

Guidance for Prospective Foundation Governors and Directors

Thank you for your interest in being appointed by the Diocesan Bishop as a foundation governor/director of a Catholic school / Catholic Education Trust in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

To be considered for appointment you must meet the following criteria:

1. Be a practising Catholic¹
2. Be aged between 18 and 75

Volunteering as a foundation governor/director is an important act of service which aims to strengthen and further the Church's mission. If you are appointed, you will be responsible for preserving and developing the Catholic character of the school and Trust and you will be responsible for representing the education policies of the Diocesan Bishop. You will also be required to serve the Catholic community as a whole and to act in a way which promotes Catholic education throughout the Diocese, considering not only the interests of the individual school or Trust you serve, but also the interests of other schools and Trusts, and to respond to the needs of the Catholic community as a whole as represented by the Diocesan Bishop.

All appointments are made on the basis of identified skills gaps on particular governing body². For this reason, school preferences may not be accommodated, and you may be asked to serve at a neighbouring school or in a different Trust where you could better fill those identified gaps. This judgement will be assisted by the references you provide during the application process.

If you think that you might make a good foundation governor/director, you should nominate yourself for consideration for appointment by the Diocesan Bishop by completing the application form. You may already have been encouraged to nominate yourself by your Parish Priest, a Trust Leader, Headteacher, Chair of a Board of Directors, Chair of Governors or someone else in the Catholic community. The identity of the individual encouraging you to nominate yourself is not an indication of the school or Trust to which you might eventually be appointed.

The information you provide on this form will be stored and used by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle only for the purposes of administering schools/Trusts' governance.³

Please read the following guidance before completing the application form. Should you have any queries, please contact the Department for Education at education@diocesehn.org.uk or 0191 243 3313.

With very best wishes



Deborah Fox
Director of Education

¹ A copy of the Diocesan briefing note on being a practising Catholic can be found here: [Diocesan Briefing Note](#)

² The term governing body also refers to boards of directors and local governing committees.

³ Details of how we process your data, and your rights, are included in the Diocesan Privacy Notice found here: [DHN Privacy Notice](#)

Interpretation

In this guidance, unless the context requires otherwise:

- the term school also refers to academies and sixth-form colleges;
- the term foundation governor(s) also refers to foundation directors and foundation governors appointed to local governing bodies;
- the term governing body also refers to boards of directors and local governing committees.

Purpose of this Guidance

This guidance has been produced by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle to assist those interested in becoming a foundation governor/director of a Catholic school/Trust. This guidance should be read alongside the Application Form provided by the Diocese and any other guidance produced by the Diocese for applicants. If applicants have questions, they should contact the Diocesan Department for Education at education@diocesehn.org.uk.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide an overview of the nomination and appointment process, and the eligibility requirements for foundation governorship/directorship. This guidance also provides further information and an explanation of the questions/statements in the Application Form to assist applicants to complete the form.

All appointments are made by the Ordinary⁴ and individuals are not able to influence the appointment process. All appointments are made on the basis of identified skills gaps on particular governing bodies and skills attributable to individual applicants that will enable them to fill those identifiable gaps. As part of this process, the Ordinary will liaise with the Headteacher/CEO and Chair of Governors/Board of Directors of a Trust to determine which applicants should be appointed to fill those gaps.

Requirement for skills based governing bodies

Governing bodies are required to ensure that they are no bigger than they need to be to have all the skills necessary to carry out their functions. Those responsible for the appointment of governors must be satisfied that each particular applicant has the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school(s)/Trust as well as being a fit and proper person to carry out those duties.

In relation to foundation governors, it is the responsibility of the Ordinary to determine whether a potential foundation governor (or indeed an existing foundation governor) has the necessary skills and commitment to Catholic education, and this judgement will be assisted by the references that you provide during the application process. Prospective foundation directors will also be expected to attend an interview with the Director of Education and/or the Episcopal Vicar for Education which will usually last approximately forty-five minutes. Prospective foundation governors may be asked to attend an interview.

⁴ The term 'Ordinary' means the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf. For ease of reference, in this guidance they are collectively referred to as 'the Ordinary' and, where appropriate, this term also includes their respective representative officers.

References and Diocesan Eligibility Criteria

In order to be considered for appointment as a foundation governor in a Catholic school in the Diocese, you must be a practising Catholic. Therefore, one of your referees must be a priest who can verify your Catholic practice. You will see that the application form requires you to submit contact information of the priest who will be providing the reference. In addition to the requirement to be a practicing Catholic, the Diocese also has specific requirements that you will need to meet, and you will see that these are set out on page one of this document.

If you have any questions, you should contact the Diocesan Department for Education.

Procedure: from Nomination to Appointment

If you think that you might make a good foundation governor, you should nominate yourself for consideration for appointment by the Diocesan Bishop by completing an application form. You may already have been encouraged to nominate yourself by your parish priest, a headteacher, a chair of governors, chair of a board of directors or someone else in the Catholic community. The identity of the individual encouraging you to nominate yourself is not an indication of the school to which you might eventually be appointed.

It is also important to appreciate that serving as a foundation governor requires a substantial time commitment and you must ensure that you will have sufficient time available. If you are unsure as to the time commitment, please speak to Diocesan Department for Education.

You can obtain an application form from our [website](#).

Consideration for appointment is a three-stage process:

1. First, the Ordinary determines whether you will make a suitable foundation governor. At this stage your references and any additional diocesan criteria will be taken into account.
2. Second, if you are considered suitable, a decision will be made as to which governing body or bodies your particular skills, knowledge and experience is best matched. DBS checks will be carried out by relevant Trust/school.
3. Third, prospective directors will be invited for an interview, and prospective governors may be invited for an interview.

The procedural flowcharts for the appointment of directors and governors, which are a useful aid to understanding the process at a glance, can be found at **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**.

It is important for you to understand that the appointment of foundation governors is at the absolute discretion of the Ordinary. Because of the nature of the decision-making process, the Ordinary is unable to engage in any discussion or correspondence with you, or any other person(s) including Parish Priests and schools, where your nomination has not resulted in your appointment.

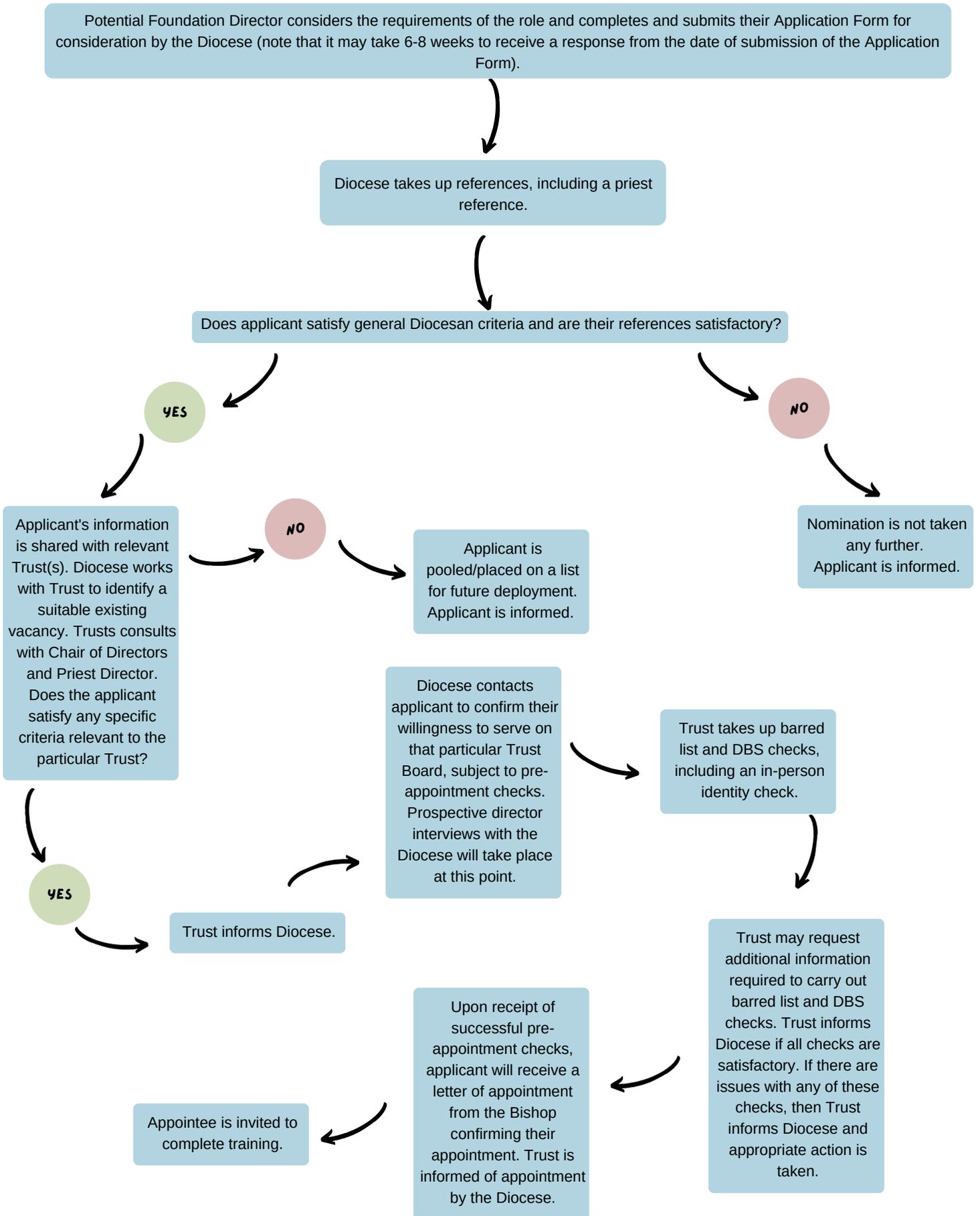
Nomination Form - Supplementary Notes to Nominees

Nomination Form Question Number	Guidance Notes to Nominee
Part 1 – Date of birth	The Diocese does not normally appoint foundation governors where they will be 75 or over at the time of appointment. However, we may consider an applicant aged 75 or over in exceptional circumstances.
Part 1 – Education, professional, vocational or trade qualifications	The Diocese is interested to know your levels of education and any relevant qualifications that may speak to your skills and experience.
Q1, Part 2 - Eligibility criteria and Part 5 (Declaration)	Please review the diocesan guidance on the meaning of ‘practising’ Catholic which you will find here .
Q2, Part 2 - Eligibility criteria	The diocese would like to know if you are educating your own children in a Catholic school. This may demonstrate your own commitment to and understanding of Catholic education, as well as connections to specific schools.
Q3, 4, and 5, Part 2 – Eligibility Criteria	The Diocese operates restrictions on appointments at certain schools where individuals are related to, for example, a member of the school’s staff, a governor, director or member of the school or a member of the clergy connected to the school. Please note that if you are appointed you will be required to keep the Diocese informed of any relevant relationships. For example, if a member of your family is appointed as a member of staff at the school where you are a governor you must notify the Diocese.
Part 3 – Particular schools you are interested to serve	You are asked to state which schools you would be interested to serve and why. You should note that the Diocese does not make appointments on the basis of the preferences of nominees but on the skills required.
Part 5 - (Declaration)	The Declaration includes references to some important legal requirements and documents by which you will be bound if you are appointed. Relevant definitions are set out below:

	<p>(a) 'Canon law' - means the Canon Law of the Catholic Church from time to time in force.</p> <p>(b) 'Trust Deed' – means the Church legal foundational documents under which the school is established, including Canon law, the objects within which the school is provided and other trust provisions regulating the composition of the governing body or the maintenance, regulation and conduct of the school.</p> <p>(c) 'the Curriculum Directory' – means the current document of the Bishops' Conference setting out the content of religious education to be provided in Catholic schools.</p> <p>(d) 'Instrument (and Articles) of Government' or 'Articles of Association' are documents in which important details of the school's particular constitution are set out. A copy of the Instrument (and Articles) of Government or Articles of Association (depending on the type of school) will be provided to you on appointment to a particular school.</p> <p>(e) 'the Ordinary' - means the Diocesan Bishop and all those exercising Ordinary jurisdiction in his name, including, in the case of a vacant see, those persons upon whom the governance of the diocese has devolved in accordance with canon law.</p> <p>If you would like to see any of the documents listed above or if you have any questions about the Declaration, please contact the Diocesan Department for Education.</p>
<p>Part 6 - (Referees)</p>	<p>It is important that you seek permission to name, in the application form, those persons you are relying on to provide references, prior to submitting your application.</p>

APPENDIX A

PROCEDURAL FLOWCHART: FROM NOMINATION TO APPOINTMENT AS A FOUNDATION DIRECTOR



APPENDIX B

PROCEDURAL FLOWCHART: FROM NOMINATION TO APPOINTMENT AS A FOUNDATION GOVERNOR

