation with one governing body, covering both schools.

The Church sees schools as an important part its mission. The Bishop of each diocese has extensive obligations and rights in relation to Catholic schooling in order to ensure the Catholic ethos and character of the schools within his diocese. The Bishop in this diocese, Bishop Declan, carries out these obligations and rights through the Schools and Colleges Department.

The Schools and Colleges Department is responsible for offering training as well as support to all of our schools regardless of status or phase. The Department also liaises with the Local Authorities (LA) across the diocese, the Regional Schools Commissioner, OfSTED and the Catholic Education Service (CES) based in London.

The Department is based in:

Alexander House, 160 Pennywell Road, Bristol, BS5 0TX Tel: 0117 9025599

and is made up of the following members:

Director of Schools and Colleges: Colleen Collett	colleen.collett@cliftondiocese.com
Religious Education Lead: Louise White	louise.white@cliftondiocese.com
Schools Partnership Officer: Paul Kehoe	paul.kehoe@cliftondiocese.com
Department Officer: Jenny Fitzgerald	jenny.fitzgerald@cliftondiocese.com
Office Administrator: Graham Tiley	graham.tiley@cliftondiocese.com
Governance Officer: Bill McEntee	bill.mcentee@cliftondiocese.com

The Department aims to support the schools of the Diocese through:

- o providing quality information, training, advice and guidance to school staff and governors
- o working with schools to develop policies and services
- o maintaining effective working relationships with other dioceses, the CES and LAs
- o helping schools to recruit and retain senior staff
- o helping schools to monitor and develop their religious education provision
- o supporting newly appointed heads by induction and mentoring
- o providing a "Section 48" school inspection service
- o encouraging productive collaboration between schools, parishes and the diocese
- o appointing and training Foundation Governors.

2. The Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School

A school's Catholic character is witnessed in all facets of its life and there is no separation into 'secular' and 'religious'. The experience of learning across all subjects is a search for God's truth in the whole of His creation. For the school to be truly Catholic, this vision must be shared by all concerned with its work.

At the heart of the Catholic school is the belief in the human person, called by God into being and offered the fullness of life. (*cf John 10:10*). The school community shares its belief in God, the creator of all, visible and incarnate in Christ, and in the Spirit, abiding in the school. Pope Benedict, in his address to Teachers and Religious in 2010 said that the school should be "*first and foremost ... a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth.*"¹

The task of education requires of Catholic schools, a sincere, ongoing engagement between faith and learning, including a critique of what is taught, a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life; the first is reached by integrating all the different aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught, in the light of the Gospel; the second in the growth of the virtues characteristic of the Christian.²

Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of the Catholic School

Foundation Governors are charged with the responsibility of preserving and developing the religious character of the school on behalf of the Bishop, but all governors share in this responsibility because it is the ethos of the school. All have a duty to act in a way consistent with the School's ethos and religious character.

Governors should work with the Headteacher, staff, pupils and parents in ensuring that their policies reflect this. Admissions, behaviour, sex and relationship education, curriculum and personnel matters are areas which require particular consideration. The school's mission should be expressed in a statement of aims and objectives that makes clear to all in the school community how the school will live out its mission on a daily basis.

At all Catholic schools, the governing body (not the Local Authority) is responsible for the allocation of places at the school.

The Common Good in Education

Governing bodies should bear in mind the Church's social teaching as set out in *The Common Good in Education* (CES 1997). They should pay particular attention to the commitment of their responsibility towards those who are poor and marginalised, disadvantaged and who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

It is crucial for all in schools to ensure that those who do not succeed academically are valued by the community as a whole, to celebrate the fact that those who have not achieved high grades may well have tried as hard – if not harder – than those who have. (*The Common Good in Education*).

Governor Code of Conduct:

¹ Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to Teachers and Religious*, Twickenham, 17 September 2010

² Congregation for Catholic Education *The Catholic School, Congregation for Catholic Education*, Rome 1977, n.37

Governors should adopt a code of conduct which sets out the purpose of their governing body and describes the appropriate relationship between the individual governors, the whole governing body and the leadership team of the school or academy.

The CES has published three “CES model Codes of Conduct” which are available online on the CES website

<http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/governance/item/1003629-codes-of-conduct-for-governors-and-directors>

They are for:

- Governors of a Governing Body of a Voluntary Aided School, Federation or Sixth Form College
- Directors of a Single Academy Trust Company or a Multi Academy Trust Company
- Governors of a Local Governing Body within a Multi Academy Trust Company.

The appropriate CES model Code of Conduct should be read and understood and thoroughly discussed so that the whole governing body or board has ownership of it, and, once it has been adopted, the governors should be asked to sign it. Clerks should ensure this is done on an annual basis, ideally at the beginning of the first meeting in the autumn term.

3. What does a Governing Body look like?

At Voluntary Aided schools (but not at academies), governing bodies are established and constituted under their ‘Instrument of Government’. Academies do not have an Instrument of Government but have ‘Articles of Association’.

Instrument of Government (schools only)

The Instrument of Government specifies that the school is to be conducted as a Catholic school in accordance with canon law, the teachings of the Church and its Trust Deed and it sets out how the governing body is constituted and establishes it as a corporate body.

Articles of Association (academies only)

These also confirm that the school will be conducted in accordance with the principles, practices and tenets of the Catholic Church and canon law and show how the governing body (board of directors) is to be constituted. In addition, the Articles set out the operational procedures of the school and governing body and must be posted on the school website.

Categories of governors

As legally, an academy is a company, governors of academies are sometimes referred to as ‘Directors’ because they are directors of the company. The DfE often refer to them as ‘Trustees’ but this should not be confused with the Trustees of the Diocese.

There are various types of governors, these are:

- foundation governors;
- parent governors;
- staff governors;
- local authority governors (not in an Academy);
- the Headteacher/Principal.
- co-opted governors
- governors appointed under Article 51 (academies only).

Academies may also be able to have Additional or Further Governors in certain specific circumstances.

The precise composition of a school's governing body will vary from one school to another. The term of office for all governor is four years, although they can resign at any time.

Foundation Governors

For Catholic schools, foundation governors are appointed by the Bishop (and/or the Religious or Charitable Order they are in the trusteeship of). Whilst all governors must ensure that the school preserves its particular religious character and that it is conducted in accordance with the terms of the school's trust deed, foundation governors have particular responsibility for this. The Bishop requires foundation governors to be practising Catholics.

Any foundation governor appointed to a governing body for the first time since 1 September 2018, will (unless there are exceptional circumstances), normally be appointed for a maximum of three terms of office on the same governing body.

In order to ensure that the Catholic ethos of the school is preserved, foundation governors must outnumber the sum total of all other categories of governors by two (except for St Brendan's Sixth Form College where they must be in a majority of three). For example, a governing body comprising of twelve governors, will include seven foundation governors and a total of five governors from all the other categories combined.

Foundation governors have particular responsibilities, and agree to ensure:

- i) that the religious character of the school is preserved and developed;
- ii) that the school is conducted in accordance with its Trust Deed
- iii) that the religious education and the sex and relationship education curriculum is in accordance with the Bishop's policy for the Diocese
- iv) all the Bishop's directives are implemented.

It is therefore important for foundation governors to:

- i) know and implement the Bishop's policies on education;
- ii) understand and promote the distinctive nature of Catholic education;
- iii) secure the long-term future of Catholic education.

Foundation governors agree to ensure that the following key duties are carried out:

- a) appointing practising Catholics to the Reserved Posts of Executive Head, Headteacher, Head of school, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Head, Head of Religious Education, Chaplain, and, where possible, appointing Catholic teachers in order to promote and maintain the Catholic ethos of the school (and using CES model contracts for all posts) <http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/recruitment-process>
- b) admitting children in accordance with the aims of the Diocesan Trust Deed (as interpreted by the Bishop) by giving priority to Catholic children;
- c) that the whole curriculum, including religious education, "is taught in the light of gospel values and actively promotes the spiritual and moral development of the pupils"; and
- d) attending appropriate governor training in order to keep abreast of developments that are in line with national, diocesan and school priorities.

Further helpful information about the role of the foundation governor, is provided in our 'A Guide for Foundation Governors' on the Governance page of the Schools and Colleges Department website <https://schools.cliftdiocese.com/governance> under the 'Diocesan Guidance' tab.

Parent Governors

Parent governors are elected by parents of children at the school and must have a child attending the school at the time of appointment (although for academies parents of former pupils or parents of a school aged child may serve depending on the criteria specified within the Articles of Association). They are required to provide a 'parents view' to the governing body – they are not representatives of the interests of parents of pupils currently attending the school. A parent governor can continue to serve as a governor until the end of their four-year term of office, even if their child leaves the school during this period.

Staff Governors

Staff governors are teachers or other members of staff and are elected by the staff at the school. They are required to provide a 'staff view' to the governing body – they are not representatives of the interests of staff. Teacher or staff governors cannot become Chair or Vice-Chair of the GB or Chair of a Committee.

Local Authority Governors (not academies)

Local Authority governors are nominated by the local authority but appointed by the governing body. The local authority can nominate any eligible person as a local authority governor, but it is for the governing body to decide whether their nominee has the skills to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school and meets any other eligibility criteria they have set.

Co-opted Governors

These are governors who are co-opted on to the Governing Body because of their specific skills but may only be appointed if specified within the schools Instrument of Government or an academy's Articles of Association. They have full voting rights.

Headteacher Governor

A Headteacher will be a full member of the governing body of their school unless he/she chooses not to be a governor. If a Headteacher decides not to be a governor, he/she is still entitled to attend all meetings of the governing body to present information but would not have any voting rights. The special position of the Headteacher governor is important if a good relationship is to be maintained between the head and the governing body.

Governors appointed under Article 51 (academies only)

The governing body may appoint the number of governors specified in Article 51 of their Articles of Association but only if the Foundation Governors remain in a majority of two, at all times.

Additional Governor (academies only)

Additional governors may be appointed by the Secretary of State, in specific circumstances, for example if an academy's Ofsted rating has significantly dropped or the school is deemed to be in a vulnerable position.

Associate Member (known as 'Committee Member' at academies)

Associate/Committee members are **not** governors. They may be appointed by the governing body for a specific period to assist them because of particular skills/expertise they may have. They are appointed to serve on one or more governing body committee. They may also attend

full governing body meetings but do not have a vote in governing body decisions. However, they may be given the right to vote on decisions made by committees to which they are appointed.



4. What is the role of the Clerk to Governors?

Specifically, as Clerk, you have an important part to play in making sure that the governing body's work is well organised. The Clerk offers advice to the governing body, particularly on matters involving the law and procedures to be followed at meetings. In some schools the role of the Clerk is undertaken by the school secretary, administrator, bursar or other member of the school staff, whilst in others the Clerk may be independent of the school. Where the clerk is a current member of staff it is important to note that whilst the Headteacher is the line manager for school staff, the Chair of Governors is the line manager for the Clerk to Governors to avoid any conflicts of interests

The purpose of the Clerk's role is to:

- Provide advice to the governing body on governance, constitutional and procedural matters.
- Provide effective administrative support to the governing body and its committees.
- Ensure the governing body is properly constituted.
- Manage information effectively in accordance with legal requirements.
- Liaise with the Diocese regarding the appointment of Foundation Governors.
- Be responsible for producing the minutes of the Full Governing Body.

The Clerk is the 'constitutional conscience' of the governing body and s/he should be accountable to the governing body. It is therefore important that there is a clear separation of functions and lines of reporting. The main responsibility for managing the relationship between the Clerk and the governing body should rest with the chair of governors. Governing bodies need to make sure that the Clerk receives adequate remuneration, is annually appraised, and receives appropriate training/support.

Clerks are required to keep a record of all training undertaken by themselves and governors and submit it to the Diocese at the end of each school year.

The positions of Executive Head, Head Teacher, Head of school, Deputy-Head, Assistant Head, Head of RE, or Chaplain are 'Reserved Posts' that **must** be filled by practising Catholics. If any of the people in these posts resigns, the Clerk must ensure that the diocese is informed and is involved in all stages of the recruitment process.

Clerks should be aware of some of the funding available to Catholic schools:

i) Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)

DFC is a formula-based grant that is usually available to all schools. It can be rolled forward, but it must be spent within three years from when it was allocated. DFC can support all types of capital work as long as it is governing body responsibility. There is a minimum project cost of £2,000 but no maximum project cost.

ii) Schools Capital Fund (SCF) (formerly known as Local Authority Co-ordinated VA Programme LCVAP)

This is formulaic funding which is administered by the Diocese. There are no limits on the size of a project that can be supported by SCF, nor any restrictions on the type of capital project, as long as the capital work is the governing body's liability. Grant is normally paid at 90% with 10% Governors' liability. SCF funding should normally be spent in the year it is allocated.

Where governors are planning a building project, the Clerk **must** ensure that they seek the prior approval of the diocese.

The Diocese mainly communicates with governors and Clerks via its regular newsletters. These must be distributed to all governors and included on the agenda of governor meetings.

To support Clerks in their important role, the Diocese provides a training session, that covers the requirements of Clerking a Catholic school. All our Clerks are expected to attend this session every three years (see section 10 below for how to access course details). Clerks are also encouraged to undertake any other training that may be available, such as provided by a Local Authority.

5. The Foundation Governor Appointment Process

There are 3 x different nomination forms for candidates to complete to apply to be a foundation governor that Clerks need to be aware of:

- **New** Nomination form – for those applying to join a governing body for the first time
- **Renewing** Governor Nomination form – for those applying for another term of office on the same governing body
- **Clergy** Nomination form – for Priests and Deacons to complete (for either 'first-time' or 'renewing governor' appointments)

As Clerk, you must ensure that whenever a foundation governor resigns before the end of their term of office, that you (not the governor) complete a governor resignation form and submit it to the Diocese. All candidates should preferably apply via our **online** application service <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/governance> under the 'Recruitment' tab (paper copies are available upon request for those not online)

For any renewing governor who has not been reappointed for another term of office before their current term of office has expired, Clerks must ensure that they do not take part in any governor activities, nor attend any meetings, until they receive confirmation that the Bishop has reappointed them.

For **schools** - whenever a new governor (of any category, including the Headteacher and any Associate Members) is appointed, you must issue them with a copy of the school's Instrument of Government.

For **academies** – whenever a new governor (of any category, including the Headteacher and any Committee Member) is appointed, you should issue them with a copy of the school's 'Articles of Association'. Each new governor must complete a form of 'Undertaking' to confirm they will abide by and fulfil the expectations required in an agreement referred to as the "Members Agreement", which governs the conduct of the academy. For an Undertaking form, see the Governance page of the Schools & Colleges Department website <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/governance> under the 'Recruitment' tab.

All governor appointments are subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) certificate being issued and also a Section 128 clearance check. It is not usually the responsibility of the Clerk to undertake the DBS and 128 checks. However, it is part of the Clerk's role to ensure that a governing body is legally compliant in this regard and so must have an up-to-date record of the DBS and 128 status of all governors. As the Bishop is ultimately legally responsible for ensuring DBS governor compliance, for every foundation governor appointment, we require Clerks to confirm that DBS and 128 clearance has been approved, shortly after each appointment and it is a **legal requirement** that it is applied for within 21 days of appointment. Clerks must **not** let governors start their term of office, unless the Diocese has confirmed, that they may do so. The letter of appointment will specify if DBS and 128 clearance is still outstanding. Clerks must liaise with whoever undertakes the DBS and 128 checks at the school to ensure that there is no delay in the Diocese being informed when clearance has been confirmed. To ensure you always use the latest version of the DBS protocol, see the Governance page of the Schools & Colleges Department website <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/governance> under the 'Recruitment' tab.

6. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors

The Members Agreement of all our **academies**, requires that governors appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair from amongst the **Foundation**. This is not compulsory for our maintained **schools**. The Chair and Vice-Chair are generally elected annually at the first meeting of the governing body in each academic year but may have a longer term of office decided by the governing body.

The Chair plays a pivotal role in the effectiveness of the governing body. This will include meeting regularly with the Headteacher. The Chair leads the governing body but does not have any power to act on the governing body's behalf without instructions, except in certain cases of urgency. It is important that the Chair develops a good working relationship with the Clerk and they should hold regular meetings.

It is the Clerk's responsibility to make sure that elections for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair are compliant with the school's agreed arrangements. Whenever there is a change of Chair of Governors, you must inform the Diocese immediately, so that our records are up to date and that correspondence is sent to the correct person.

For new Chairs of an **academy only**, it is a legal requirement that they also complete a 'Deed of Adherence' form to confirm that they will comply with the original 'Members Agreement' signed by the Chair when the school became an academy. For a Deed of Adherence form, see the Governance page of the Schools & Colleges Department website <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/governance> under the 'Recruitment' tab.

7. Governor Meetings

Meetings of the governors will be attended by the Clerk to the governing body. Broadly, the Clerk convenes the governing body meetings and keeps a record of the important matters discussed and decisions taken during the meeting (the “minutes”). Minutes will be examined by OfSTED, so it is vital that accurate minutes are kept. The Clerk ensures that each governor receives proper notice of forthcoming meetings and makes sure that the work of the governing body is well organised, as well as maintaining a register of governors. Legislation requires that there must be a minimum of three meetings per school year.

To help ensure confidentiality and avoid any breaches of GDPR, Clerks and governors must **not** use personal email account. Only school-based email accounts should be used. Any documents containing confidential or sensitive information, must be sent securely, for example, encrypted with a password

Clerks must ensure that, in line with legislation, only those actually present at a meeting vote on any issue. Being ‘actually present’ can include video or telephone conferencing (if agreed by the governing body), but an exchange of emails is not valid.

The Clerk is not a governor of the school and is **not** eligible either to participate directly in a debate or to vote. Usually, the cost of the Clerk is met from the school’s budget.

Meetings and Agendas:

- It is expected that meetings will begin and end with a prayer.
- A full meeting of the governing body must be held at least once per term.
- Any member of the governing body may ask the Chair to place an item on the agenda (provided adequate notice is given).
- The notice of meeting should include an Agenda, draft minutes of the last meeting, any reports and any other papers to be considered are distributed (securely) at least seven days before the meeting.

Attendance at Meetings:

Governors needing to offer apologies for a meeting should provide these to the Chair or the Clerk in advance of the meeting with the reason for their absence noted. Apologies should not be automatically accepted. Unless the reasons for non-attendance are confidential, they should be considered by those at the meeting, who must decide if they will accept the apologies or not. This is important because constant failure to attend meetings without the approval of governors, can lead to a governor being removed from the governing body and attendance is looked at by OfSTED to assess effective governance.

The quorum for a meeting of the governing body is one half (rounded up to a whole number) of the governing body membership, excluding any vacancies. The quorum for any committee meeting and for any vote must be three governors who are members of the committee, or more, as determined by the committee.

The Employment Rights Act 1996 gives employees the right to have time off to perform official duties, as long as ‘time off’ is reasonable in the particular circumstances. If a governor is in

employment, they should clarify with their employer the conditions for releasing employees from work and whether this would be with or without pay.

Confidentiality:

Governing body meetings are not open to the public. Visitors may attend by invitation but may be asked to leave if a confidential item is discussed.

It is the chair's role to manage the confidentiality of the work of the governors where this is appropriate. The minutes of any part of the meeting that are confidential should be kept separate. In the main, confidential items will be those where the privacy of an individual needs to be respected.

The governing body must ensure that the agenda, approved draft minutes, signed minutes of meetings and any report or paper considered should be available for inspection at the school by any interested person. However, any item deemed confidential by the governing body, or items relating to a named pupil or member of staff would not be included.

Minutes are usually in two parts and the confidential items are in the second part. When the confidential part of the agenda is reached all non-governors, apart from the Clerk and the Headteacher (if not a governor) should be asked to leave the meeting (as determined by the governing body). It is important however, to note that even the confidential part of the minutes must be made available if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, although information will have to be blanked out to meet requirements in the Data Protection Act.

Committees:

Some governing bodies do not establish s-committees, and so the full governing body meet more frequently to consider all governor matters. However, most governing bodies operate with Committees. Generally, there are two types of committees - working committees dealing with matters such as finance, personnel, curriculum etc. - and statutory/standing committees that only meet when required relating to matters such as staff discipline and appeals, pupil discipline and complaints. It is only compulsory for the statutory committees to have an appointed Clerk. A governing body may, however, appoint a Clerk to any other committee established by it if they wish. Even if a Clerk is not appointed, an accurate record of the meeting should still be made.

Admissions:

- It's a legal requirement that all applications are not dealt with by just one person but are considered by the FGB or a committee of it

NB Only governors, not staff, must be on the Committee. Heads can be on the Committee, but it is strongly recommended that Staff Governors and Clergy are not, as it can cause a conflict of interests

- The governors are the admissions authority and must not delegate the decision to offer or refuse places and/or the task of ranking applications to a member of staff or the LA, although, for new intake applications the LA will inform the parents in writing on behalf of the governors of their decision.

- Governors must meet to consider **all** applications and the reasons provided by applicants, otherwise may cause maladministration.

- Applications must **not** be automatically refused if a year group and/or class is full.

Governors must only refuse admission if they consider that the child's admission would *'cause*

prejudice to the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources’ – if not, a place should be offered.

- The reasons for offering or refusing admission must always be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The minutes may be required by an appeals panel.
- In the event of a refusal of a place, parents, and in some circumstances, children, have the right to appeal against the admission authority’s governor’s decision. When informing the applicant of the refusal, the admission authority governing body must set out the reasons for the decision, that there is a right of appeal and the process for hearing such appeals.

8. Clifton Catholic Diocesan Education Foundation (CCDEF) also known as The Diocesan Academy Project Board

CCDEF is a company established by the diocesan trustees in response to the establishment of single academies in 2011 and protect the Bishop’s canonical rights. It has now also become known as the Diocesan Academy Project Board. Its prime responsibility is to oversee the establishment of the diocesan strategy to now establish Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and to hold academies, either as single academies or MATs, to account. All applications to move towards academisation, must be submitted to and approved by this board.

The Board is chaired by the Bishop and its membership comprises of:

- Lyn Murray - Chief Operating Officer
- Michael Thompson - Educational Trustee
- Michele Morgan - Educational Trustee
- Margaret Young - Legal Trustee
- Colleen Collett - Director of Schools and Colleges
- Paul Kehoe – School Partnership Officer
- Fr. Adrian Porter – independent panel member (Director of Jesuit Institute)

9. Schools & Colleges Committee

This is a committee that has been set up to assist the Schools and Colleges Department in fulfilling its role. It enables its stakeholders - schools & colleges to contribute to and critique the Department. The Committee is chaired by the Bishop. It has a representative from all partnership groups along with a Bishops’ representative for education, finance and mission, 6th form, special schools and independent schools. The Chief Operating Officer, Director of Schools and Colleges and Schools Partnership Officer also sit on the Committee.

Sitting alongside this are three working groups: Mission and Ethos, Standards and Quality and Resources. Each has partnership representation. Feedback from these committees should be a standing item on a governing body’s agenda.

Sitting beneath this are three working groups: Mission and Ethos, Standards and Quality and Resources. Each has partnership representation. Feedback from these committees should be a standing item on a governing body’s agenda.

10. Insurance

- **Schools**

Buildings and liability insurances for the school and staff is to be sought by the school. Many schools buy this service from their Local Authority. Governors should also purchase Governors' indemnity insurance. This may be available through the LA or you may have to purchase it separately through another service provider.

The Diocese has arranged for the Catholic Church Insurance Association (CCIA) as an option to provide buildings insurance for all diocesan academies. Academies must take out building's insurance, preferably through the CCIA and the insurance should be in the joint names of the Academy and the Clifton Diocese. Please contact CCIA for further information, including information regarding the procurement position in relation to buildings insurance for diocesan academies.

- **Academies**

Academies can purchase liability insurances from Zurich, who provide the buildings insurance through CCIA, meaning that all the academy's insurances can be placed with the same insurer. Alternatively, academies can purchase their liability insurances elsewhere. Purchasing as a package ensures that there are no "gaps" in insurance or disputes between insurance companies as to which is the relevant policy. Academies can also arrange their liability policies through the Government Scheme, by opting into the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA). The payment for this will be deducted from the GAG funding monthly.

In purchasing the liability insurances, academies are responsible for ensuring that they comply with the relevant procurement requirements. Funding for academy insurance will form part of the general annual grant (GAG).

11. Working in Partnership

The 68 schools and colleges of the Diocese are divided into seven school partnership groups, with between seven to twelve schools within each group. Every school has signed a Memorandum of Agreement to work collaboratively with the other schools within their partnership group. This applies to staff, governors and Clerks.

The partnership model was created to enhance the collaborative work being undertaken by schools to help and support each other. The partnerships have been in place for a number of years and are the basis on which future plans for Clifton Diocese are based as we move forward to closer collaboration and partnership including Hard Federation, and the formation of Multi Academy Trusts. The Diocesan strategy is that all schools should either be part of a MAT or ready to enter on by September 2021. All governing bodies are required to have undertaken a due diligence task. Documentation is available on the Schools and Colleges website at:

Each Partnership group currently has a strategic partnership board which guides the schools and looks at how further collaboration can be achieved. Each partnership also has three committees:

- Mission and Ethos (including Governance);
- Standards & Quality
- Resources. The chair of each reports to the partnership strategic board.

The Clerk to Governors post is a unique one within every school and so Clerks can feel isolated. We recommend that Clerks establish contact with their fellow partnership Clerks, to create a network of supportive working relationships, the sharing of experience and good practice is an effective way for Clerks to support each other in their important role.

Schools, in conjunction with other partnership schools, may wish to convert to academy status and form a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). A MAT can only be formed with the agreement of the Diocesan Trustees, so the Diocese must be informed when a MAT is being planned. The point of contact is paul.kehoe@cliftdiocese.com. The Diocesan Academy Project Board has asked each school to undertake due diligence and to establish as to when they may wish to enter the MAT or how they will ensure they are academy ready by 2021.

The seven partnership groups and the schools included within each of them, are included in the Appendix below.



12. Training and support

The Schools and Colleges annual training programme for Governors, Clerks and Teachers is published in our CPD Booklet of Courses, available from our website <https://schools.cliftdiocese.com/courses>. Please ensure that governors are aware of the booklet. It is an expectation that all Clerks and governors undertake regular training, provided by both the Diocese and other providers, such as Local Authorities. Details of how to book places on Diocesan courses are included with the Booklet of Courses.

13. Useful Resources

The Schools and Colleges web page has various legal documents and guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Diocese, that Clerks and Governors should be aware of, to help them in their roles.

For governance matters, visit <https://schools.cliftdiocese.com/governance> under the 'DfE & CES' tab for:

- 1) “The constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools” - this statutory guidance is for maintained schools but is also useful for academies. Issued by the DfE in 2017.
- 2) “Governance handbook” - issued by the DfE in 2019.
- 3) “Clerking Competency Framework” - issued by the DfE in 2017.
- 4) “The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations” – Advice issued by the DfE in 2014 for maintained schools (but also useful for academies).
- 5) “Statutory policies for schools”: Advice on the policies and documents that governing bodies are required to have by law. Issued by the DfE in 2014.

For admissions/appeals matters, visit <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/governance> under the ‘**Admissions**’ tab for:

- 6) “Guidance on School Admissions” – issued annually by the Schools and Colleges Department.
- 7) “School Admissions Code” – issued by the DfE in 2014.
- 8) “School Admissions Appeals Code” – issued by the DfE in 2012.
The Catholic Education Service website <http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/> is a valuable resource for schools.

Appendix

School Partnership Groups

Emmaus

[St Augustine’s College, Trowbridge](#)
[St Joseph’s, Salisbury](#)
 St Edmund’s, Calne
 St John’s, Trowbridge
 St Joseph’s, Devizes
 St. Louis, Frome
 St. George’s, Warminster
 St Osmund’s, Salisbury

Aquinas

[St Brendan’s Sixth Form College, Bristol](#)
[St Bernadette’s Secondary, Bristol](#)
 St Bernadette’s, Bristol
 Christ the King, Bristol
 St Pius X, Bristol
 Holy Cross, Bristol
 St Joseph’s, Bristol
 St Patrick’s, Bristol
 St Nicholas of Tolentine, Bristol

Christ The King, Amesbury
Wardour, Tisbury
[St Edward's, Romsey \(Special\)](#)

Gloucestershire

[St Peter's High, Gloucester](#)
St Peter's, Gloucester
The Rosary, Stroud
St Joseph's, Nympsfield
St Gregory the Great, Cheltenham
St Thomas More, Cheltenham
St Marys, Churchdown
St Catharine's, Chipping Camden
[St Rose's, Stroud \(Special\)](#)
[St Edward's Preparatory,
Cheltenham \(Independent\)](#)
[St Edward's Senior,
Cheltenham \(Independent\)](#)

Camino

[St Gregory's College, Bath](#)
St John's, Bath
St Mary's, Bath
St Benedict's, Midsomer Norton
St Patrick's, Corsham
St Mary's, Chippenham
St Augustine's, Downend
Our Lady of Lourdes, Kingswood
St Paul's, Yate
[Downside, Stratton-on-the-Fosse \(Independent\)](#)
[All Hallows, Shepton Mallett \(Independent\)](#)
[Prior Park Senior, Bath \(Independent\)](#)

Newman

[St Bede's College, Bristol](#)
St Bernard's, Bristol
Our Lady of the Rosary, Bristol
SS Peter and Paul, Bristol
St Bonaventure's, Bristol
St Teresa's, Bristol
St Mary's, Bradley Stoke
Holy Family, Patchway
Christ the King, Thornbury
St Francis, Nailsea
St Joseph's, Portishead

Dunstan

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Wincanton
St Gildas, Yeovil
St George's, Taunton
St Joseph's, Bridgwater
Corpus Christi, Weston-super-Mare
St Joseph and St Teresa, Wells
St Joseph's, Burnham-on-Sea

Samuel

[St Joseph's College, Swindon](#)
Holy Cross, Swindon
Holy Rood, Swindon
Holy Family, Swindon
St Mary's, Swindon
St Catherine's, Swindon
St Joseph's, Malmesbury