



# Foundation Governor Recruitment

## Best Practice Guide

Six key elements are essential for the effective promotion of governance on your website. They are:

- **Well signposted information**
- **Concise material**
- **Plain English**
- **Clear call to action**
- **Easy to respond**
- **Keeping everyone update**

Below we will look in depth at the following points with advice and examples of best practice and sample copy.



The Catholic Education Service has written in-depth guidance for Dioceses and Parish Priests on the nomination and appointment of Foundation Governors that are available on request.

## Well signposted information

Do you have...

- ✓ A 'single click-through' link to governance information on your homepage?
- ✓ A governance tab on your main menu?

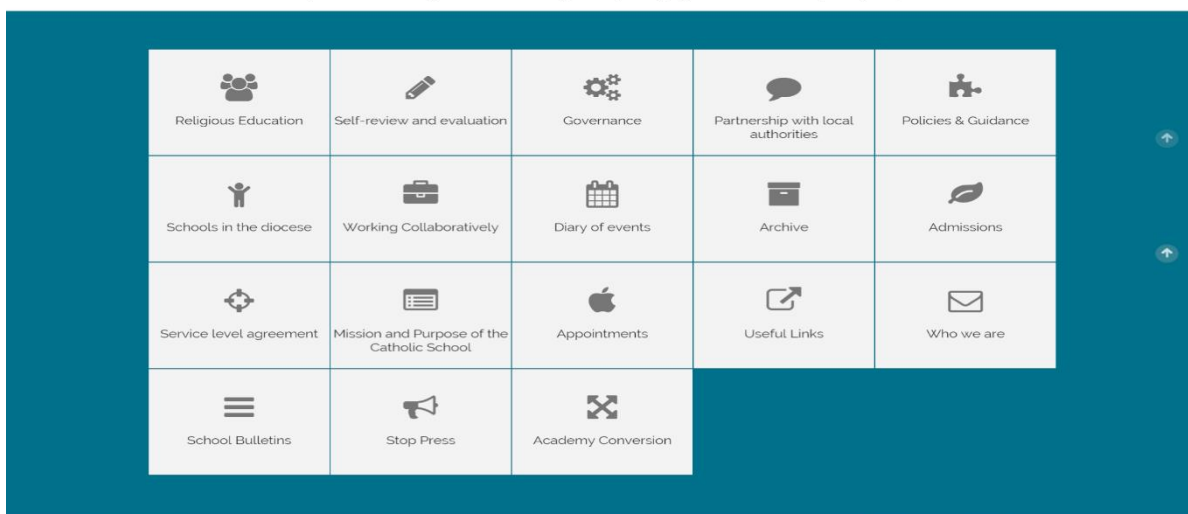
As a general rule of thumb, the most important information on your website should be no more than two 'clicks' away from your homepage.

A 'governance' icon on your homepage or tab on your main menu is the best way of doing this. Below is a screen grab of the Diocese of Portsmouth's Department for School's homepage. As you can see the information is clearly set out with a 'one-click' option for governance.



### The Department for Schools

The department operates under the mandate of the bishop and trustees, ensuring schools operate in accord with the diocesan Trust Deed. It promotes the Catholic nature of schools, providing direction and advice on educational matters. It represents the Bishop at senior leadership appointments, advises on the quality and provision of religious education and collective worship and administers the appointment of foundation governors, providing support on canonical, statutory and legal responsibilities.



## Plain English

### Do you have...

- ✓ A plain English overview of what a Foundation Governor is?

Governance is a complex part of school procedure and when talking about it there is a tendency to slip into jargon.

Not everyone is an education expert so keep your language simple and don't assume any prior knowledge on the part of the reader.

Below is a sample copy of a simple overview of foundation governance:

#### **Overview about Foundation Governors**

All schools have a governing body comprising different types of governors, for example parent-governors and teacher-governors etc.

Governing bodies in Catholic schools are made up of Foundation Governors in addition to the other categories, however the Foundation Governors will always form a majority.

The main role of a governing body is to operate at strategic level, ensuring that the Catholic vision and ethos of the school, holding the Headteacher and leadership team to account and overseeing the financial performance of the school.

Foundation Governors are appointed by the local Bishop specifically to preserve and develop the Catholic ethos of the school and represent the Bishop's education policy to the governing body. This is why Foundation Governors will always outnumber other governors.

There is no magic formula about what makes a perfect Foundation Governor, they come from all walks of life and all ages. But it is important that each governing body has a good mix of skills, knowledge and experience.

[Insert diocese name here] manages the process for the appointment of Foundation Governors and provides support to governing bodies in carrying out their responsibilities.

## Concise material

### Do you have...

- ✓ A fact sheet about time commitments and responsibilities?
- ✓ Guidance for potential Foundation Governors about the application process?

Some of the most eligible Foundation Governor candidates are incredibly time-poor. Therefore, information about school governance, foundation governance, and the application process needs to be concise and straight forward.

Success in this area is largely down to the format in which the information is laid out. A 'question and answer' section or a flow chart are good ways to explain complex issues and procedures.

Below is an example of sample question and answer copy

#### **Foundation Governor Factsheet**

##### **Q: Who can become a Foundation Governor?**

A: Any practising Catholic over the age of 18 can become a Foundation Governor. As part of the nomination process you will need to demonstrate your commitment to the Catholic faith as well as being able to articulate what you feel you are able to contribute to the Catholic life of a Catholic school.

##### **Q: How do I prove I'm a practising Catholic?**

A: You will, as part of the nomination process, need to provide contact details for the Priest of the parish or chaplaincy in which you regularly worship in order that the Bishop may take up a reference verifying your Catholic practice.

A practising Catholic is defined as someone who keeps the precepts of the Church, as summarised in the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

##### **Q: I am not a practising Catholic but I would like to become a governor. What do I do?**

A: If you are not a practising Catholic but are interested in becoming a governor at a Catholic school, you are strongly encouraged to contact ([contact@nameofdiocese.co.uk](mailto:contact@nameofdiocese.co.uk))

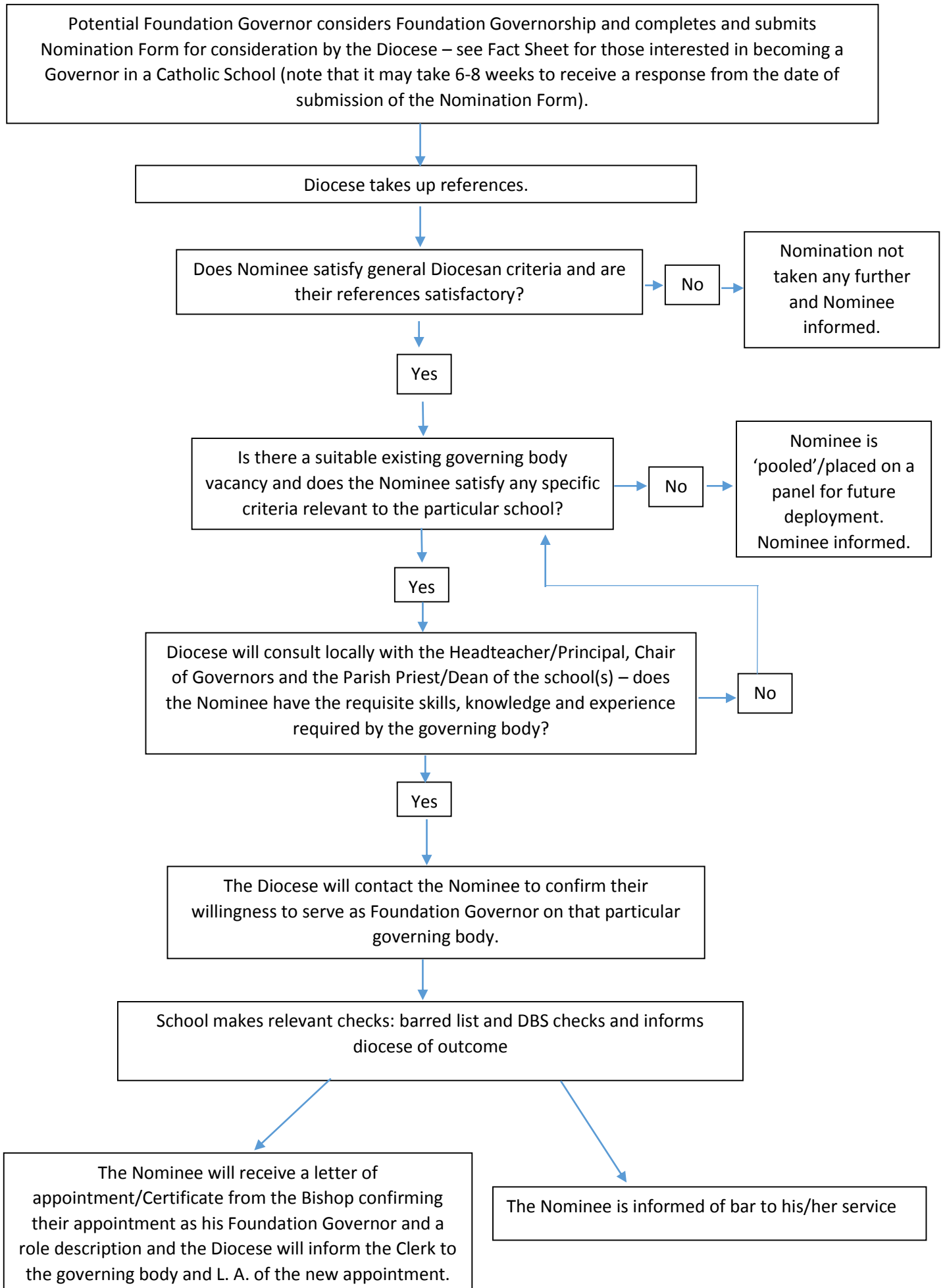
##### **Q: What is the time commitment?**

A: The average Foundation Governor role will take up about 10-12 hours per month. This includes the minimum requirement of attending one full governor meeting per term and serving on at least one committee. You will also be encouraged to attend free training sessions.

##### **Q: What are safeguarding checks?**

A: As a requirement of the appointment process, all governors, regardless of category, will be required to consent to the carrying out of any appropriate checks, including Disclosure and Barring Service checks (previously Criminal Records Bureau Checks), in respect of eligibility/suitability to be appointed as a school governor.

Here is an example of what an application flow chart might look like:



## Clear call to action

Do you have...

- ✓ A clear and compelling call to action on your website?

Very little will come from a well sign posted and clearly set out website if there is not a strong call to action at the end. A call to action basically tells the reader what they should do next and how they go about it. Below are two examples of how this could look.

If you think that you might make a good foundation governor, you should nominate yourself for consideration for appointment. You may already have been encouraged to nominate yourself by your Parish Priest, a Head Teacher, a Chair of Governors or someone else in the Catholic community.

Are you a practising Catholic? Do you care about Catholic education? Can you commit to 10-12 hours a month? Do you have a wide range of skills and experiences?

If the answer to all three of these is yes, download the forms to apply to be a Foundation Governor or contact the Diocese for more information.

## Easy to respond

Do you have...

- ✓ Foundation Governor application/nomination form?
- ✓ Guidance for completing the form?

The easier you make it to respond the more likely potential Foundation Governors will get back in touch with you.

Downloadable PDFs of the application forms, information sheets and guides to filling in application forms should be a must on all governance websites.



The Catholic Education Service has written a sample Foundation Governor Nomination Form and Religious Reference Request which are available from the CES.

Similarly it should be incredibly easy for someone willing to register their interest or request some more information. A hyperlinked email address or a 'let us know' click-through box is a good way of doing this.

Below are best practice examples from the Dioceses of Nottingham, Portsmouth and the Archdiocese of Westminster.

Resource Centre | Contact | Liturgical Calendar | Intranet Sign In | Safeguarding | RSS | Twitter | Facebook | YouTube | LinkedIn

Search

 **Diocese of Westminster**

To have eyes for the good things of the Lord is to live by faith, to see life with the eyes of faith  
Cardinal Vincent Nichols



Home | Vocations | Cardinal | News | Diocese | Schools | Faith | Caritas | Youth

## The Education Service

*The Education Service*

Home > The Education Service > Welcome to the Education Service pages for Governors > Serving the Diocese as a Foundation Governor

### Serving the Diocese as a Foundation Governor

The form for those wishing to offer to serve the Diocese as a Foundation Governor can be downloaded as a PDF file on the right, together with a guide to the appointment process.

**Related Files**

- Form OS: Offer to Serve the Diocese as a Foundation Governor
- The Appointment Process for Foundation Governors

**More stories**

St Anthony's Girls' School Appoints Founding Head Teacher

Education Home ▾

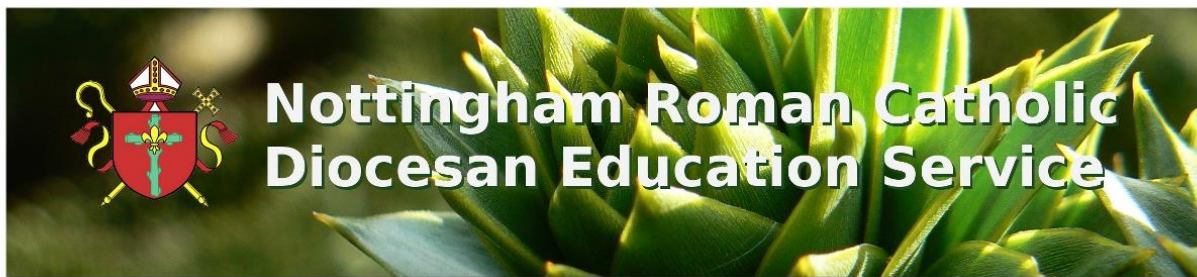
Schools Bulletin: January 2016 ▶

News and Events ▶

For Parents ▶

For Governors ▾

Admissions Guidance



## Governor Appointments: Vacancies for Foundation Governors and Training

### SCHOOL GOVERNORS –VACANCIES FOR FOUNDATION GOVERNORS AND TRAINING

We are looking for practising Catholics who want to support Catholic education by becoming Foundation Governors at our Catholic schools and academies.

Foundation Governors are entrusted by the Bishop with the ministry of school governance to act in recognition of the love of Christ for all members of the school community and one another. They have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education acting as 'critical friends' for the school leadership team and setting the strategic direction of the school.

We presently have opportunities for people to become Foundation Governors in many of our schools and academies and more will become available during 2015. We, therefore, need to locate people who are willing to become Foundation Governors as soon as possible.

Most people find being a governor to be intensely rewarding. It is a joy and a gift to contribute to the ministry of the Church by making our schools successful and to ensure that children are provided with a supportive environment within which they can learn and grow in Christ.

The 'Being a Governor in a Catholic school' factsheet linked to this article provides more information about the role of the Foundation Governor but we are also running a series of introductory two hour early evening training sessions on being a Foundation Governor in a Catholic school for anyone who wants to know more. Provisional details for the training are:

6.30-8.30pm, Tuesday 1st March 2016, Nottingham, venue tbc

6.30-8.30pm, Thursday 28th April 2016, Leicester, venue tbc

6.30-8.30pm, Tuesday 28th June 2016, The Diocesan Centre, Mornington Crescent, Mackworth, Derby

6.30-8.30pm, Thursday 29th September 2016, Glossop, venue tba

6.30-8.30pm, Tuesday 13th December 2016, The Diocesan Centre, Mornington Crescent, Mackworth, Derby

**More dates will be added for later in the year and we are always willing to discuss arranging courses for groups of schools in other parts of the Diocese.**

If you are interested in becoming a Foundation Governor, please complete the 'Self-Nomination' form linked to this page and email it to Julie Sweeney at NRCDES Governor Support [julie.sweeney@nottingham-des.org.uk](mailto:julie.sweeney@nottingham-des.org.uk) and if you could at the same time indicate your availability for attending the introductory training that would help us to firm up the sessions and would be much appreciated.

NRCDES Admissions & Governor Support  
Neil Weightman ([neil.weightman@nottingham-des.org.uk](mailto:neil.weightman@nottingham-des.org.uk) /01332 293833 x204)  
Julie Sweeney ([julie.sweeney@nottingham-des.org.uk](mailto:julie.sweeney@nottingham-des.org.uk) /01332 293833 x202)

#### Attachments:

- [Fact Sheet on becoming a Governor in a Catholic school](#)
- [Guidance for Potential Foundation Governors](#)
- [Self-Nomination Form](#)

## Declaration of pecuniary and personal interests

### Declaration of pecuniary and personal interest

Under the 2012 Governance Regulations all governors and directors of schools, academies or academy trusts must now complete a declaration of pecuniary and personal interest. The attached is a model form which you can use with your governing body which comes with the benefit of some guidance notes.

The Clerk of Governors is required to maintain a register of any interests which should be review annually. A model register of interests is also attached.

Any queries about either form or the guidance can be addressed to: Neil Weightman [neil.weightman@Nottingham-des.org.uk](mailto:neil.weightman@Nottingham-des.org.uk) 01332 293833 ext 204

#### Attachments:

- [Register of interests](#)
- [Declaration of pecuniary interests form](#)

## New Governor Induction Policy

To support our schools and governors we have produced the attached New Governor Induction Policy.

This provides a suggested structure for induction of new governors. It sets out what as a minimum should be covered in the briefing session with the Headteacher, provides a list of essential documents that the school should ensure the governor has access to and provides a checklist for the governor themselves to use through the process. Schools are able to tailor and adapt the policy.

Any questions about the content of the policy or any issues arising should be directed to:



## Good communication

Do you have...

- ✓ Information for governors page on website?
- ✓ Information on courses for Foundation Governors?
- ✓ Governance Newsletters?

Once you have governors signed up it's important you stay in touch with them and keep them up to date about the latest information.

This can be achieved through a clear and easily accessible 'information for governors' page on your website including info on courses and training events.

It is also good practice to have a newsletter which is sent to all governors in the diocese. The Diocese of Portsmouth is a good example of how this is done.

Below is an example of their governance page and you can see examples of their diocesan governance newsletter by clicking [HERE](#).

**PORTSMOUTH CATHOLIC DIOCESE**

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCHOOLS

### Governance

All schools have governing bodies made up of different categories of governors. All Catholic school governing bodies are made up of foundation governors but may also include parent governors, staff governors, the head teacher (or equivalent), local authority governors and co-opted governors.

The main role of the governing body is to operate at a strategic level, leaving the head teacher and senior school leaders responsible and accountable to the governing body for the operational day-to-day running of the school. As such, the three core functions of the governing body are:

1. Ensuring clarity of the Catholic vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the head teacher to account for the educational performance and Catholic character of the school and its pupils; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Foundation governors are specifically appointed by the Bishop to ensure the preservation and development of the school's Catholic character, to ensure that the school is being conducted as a Catholic school, and to represent the Bishop's education policy to the governing body. However, all categories of governor in a Catholic school are required to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school in addition to their other legal duties. Foundation governors always outnumber all other governors by at least two so as to ensure a majority vote where matters of particular Catholic importance arise.

Governors come in all shapes and sizes and there is no magic formula when it comes to putting together a successful governing body. But it is important that each governing body has a good mix of skills, knowledge and experiences.

The Department for Schools manages the process for the appointment of foundation governors, provides support to governing bodies in carrying out their statutory responsibilities and their responsibilities to the Bishop and promotes the development of governors through regular newsletters, briefings and training courses.

- > [Download governor fact sheet \(for those interested in becoming a governor in a Catholic school\)](#)
- > [Download Guidance for Potential Foundation Governors](#)
- > [Download foundation governor advertisement template](#)
- > [Download foundation governor nomination form](#)
- > [Courses for governors](#)
- > [Newsletters](#) - please note that these have now moved to 'School Bulletins'

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