

**Diocesan protocols for maintained schools and academies within the trusteeship of the Diocese of Shrewsbury setting out the principles for a committed working relationship to underpin the effective running of Catholic maintained schools and academies**

**These Protocols were issued to governing bodies of Diocesan voluntary aided schools and boards of directors of Diocesan academy trust companies, (with an obligation to procure and monitor the compliance of local governing bodies), by the Diocese in September 2024**

**Signed by the Diocesan Schools Commissioner on behalf of**

**Bishop Mark Davies**

We are all called to be good stewards and to safeguard Catholic education for the future. These Diocesan Protocols set out the principles which govern the committed working relationship which must exist between the Diocese and those responsible for running Catholic Schools. Compliance with these Diocesan Protocols ensures the effective running of Catholic Schools on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop for the benefit of pupils, parents, staff and the wider parish community. Compliance with these Diocesan Protocols will also contribute to ensuring the future of Catholic education for future generations.

In particular, this document includes Diocesan Protocols which explain Diocesan requirements and expectations and detail the support the Diocese will provide to those responsible for running Catholic Schools.

Compliance with these Diocesan Protocols will ensure the preservation and development of the Catholic character of Catholic Schools through relationships which are:

• effective;

• respectful;

• pro-active;

• collaborative; and

• productive.

Compliance with these Diocesan Protocols will also ensure that those responsible for running Catholic Schools are doing so in compliance with the relevant governing documents.

In order for authentic and effective Catholic education to be provided, there must be a commitment to the principles of solidarity, (a sense of responsibility on the part of everyone with regard to everyone), and subsidiarity, (the co-ordination of activities locally to support the community locally

It is important that those responsible for Catholic education work together to achieve an effective working relationship for the benefit of all and that everyone commits to the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. All Diocesan Schools are part of the wider Diocesan family of Schools and the expectation is that all those involved in the provision of Catholic education, including School staff, leaders, directors, governors and clergy will work together with the Diocese for the common good and that they will not work in opposition, either to each other, or to the Diocese.

The education mission is central to the Church and those involved in the provision of authentic Catholic education must be inspired by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching on which these Diocesan Protocols are based:

• dignity;

• solidarity;

• the common good;

• the option for the poor;

• peace;

• care for creation; and 2 Principles recorded in ‘The Common Good in Education’ (Bishops’ Conference 1996) P a g e | 5

• the dignity of work and participation.

The Church’s mission in education includes the principle of community cohesion, so you must continue to look outwards and work in partnership with others in the wider community, for the benefit of all children in society. We work most effectively when we work together.

**DIOCESAN OF SHREWSBURY PROTOCOLS**

**1. DIOCESAN PROTOCOLS ON GOVERNANCE**

Key principles:

• To be Catholic, Schools must be controlled by the Catholic Church and be recognised as such by the Diocesan Bishop.

• The Diocesan Bishop is responsible under Canon law for any strategic decisions about Catholic Schools in his Diocese.

• Structural changes, including changes to governance arrangements, require both the consent of the Diocesan Bishop and the Diocesan Trustees.

• The Diocesan Bishop has a duty to ensure that all the foundation directors/governors that are appointed to govern Catholic Schools in his Diocese have the necessary skills to perform the role and the personal commitment and skills required to fulfil their overarching duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the School(s) for which they have responsibility.

• As an integral part of its educational vision, the Catholic Church expects Governing Boards to promote and uphold high standards, including academic standards. This requires effective and strategic governance arrangements.

• The Governing Board must endeavour to operate at a strategic level, leaving the School’s senior leadership responsible and accountable for the operational running of the School.

• All Governors are entitled to receive an appropriate induction, and appropriate and tailored ongoing formation is an entitlement and an expectation for all Governors for the whole of the duration of their appointment. Governors should be aware of the work of Formatio and its strategy.

• The three core strategic functions, of a Governing Board, are to:

o ensure clarity of Catholic vision, ethos and strategic direction;

o hold the appropriate senior leadership to account for the educational performance and Catholic character of the School and its pupils; and for the internal organisation, management and control of the School, including performance management of staff; and

o oversee the financial performance of the School and make sure its money is well spent.

**Diocesan Protocols on Governance:**

**Protocol 1** Governing Boards must ensure that their governance arrangements comply with the law.

**Protocol 2** Governing Boards must preserve and develop the Catholic character of the School(s) at each layer of governance and fulfil the three core strategic functions.

**Protocol 3** Governance and management structures and arrangements must be in line with any Diocesan policy that may be published from time to time.

**Protocol 4** Academy Trust Companies must use both the Model Articles for Catholic Schools and the CES Model Scheme of Delegation, (including the table of roles and responsibilities). Both of these documents may be subject to amendment by the Diocese and the Diocese will provide a version of these documents for use.

**Protocol 5** Governing Boards must use the information, guidance, resources and documentation relating to governance arrangements available on the CES website.

**Protocol 6** Governing Boards must conduct an annual self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for further development. Governing Boards should use the CES model skills audit and the CES model self-evaluation form for this purpose. Governing Boards must also engage with the Diocesan Schools Commissioner, on a regular and ongoing basis.

**Protocol 7** Governing Boards must adhere to Diocesan policy on Governance Statements and should consult the Diocesan Schools Commissioner before adopting the CES Model Governance Statement to ensure compliance with any particular Diocesan policy.

**Protocol 8** Governing Boards must comply with any requirements and directions issued by the Diocesan Schools Commissioner to address areas for improvement (including, in particular, any requirements and directions following a governance review and any request to amend the constitutional documents, including the Instrument of Government and Articles of Association).

**Protocol 9** Governors must complete all Diocesan induction and other training that may be required by the Diocese.

**Protocol 10** Governing Boards must pay the diocesan contribution as stipulated from time to time by the Diocesan Bishop.

**Protocol 11** Governing Boards, as the employer of School staff, must ensure that CES model application forms are used, that CES model employment contracts are issued and that CES model workplace policies are adopted.

**Protocol 12** Governors must ensure that they make themselves available to attend meetings or that they send apologies when appropriate. Governors must ensure that they read all meeting papers in advance of meetings, that they declare any conflicts of interest and that they do not vote where there is a conflict (for example, in the appointment of family members). Governors must ensure that they respect the confidentiality of Governing Board discussions.

**Protocol 13** Governing Boards must ensure that all Governors sign a code of conduct at the beginning of each academic year. Governing Boards should use the CES Model code of conduct for this purpose.

**Protocol 14** Governors must use their position on the Governing Board to implement the Diocesan Bishop’s strategic plans for Catholic Schools in his Diocese.

**Protocol 15** Governing Boards must provide the Diocese with any information requested, in the format required, and in a timely fashion, in order to ensure that the Diocese is able to perform its functions. Governing Boards will not appoint non-foundation Governors (including local authority Governors) with the exception of elected Governors, (i.e. parent and staff), without the prior approval of the Diocese.

**Protocol 16** Governing Boards must ensure that only foundation Governors are elected to the role of Chair and Vice-Chair.

**Protocol 17** School staff are not eligible to be appointed as foundation Governors at the School where they are employed.

**Protocol 18** Foundation Governors will only be permitted to serve a maximum of three consecutive four-year terms of office on the same Governing Board.

**Protocol 19** Governors must inform the Diocese, if following their appointment, there are any changes to the information provided as part of the nomination process relating to any personal or family relationships that they have with any employee of the School or any member of the Governing Board.

**Protocol 20** Governors must participate in an appropriate induction which emphasises the distinctive nature of Catholic education.

**Protocol 21** Governors must engage in appropriate and tailored ongoing formation for the whole of the duration of their appointment and the Governing Board must ensure that all Governors participate regularly in such formation for their work in Catholic education.

**Protocol 22** Governors must ensure that they are familiar with the work of Formatio and its strategy (www.formatio.org.uk).