



**Diocese of  
Nottingham**  
Multi Academy Trusts

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**  
*Moving Forward Together*

# Local Governing Body Handbook

Guidance to support the effective operation of local governing bodies in the Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts of the Diocese of Nottingham

2024/25

## Diocesan Prayer for Schools



God our Loving Father,

Look with love and protection upon all of our schools in the Diocese of Nottingham.

Help us to ensure that everyone is helped to:

- Encounter your personal love for them;
- Discover and grow in their personal relationship with your Son, Jesus Christ, as his disciples;
- Be open to the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit in their lives, so that, they may be helped to reach out to others with your love and practical support, especially to the vulnerable and those most in need.

Do not allow us to stray from this vision, with Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, at its centre.

We thank you for all the gifts and talents within our diocesan family of schools.

May our Trusts work closely together for the benefit of our schools and may they grow stronger in their experience of communion and mission within our diocese.

Grant that all we seek to do may always be for the good of the children and young people within our schools.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Lady of Lourdes ... ***pray for us.***

St Ralph Sherwin ... ***pray for us.***

St Thomas Aquinas ... ***pray for us.***



## Welcome from Bishop Patrick McKinney

I am delighted to welcome you to our Local Governing Body Handbook which has been produced specifically to support local governors in their role.

The establishment of our Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts brings with it changes to the way in which our schools are governed with the ultimate responsibility for each Trust resting with the Board of Directors. However, alongside that remains the crucial role of local governing bodies in providing support and challenge to our school leaders over the areas of Catholic Life and academic standards; also acting as my representatives to ensure that the school is conducted as a Catholic school in every respect so that the children within it receive the very best Catholic education possible.

The purpose of this Handbook is to ensure that there is a consistency of approach to all matters relating to governance within our Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts. In this way, each tier of the governance structure will be aware of their specific duties and responsibilities.

Whether you are an experienced governor or a governor taking up the role for the first time, I thank you for your commitment and your generosity in supporting Catholic education in the Diocese of Nottingham.

With my prayers and best wishes,

+ Patrick McKinney

**Right Rev. Patrick McKinney**

Bishop of Nottingham

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## 1. The Diocese of Nottingham

The Diocese of Nottingham was established on 29 September 1850. It comprises the counties of Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Lincoln and Rutland; except the district of Bassetlaw, Nottinghamshire and the area around Chesterfield, Derbyshire (given to create the Diocese of Hallam in 1980).

There are 86 schools in the Diocese of Nottingham; 69 primary, 15 secondary and 2 independent. The diocese has a strong tradition of providing good and outstanding Catholic education to some 30,000 children and young people. The Instrument of Government for diocesan schools states that they are part of the Catholic Church and are to be conducted as Catholic schools in accordance with Canon Law, the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Nottingham. At all times, our schools must serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The three Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts (CMATs) covering the following geographical areas of the Diocese of Nottingham are:



## 2. Catholic Education

Catholic schools offer a unique and distinctive education; they have the teachings of Christ and his Church at the very centre.

***The mission of schools is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful.  
And this occurs through a rich path made up of many ingredients.***

(Pope Francis – Address to Italian School Teachers – 10 May 2014)

The Code of Canon Law defines the purpose of Catholic education:

***Education must pay regard to the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society.***

***Children and young people are therefore to be cared for in such a way that their physical, moral and intellectual talents may develop in a harmonious manner, so that they may attain a greater sense of responsibility and the right use of freedom and be formed to take an active part in social life.***

(Code of Canon Law - 795)

Catholic schools evangelise culture because they address the deepest questions about what it is to be human and live in society. They open pupils' minds to the transcendent dimension of life and the reality of God revealed in Jesus Christ. They teach a holistic understanding of the human person and society in which all are included so that humanity can flourish. The Catholic school enables each pupil to develop their God-given gifts in order to engage in building a better society which is characterised by justice, truth and love.

***Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school.***

(The Catholic School, 1977 - 34)

***Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valuable resource for the evangelisation of culture.***

(Pope Francis - Evangelii Gaudium, 2013 - 134)

The document *Christ at the Centre* cites four reasons why the Church provides Catholic schools:

- To assist in its mission of making Christ known to all people
- To assist parents, who are the primary educators of their children, in the education and religious formation of their children
- To be at the service of the local Church, the diocese, the parish and the Christian home
- To be of service to society

The core principles which underpin Catholic education are further exemplified in a document produced by the Diocese of Leeds in 2008 called, *Schools of Discipleship* and are reproduced below.

- Catholic schools have Christ at their heart
- Catholic schools are distinctive

- Catholic schools have a liturgical, sacramental and spiritual life
- Catholic schools are centres of excellence for Religious Education and the wider curriculum
- Catholic schools are collaborative
- Catholic schools are essential

The Catholic schools in our diocese are rich, diverse communities. In many cases, parents who may not be of the Catholic faith choose to send their children there. It is a great privilege for us to be able to offer this excellent education to all who seek it and to continue to do so in the future.

***Catholic education is not reserved to Catholics only but is open to all those who appreciate its qualified educational project.***

(The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1997 – 16)

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education has produced a number of very informative documents on the distinctiveness of Catholic schools and the philosophy of Catholic education. Please consult the following website:

[www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/index.htm)

The Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service (NRCDES) acts on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham on all matters relating to Catholic education in the Diocese of Nottingham.

**Director of Education:** Peter Giorgio

***For support on governance, please contact:***

Samantha Buller (Governance Manager)  
[samantha.buller@nottingham-des.org.uk](mailto:samantha.buller@nottingham-des.org.uk)

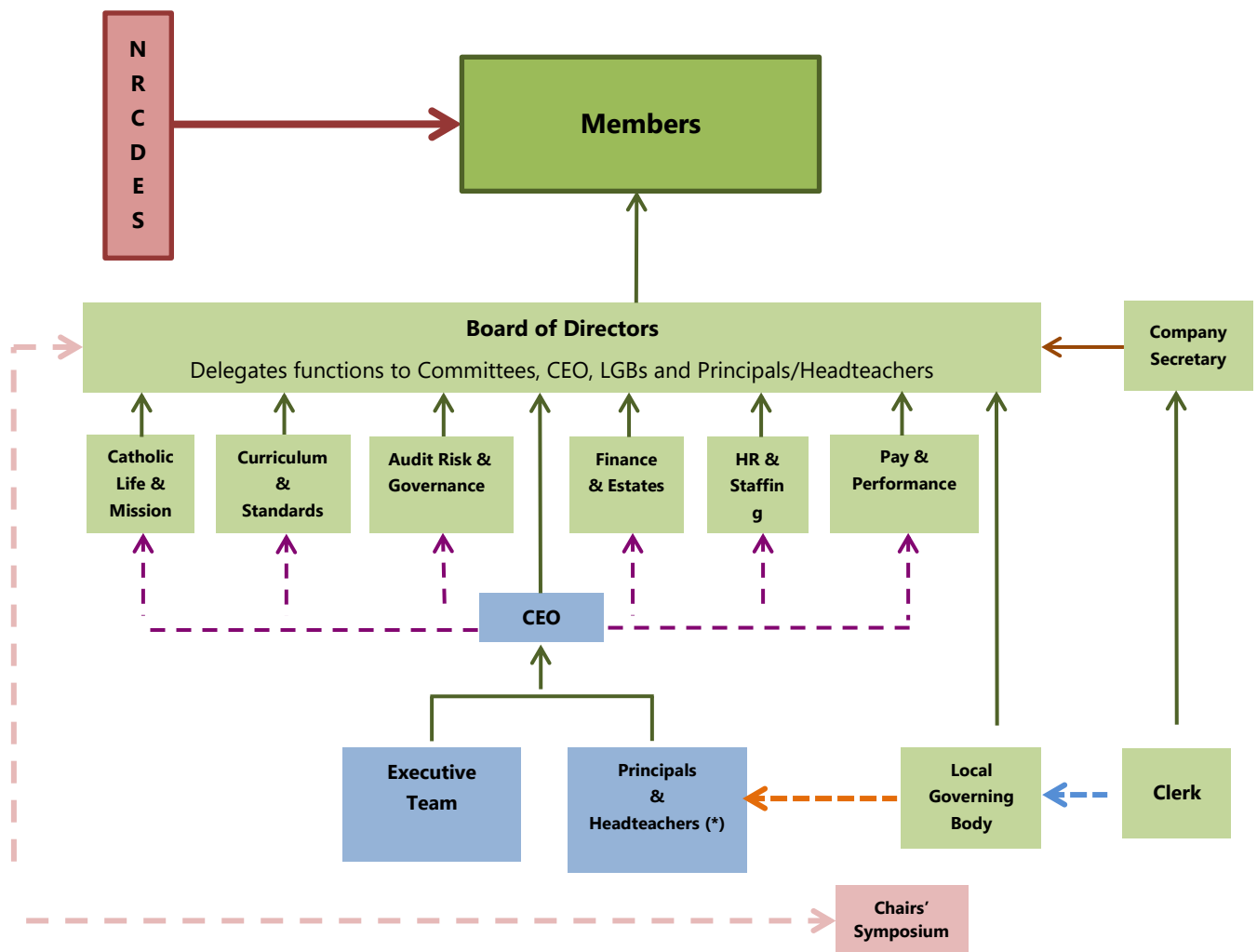
Website: [www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/education](http://www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/education)

### 3. CMAT Governance Model

Each of the Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts (CMATs) in the Diocese of Nottingham are single Trusts responsible for all of the schools within them. Each CMAT is the legal entity, responsible for standards and budgets in all the schools and is the employer of all staff working within the central team and all of the schools in the CMAT.

There are 3 layers to the governance and accountability structure in the CMAT: Members, Directors and Local Governors as illustrated in the structure chart below:

#### Governance Structure and Lines of Accountability



#### Notes:

\*Line management of Principals and Headteachers may be undertaken by other Executive Team Members such as a member of the Catholic Multi-Academy Trust School Improvement Team. The line management arrangements will be determined by the Catholic Multi-Academy Trust Board.

#### KEY

- Safeguards the diocesan vision for Catholic Education
- Formal Accountability
- - - Updates on Progress
- - - Monitors and scrutinises performance through support and challenge
- - - Professional advice, in line with Scheme of Delegation
- - - Provides advice and feedback



## **Members**

The Members are akin to the shareholders of a company. They have ultimate control over the CMAT, with the ability to appoint/remove the Directors and are responsible for approving any amendments to the CMAT's Articles of Association. There are presently four Members including the Bishop of Nottingham and the Episcopal Vicar for Catholic Education. The Members are the same for all of the Catholic MATs within the Diocese of Nottingham. The Members hold the Directors of the CMAT to account ensuring that they deliver the Bishop's vision for the CMAT. The Members are supported by the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service (NRCDES) and hold at least one annual meeting to assess the performance of the CMAT.

## **Directors**

Directors are often known by the Department for Education as 'trustees', a term we do not use in order to avoid confusion with the already existing Diocesan Trustees.

The Directors are responsible for ensuring that the vision set for the Trust by the Bishop of Nottingham is delivered. They will also hold the CEO and the leadership of the Trust to account on standards, performance of the CMAT and financial probity. As charity trustees, they must ensure that they are complying with charity law requirements. CMATs are charitable companies and the Directors are company directors and must comply with company law requirements.

## **Local Governors**

The CMATs have local governing bodies (LGBs). LGBs are a committee of the CMAT Board of Directors. Individuals who sit on LGBs are referred to as 'local governors'; the term referring to both foundation governors and elected parent governors. Local governors are not Directors of the CMAT. The Directors delegate some governance functions to LGBs through a Scheme of Delegation.

The Scheme of Delegation for LGBs is subject to an annual review and is approved by the Members. The Scheme of Delegation makes clear what functions the Directors have delegated to the LGB of each school.

A copy of the Scheme of Delegation used by each of the CMATs can be found on the website of each CMAT.

#### **4. Role and Responsibilities of the Local Governing Body (LGB)**

The LGB has a key role to play in the governance and accountability framework in place in each of the CMATs. The LGB is a committee of the CMAT Board of Directors; its role is to understand how the school is being led and managed and to be the 'eyes and ears' of the CMAT Board, monitoring how well the school is progressing.

The LGB is responsible to the Bishop of Nottingham for ensuring that the Catholic character of the school is preserved and that links between the local/parish community and the CMAT Board of Directors are developed.

The LGB is crucial to driving up standards by challenging and holding the leadership team in the school to account and as such, it has a key role in influencing the development of the school and ensuring that it meets the needs of the children. The LGB will oversee behaviour and attendance matters at the school and the management of pupil disciplinary matters and admissions. The LGB also has an important role to play in the management of exclusions. LGBs statutorily have the responsibility for arranging panels of governors to review decisions to permanently exclude and must make arrangements for Independent Review Panels (IRP) if required. LGBs must therefore also ensure that local governors have attended the training on exclusions and the functions of the IRP arranged by the CMAT. In addition, as exclusion review and IRP panels must be arranged within tight timeframes it is expected that governors will be prepared to sit on panels for other schools within the CMAT.

Alongside the Scheme of Delegation sits a school development plan for each school which is also subject to an annual review. This will involve the CEO, the CMAT Director(s) of Performance and Standards and the headteacher in determining what the improvement priorities are for the school for the next year, what actions will be taken to achieve the desired outcomes and how they will be monitored. Local governors ensure that the actions set out in the school development plan are delivered. (It should be noted, that the Directors remain accountable and responsible for any functions delegated through the Scheme of Delegation).

The LGB is engaged with the management of complaints from parents and it is important therefore that the LGB ensures that local governors are familiar with the complaints procedure. The LGB also supports the CMAT on succession planning for leaders and on the appointment of key staff in the school.

The LGB has the following responsibilities (please also see Appendix C):

- Ensuring that the school is conducted as a Catholic school, meeting the expectations set out for his schools by the Bishop of Nottingham including on the development of the Catholic Life and Mission of the school including facilitating Catholic School Inspection
- Safeguarding and promoting the Catholic values of the school
- Developing the engagement with the local school and parish community(ies)
- Maintaining a detailed understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school

- Regularly monitoring the school development plan and in-year performance and progress data (where appropriate)
- Monitoring the management of pupil behaviour, attendance, exclusions and admissions
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the deployment of resources at the school
- Monitoring the Employee Growth and Development Programme in the school and supporting with/advising on this process for the headteacher
- Supporting the CMAT with the appointment of senior leaders and other reserved posts
- Supporting the headteacher with the appointment of other staff
- Supporting effective governance at all levels of the CMAT
- Supporting the leadership team at the school and acting as a critical friend
- Supporting the CMAT in the development of succession planning of leadership within the school and the CMAT

## 5. Composition of the Local Governing Body and Terms of Office

The composition of the local governing body is:

- A **minimum** of 4 foundation governors (there is no maximum)
- 2 elected parent governors

There is no other category of governor.

There must always be a minimum of 2 foundation governors present at any LGB meeting.

As essentially, the local governing body is already a 'committee' of the Trust Board, there will be no other committees at local governing body level.

The normal term of office for foundation and elected parent governors is 4 years. Foundation governors are limited to three consecutive four-year terms of office unless the Bishop of Nottingham determines that there are exceptional circumstances to extend this. As foundation governors' terms of office end, there will be a discussion between the school, the CMAT and the NRCDES regarding replacements. Elected parent governors can be elected even if their child is due to leave the school before the end of their fourth year of office. Also, if at the end of their term of office, they still have a child at the school, they may stand for re-election for a further term of office.

Priests may serve for longer than three terms and are not required to re-apply at the end of their term of office. They are effectively 'ex officio' members of the local governing body. Priests are encouraged to serve as foundation governors but due to the pressures on them, some may determine that they would wish to serve as Local Governing Body Advisers in order to support the school specifically in its Catholic Life and Mission. If this is the case, they will inform the NRCDES and we will liaise with the CMAT to facilitate the appointment to this role (see below).

### **Other possible meeting attendees:**

At specific times and where there is a clear need, the LGB may request that it is able to utilise a '**Local Governing Body Adviser**' to support on specific projects or issues where there is a need to temporarily augment the skills and experience of the LGB. It should be borne in mind that the Adviser is akin to a guest speaker, and should usually only be present for those elements of a meeting in which they can add value and expertise. The need for the Local Governing Body Adviser must be first approved by the CMAT Board of Directors and the NRCDES before they can commence their engagement with the school. Local Governing Body Advisers are not governors and, as such, do not have voting rights but they can attend all meetings as specified by the NRCDES/CMAT and can play a full part in discussions within their field of expertise. It should also be noted that, in reality, there will be very few occasions where a vote would be necessary.

**Headteachers** have a right to attend all meetings of the LGB. Other **staff members** can also be asked or invited to attend any or all meetings of the local governing body by the local governing body or the headteacher to give professional input without being appointed as a governor.

**CMAT Directors** may attend any meeting of the LGB and, if in attendance, will have voting rights.

The **Bishop of Nottingham** (or his representative) also has the right to attend any meeting of any Trust or LGB and no item may be deemed confidential. If in attendance, the Bishop of Nottingham (or his representative) will have voting rights.

The **CEO** (or a representative) may also attend any meeting but must give notice of their intention to attend and he/she does not have any voting rights.

## **6. Recruitment, Appointment, Resignation and Removal**

Full details of the process for the appointment, re-appointment, removal and suspension of governors is set out in the guidance note: *Appointments, Re-appointment, Resignation, Suspension and Removal of LGB Members*.

Information on how to apply to become a foundation governor can be found on the NRCDES website. Candidates can self-nominate by completing the form available on the website and sending this through to the NRCDES. The NRCDES also regularly promotes the role of foundation governor through schools and parishes and the local parish priest, headteacher and chair of governors are often very active in encouraging candidates to put themselves forward.

The appointment process for foundation governors is managed by the NRCDES. The NRCDES appoints all foundation governors on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham. Each local governing body will conduct a regular governor skills audit and self-evaluation; the NRCDES

will have regard to how prospective candidates match against the needs of the school and the local governing body before making an appointment.

The LGB is responsible for filling any vacancies for \*elected parent governors (\*a parent, or an individual exercising parental responsibility, of a registered pupil at the school). Steps should be taken to do so as soon as is practicable. However, if it is later in the academic year, it may be prudent to wait until the beginning of the new academic year in order to reach parents of the new intake year group. The local governing body must advertise the vacancy providing a statement on the process, steps to be taken by prospective candidates and a statement about the role.

If the number of parents standing for election is less than the number of vacancies, the remaining vacancies must be made up by parents 'appointed' by the local governing body, acting with the delegated authority of the Board of Directors.

Any parent so appointed should be, (at the time of appointment) in order of preference:

1. *a parent, or an individual exercising parental responsibility, of a registered pupil at the school*
2. *a parent, or an individual exercising parental responsibility of a former registered pupil*
3. *a parent, or an individual exercising parental responsibility of a child of compulsory school age or below.*

The local governing body may only appoint as a parent governor a person who has, in the opinion of the local governing body, the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. Further information on eligibility and the procedure to be followed for the election of a parent governor can be found in the guidance note: *Election and Appointment of Parent Governors*.

Elected parent governors may resign at any time by giving written notice to the clerk. However, foundation governors as Bishop's appointments should also inform the NRCDES that they no longer wish to serve. Ideally, this should be done in writing or via email in the term prior to their proposed final date in office. In addition, as their appointment is approved by the CMAT and the NRCDES if a Local Governing Body Adviser resigns ahead of his/her scheduled end date then the clerk should inform the CMAT and the NRCDES.

Local governors of any category may be removed from office if attendance is considered to be too low for them to be effective in the role, if the governor is failing to fulfil his/her commitments or is bringing the school, the CMAT or the Diocese of Nottingham into disrepute. Equally, governors may be removed if they carry out actions or display behaviours which are incompatible with their role of supporting the school and the CMAT or for a serious breach of the Code of Conduct. Removal from office for elected parent governors will be carried out by the LGB following approval by the CMAT Board. For Local Governing Body Advisers, by the CMAT Board and foundation governors, as appointments of the Bishop of Nottingham can only be removed by the NRCDES, (acting on behalf of the Bishop).

## 7. Role of the Local Governor

Local governors in all schools offer their experience and expertise to strengthen the decision making process and to support the school's journey of continuous improvement. However, within a Catholic school, a governor's first responsibility is to ensure that the school is conducted as a Catholic school, to uphold the views and directives of the Bishop of Nottingham and to support his vision for Catholic education in the diocese.

Being a local governor is a *strategic* and not an operational role. Local governors are not part of the management and operation of the school. They will closely monitor and scrutinise standards in the school, the management and leadership of the school and ensure that acceptable progress is being made against the targets and priorities set down in the school development plan.

Local governors:

- Provide support and advice to school senior leadership
- Act as a sounding board for ideas
- Provide feedback on proposals
- Provide help where needed

They also provide challenge by:

- Asking constructive questions to ensure that decisions are made on the basis of sound information
- Exploring alternative proposals

An effective local governor supports the school and wants the school to succeed. They have a relationship with the school that means they can also be honest where there are concerns. Local governors have a direct link to the CMAT Board of Directors should concerns need to be raised about the school.

Being a local governor requires commitment. You will come to meetings prepared, having read and familiarised yourself with the agenda and accompanying papers as well as being prepared to ask relevant questions. You will be expected to visit the school regularly, to attend meetings, to monitor progress against the school development plan and to be available at important times in the school calendar such as school Masses/liturgical celebrations and parents' evenings for example. You will also be expected to undertake training from time to time; some compulsory, for instance in safeguarding and the PREVENT duty but also for your own development as a governor.

To be effective, a local governor must;

- Have an interest in education
- Be patient, tolerant and able to work with others in an open and democratic way
- Be able to challenge robustly whilst also being able to listen and respect the views of others

- Be willing to participate in regular training for the role

In addition, all those appointed as a local governor are expected to abide by the Governor Code of Conduct (provided on appointment and also available on Trust Governor), and fulfil their duties in line with the seven principles of public life (*the Nolan principles*).

All new local governors are expected to engage in a 'welcome' programme coordinated by the chair of governors, another nominated local governor or the Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. This will include:

- A tour of the school and meetings with the headteacher and the chair of governors
- A thorough briefing on the school covering issues such as the Catholic Life of the school, standards, present performance, priorities for the school in the school development plan and the local context
- Access to key school policy documents and briefing on those
- Briefing on the work of the local governing body
- A review of skills and background and where the local governor might contribute most to the work of the local governing body
- Introductory training on safeguarding
- Access to latest CMAT reports on the school and minutes/notes from previous local governing body meetings

The *Diocesan New Local Governor Welcome Statement and Checklist* provides details of the welcome process that must be followed for all new governor appointments.

Additionally, a comprehensive local governor training programme is available via <https://bookwhen.com/nrcdes>, here local governors can see the full programme and manage their own course bookings. New Local Governors are expected to have completed the 'Level 1 – *Developing*' modules by the end of the first year of their appointment.

More information on the role of the local governor can be found by referring to the information document *Job Description for the Role of Local Governor within a CMAT* located at *Appendix C*.

## 8. Meeting Organisation, Conduct at Meetings and the Role of Office Holders

The work of the local governing bodies and the CMAT as a whole is supported by the online platform 'Trust Governor'. Each local governor will have a login to Trust Governor (<https://www.the-trust-governor.co.uk>).

The platform maintains all local governor records, school and CMAT policy documents, key school information such as the school development plan as well as all meeting agendas, minutes and papers. It enables local governors to be provided with information in an entirely confidential and secure environment and for local governors to converse on issues remotely including voting on resolutions if required outside of scheduled meetings. Training is available for governors to get them started on Trust Governor but the clerks will also be established as 'super users' to support all governors to explore the full potential of the system. Under the Trust Governor system, governors are expected to maintain their own personal profile and to ensure that their training record is up to date. The system also supports all key documents such as the *Code of Conduct for Governors*, *Governor Skills Audit* and the *Governance Self-Evaluation Tool*.

All governance activity will be undertaken as far as possible through Trust Governor enabling governance to be virtually paperless. All meetings therefore will be run through Trust Governor. Local governors will come to meetings prepared to log on to Trust Governor either through their own device or on one provided by the school.

During meetings, local governors are expected to have regard to the *Code of Conduct for Governors* but to also adhere to the following principles:

- Support and be guided by the chair of the meeting
- Respect other people's opinions and ideas
- Actively participate in discussions
- Limit the length of individual contributions
- Ensure contributions are delivered in a positive and constructive manner, even when challenging or difficult issues are being discussed
- Respect confidentiality and respect decisions taken within meetings, acting corporately internally and externally once those decisions have been taken

Meetings of the local governing body will be quorate as long as a minimum of two governors are in attendance and there must be a majority of foundation governors present. However, voting on any issue will be undertaken using the facility in Trust Governor thereby ensuring that all governors are able to vote on key issues. The clerk will manage this process and will set the timeframes for votes.

All local governors are expected to attend all meetings. The clerk will log governor attendance on Trust Governor and this will be reviewed annually as part of the local governor appraisal and governance self-evaluation process. Virtual attendance at meetings can also be supported using Trust Governor but it is not expected that local governors will routinely request using this facility.



The local governing body will elect a chair and vice-chair for the new academic year at the last meeting of the year in the Pentecost Term together with link governors for safeguarding and SEND. The positions of chair and vice-chair must be filled by foundation governors. The chair and vice-chair may resign at any point by giving notice in writing to the clerk and informing the NRCDES and the CMAT chair.

At the start of each meeting, the clerk will require all local governors to declare if they have an interest in any of the agenda items.

All meetings will use the standard CMAT local governing body agenda but the clerk will co-ordinate each meeting agenda with input from the headteacher and chair of governors and ensure that the agenda meets the expectations of the CMAT as well as customising it to allow local school issues to be addressed. Each meeting will be supported by a standard headteacher information report (this will be produced by the Trust). The agenda and supporting papers will be posted on Trust Governor by the clerk seven days in advance of the meeting.

The clerk will also support the chair of governors and the local governors to ensure that the meeting is effective and will ensure that a clear note is taken of meetings with emphasis on demonstrating the **challenge** and **support** given by the governors to the school leadership and recording the **impact** of the local governing body. All minutes/notes will be available for scrutiny on Trust Governor within ten working days of the meeting labelled 'draft' and ready for approval at the next meeting.

The chair of governors will ensure that all local governors are given opportunity to contribute to the meeting, ensure that no governor monopolises the discussions and that the key priorities for the school are given prominence and adequate discussion time.

The vice-chair of governors will lead meetings in the chair's absence. The vice-chair will be developing their knowledge and experience with the view to stepping into the chair's role in due course. The vice-chair also has a key role in the parental complaints procedure as the local governor that will normally chair the final stage panel.

Further information on the role of the chair is contained at *Appendix A*.

## 9. Meeting Programme

The local governing body will meet up to six times during the academic year following the schedule set out by the CMAT. Meeting dates for the future year are to be agreed annually at the end of the academic year and communicated by the clerk.

It is expected that the chair of governors will attend the chairs' symposia scheduled throughout the year. The symposia will consider and determine what the common content will be for local governing body meetings during that term. The vice-chair may also attend the symposia and the chair must ensure that their LGB is represented at each event by nominating other governors to attend if required.

There will also be opportunities for the chairs to engage in discussions on key issues such as CMAT development, central CMAT team services and to support the development of the chairs. All information exchanged at the symposia will be made available to all governors and will also form part of future local governing body agendas.

For further details about the chairs' symposia, please see *Appendix D*.

The clerks will attend regular briefing sessions which in a similar way will enable them to be fully briefed on CMAT developments and key issues and support their development.

## 10. Visits to the School

As a local governor, you are encouraged to visit the school to fulfil your responsibilities and to gain a better understanding of how the school operates. You do not have an automatic right of entry to the school; all visits must be agreed in advance with the school's leadership and must have a clear focus. A visit may be undertaken to:

- Improve your knowledge of the school and the people that work in it
- Support the monitoring responsibilities of the local governing body
- Assist the local governing body in discussions and in making informed decisions

In practice, monitoring visits will be scheduled at the start of each term through discussions with the headteacher.

Local governors will produce a report of their visits and this will be shared with other local governors via Trust Governor. The CMAT will provide a standard visit report template and training on undertaking effective visits will also be provided.

Again, it is important to be clear that being a local governor is a *strategic* not an operational role. Therefore, the focus for your visits is to check on *progress* being made by the school, to verify the evidence that agreed actions have taken place and to see the evidence of the impact of those actions. In addition, local governors are not expected and nor should they be making judgements on the quality of teaching or the assessment of standards in pupil workbooks -

that is a professional function to be carried out by the school's leadership team and the CMAT Director(s) of Performance and Standards.

As well as undertaking focussed visits, it is also important that governors are able to be 'visible' in school (please see Section 7).

*Appendix B* provides further information on the purpose of visits.

## **11. Training**

To match the commitment shown by local governors in their roles, support is provided in the form of a bespoke training programme for governors within the diocesan CMATs.

The programme assumes that all new governors will receive a full induction from their chair of governors and headteacher about their school within one month of their appointment.

We also require governors to attend a session on the role of governors in relation to Catholic Life and Mission. This is part of a suite of modules within our 'developing' training strand which new governors are asked to complete within their first year. These will help the governor to settle into the role, to understand what the essential elements of the role are and to be given the tools to be effective in the role. These 'developing' modules have been designed by NRCDES and are open for any governors to attend, not just those new to the role. We would encourage governors to take advantage of them. They will be delivered as online facilitated sessions and governors may attend any of the events regardless of which CMAT they are within.

The NRCDES will provide training throughout your time as a governor; following on from the *Level 1 - Developing* strand there are *Level 2- Embedding* and *Level 3- Advancing* strands to support you as you become more established in the role.

The CMATs will provide training for governors on issues such as safeguarding, PREVENT and GDPR.

For full details of the governor training programme, please visit:

<https://bookwhen.com/NRCDES>

Here, you will find details of all courses, dates, times and locations. You will also be able to book directly onto courses.

In addition to this, we are building a library of governor information and guidance documents. These documents will be available on Trust Governor and on the NRCDES website: <http://www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/education>

## **12. Relationships within the CMAT Governance Model**

The local governing body is a key part of the CMAT governance structure and it is important that the local governing body has a close working relationship with the CMAT Board of Directors. Both have a different role to perform and it is crucial that you understand your remit. The CMAT Scheme of Delegation provides details of the functions that are delegated to the local governing body.

The CMAT Board consults on Trust wide matters and maintains links with the local governing bodies through:

- Chairs' symposia
- Clerks' briefings
- Standing items on the local governing body agendas
- Specific requests for views and feedback
- Attendance of CMAT Directors/CEO/Director(s) of Performance and Standards at local governing body meetings

Local governing bodies advise the CMAT Board on school level issues and CMAT development through:

- local governing body meeting notes/minutes
- specific responses to consultation requests
- input into chairs' symposia
- invitations to CMAT Directors/CEO and Director(s) of Performance and Standards to attend local governing body meetings

## **13. Role of Local Governing Bodies in Relation to Inspections**

As with all schools, Catholic schools are subject to inspection by Ofsted. They are also subject to Catholic school inspection (CSI). The local governing body has an important role to play in both of these inspection regimes.

### ***Ofsted***

As part of an Ofsted inspection, the lead inspector should meet with those responsible for governance functions, this includes the chair of the local governing body. However, as schools are only given a day's notice of an inspection, it is likely that not all chairs will be available and so all governors must be prepared to meet with the Ofsted inspector if required. The CMATs will produce further guidance about how members of the Trust's executive team will be involved in inspections.

Governors will be knowledgeable about the school and be able, if required, to present to Ofsted inspectors a clear understanding of what the key priorities are for the school, what action has been taken and is being taken to address them, the impact of action taken to date and what specifically the local governing body has done to support the school to address the priorities. Typical questions that could be put to governors are:

- What are the school's priorities, strengths and weaknesses?
- What improvements have been made since the last inspection?
- How do you know that the school is improving?
- How is the pupil premium funding used? What impact does it have on pupil progress?
- How do you challenge the school leadership and what examples do you have?
- How do governors monitor the school development plan?
- How is the sports premium used? What impact does it have? Is it sustainable?
- How do you know that the school meets its safeguarding duties?
- How do the governors know that performance management of teachers is carried out robustly at the school?
- How effective is teaching and how do you know?

### ***Catholic School Inspection***

The local governing body has a pivotal role to play in the process of Catholic School Inspection as one of its core roles is to monitor and develop the Catholic Life of the school and to ensure, on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham, that the school is conducted as a Catholic school.

Catholic School Inspection looks at three separate areas:

- Catholic Life and Mission
- Religious Education
- Collective Worship

A range of resources to support the inspection process are available on the NRCDES website.

The inspection begins by looking at the school's main priorities identified at the previous inspection. Typical questions that could be asked of governors include:

- How do governors monitor the school's Catholic Life and Mission?
- When was the school's mission statement last reviewed?
- How high are standards in Religious Education and how do they compare with diocesan and/or national outcomes?
- Is teaching and learning in Religious Education as effective as teaching and learning in other core areas such as English and mathematics?
- Does the school comply with diocesan expectations regarding the quantity and quality of work that pupils produce in Religious Education?
- Does the school comply with the Bishops' Conference requirement that 10% of the working week is devoted to curriculum Religious Education (5% at Key Stage 5)?
- Does the school provide a daily Act of Collective Worship?
- Does the school ensure that pupils receive a range of liturgical experiences?
- Is the liturgical year celebrated in school?
- Do pupils take an active role in the planning, preparation and leadership of Collective Worship?
- How do governors monitor the school's provision for Collective Worship?

## **14. Review of the Handbook**

The NRCDES will work with the CMATs and local governing bodies to keep the contents of this handbook under review and will ensure that, as a minimum, it is reviewed annually following consultation with the CMATs at the end of each academic year.

Revisions to the handbook will be published on the NRCDES website.

## **Appendix A: Role of the Chair of Governors**

The chair of a local governing body is a critical role in the CMAT governance structure and needs to be filled by a strong and skilled leader. The chair liaises with the CMAT Board of Directors and also:

- Chairs and facilitates all local governing body meetings
- Works with the CMAT and the headteacher to agree agendas for local governing body meetings
- Establishes and fosters an effective working relationship with the headteacher. Acts as a critical friend, offers challenge, support, advice and encouragement
- Works with the headteacher to ensure the information and facts needed for good discussions to take place at local governing body meetings are provided
- Keeps meetings orderly, focussed on key priorities for the school with sufficient time allocated to them to do justice to the topic and keeps the meetings to time
- Sets a meeting timetable in accordance with the CMAT meetings schedule and agrees local timings of meetings
- Has the casting vote in cases of a split decision
- Represents the school at events and meetings
- Supports the development of the local governing body including through induction, training, reviewing performance and succession planning
- Maintains good relationships on the governing body and addresses any conflicts which arise
- Supports governors to understand the role and responsibilities of the local governing body and encourages the training and development of governors
- Attends the chairs' symposia and other CMAT events, meetings or training sessions relevant to the role

### **Good Practice for Chairs in Meetings**

The chair will:

- Welcome all to the meeting
- Ensure that the meeting opens with a relevant prayer
- Remind attendees of practical arrangements and the purpose of the meeting
- Clarify ground rules if necessary
- Ask for reports on actions from the previous meeting
- Keep the meeting to time, maintain control on who is speaking, in which order and for how long
- Keep the discussion focussed, positive and constructive
- Stop any inappropriate behaviour and, where necessary, remind attendees of the contents of the Code of Conduct
- Repeat people's comments if they have not been heard of understood by others or seek clarification
- Sum up discussion and what has been agreed including who is taking forward actions
- Confirm date and time of the next meeting
- Ask for agenda items for the next meeting
- Thank participants for their attendance and contributions
- Check the meeting notes once available from the clerk

## Appendix B: Visits to School by Local Governors

Visits to school are for local governors to:

- Hold the school leadership to account and to gather evidence
- Recognise and celebrate success
- Develop relationships with staff
- Understand the school environment
- Focus on monitoring actions for raising attainment, other school development priorities or for monitoring risks to the school

Visits are not for

- Making judgements about the quality of teaching and learning
- Pursuing personal agendas
- Monopolising headteacher/teacher time

### Monitoring Visit Protocol

Before the visit, always:

- Agree the purpose of the visit with the local governing body ensuring that it is linked to key issues in the school development plan
- Arrange details of the visit with the relevant staff member through the headteacher and ensure that the chair of governors is aware of the visit

During the visit, always:

- Observe any class guidelines/rules
- Talk to the pupils but do not disturb the lesson in any way
- Save the writing up of your visit report for outside of the classroom

After the visit, always:

- Complete the standard CMAT template for visit reports (format available from the chair of governors, clerk or headteacher) and send to the headteacher and/or staff member
- Discuss any areas of significant concern directly with the headteacher
- Send the visit report to the clerk and chair of governors

**Note:** As part of a visit governors may enter classrooms to observe class activities but that this should be part of a learning walk and always accompanied by a school staff member. If observing class activities it is important to be aware that it is outside the remit of the governor to make judgements on teaching and learning.



## **Appendix C: Job Description for the Post of Local Governor within a CMAT**

All those elected or appointed to local governing bodies should fulfil their duties in line with the seven principles of public life (the Nolan principles). They should also be mindful of their responsibilities under equality legislation, recognising and encouraging diversity and inclusion. They should understand the impact of effective governance on the quality of education and on outcomes for all children and young people.

All local governors will be required to sign the *Code of Conduct* annually and there is an expectation that governors attend meetings and training regularly.

In addition, all those involved in governance should be:

**Committed** - Devoting the required time and energy to the role and ambitious to achieve best possible outcomes for young people. Prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others in order to create highly effective governance.

**Confident** - Of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to express their opinion and to play an active role on the local governing body.

**Curious** - Possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding the value of meaningful questioning.

**Challenging** - Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always driving for improvement.

**Collaborative** - Prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with executive leaders, staff, parents and carers, pupils/students, the Diocese, the local parish community and employers.

**Critical** - Understanding the value of critical friendship which enables both challenge and support, and self-reflective, pursuing learning and development opportunities to improve their own and whole board effectiveness.

**Creative** - Able to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving; recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success.

### **The Catholic Character of the School**

- Preserve and develop the Catholic and educational character, mission or ethos of the school in collaboration with the headteacher
- Champion the CMAT's vision, ethos and strategic direction in the school
- Ensure the spiritual wellbeing of pupils at the school
- Ensure that the school has a medium to long-term vision for its future viability as a Catholic school and that there is a robust strategy in place for achieving its vision
- Establish and maintain relationships with the parish priest, local church and parish community to work with them as they contribute to the Catholic formation of the pupils at the school
- Establish and maintain relationships with parents of pupils attending the school to support them in their role as primary educators
- Establish and maintain a relationship with members of the wider local community, including assisting the principal to build relationships with other schools, agencies and businesses in the community to enhance the quality of Catholic education provided for pupils
- Comply with any denominational inspections pursuant to s.48 and any additional canonical inspections and visitations of the Bishop

### **Standards**

- Receive information regarding the monitoring of the KPI figures reported from the headteacher relating to standards and report any issues to the Executive Team
- Monitor the impact of the school development plan reporting any issues to the CMAT executive team/Directors
- Monitor the quality assurance of teaching and learning, the curriculum inclusion and the sharing of good practice across the school and take action where issues arise
- Ensure that inclusion involves challenging all vulnerable groups within the school
- Carry out monitoring visits to the school
- Challenge the headteacher and leaders regarding the progress of all pupils in the school

## **Leadership and Governance**

- Support the headteacher to develop the school development plan, monitor its implementation and report on progress to the CMAT Directors
- Assist the headteacher to tailor CMAT wide policies for the school
- Appoint (and remove) from its number: chair, vice-chair (to be approved by the Board) and local governors with specific responsibilities for SEND and safeguarding
- Review and amend the policies of the school in line with any CMAT wide policies
- With the headteacher, establish and develop pupil, parent and staff voice and monitor the same, reporting any issues or other matters to the executive team/CMAT Directors as appropriate
- Carry out the annual self-evaluation of the LGB and report findings to the CMAT executive team/Directors as appropriate
- Succession plan for local governance and senior leadership in conjunction with the CMAT
- Support and work with other LGBs in the CMAT
- Provide appropriate levels of support and challenge to the headteacher
- Comply with any other education inspections, e.g. s.5 as required by law
- Contribute to the review of the CMAT, its leadership, central team and services and support provided to schools

## **Curriculum**

- Approve the curriculum proposed by the headteacher (to the extent that it is consistent with the CMAT wide policy)
- Ensure that the curriculum of the school, including all the subjects of the National Curriculum, is taught in the light of the Gospel values and actively promotes the spiritual and moral development of its pupils
- Ensure that RE is in accordance with the Curriculum Directory and the Bishop's policy and that it constitutes 10% of the weekly timetable in the academy in accordance with the tenets and norms of the Catholic Church (or 5% for post 16 level)
- Ensure that the headteacher is complying with the requirement to provide a daily Act of Collective Worship in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church and take action to address any issues, as appropriate
- Ensure that relationships and sex education (RSE) is taught in accordance with the social and moral teachings of the Catholic Church having regard to any diocesan requirements
- Review information regarding the quality assurance of teaching and learning, the curriculum, inclusion and ensure actions are in place to address any issues that arise

**Pupil Issues**

- Monitor the implementation of a behaviour policy for the school in line with Trust wide policies
- Review any exclusion of a pupil
- Review the overall pattern of exclusions at the school and report to the executive team/Directors
- Review pupil attendance
- Monitor the impact of the pupil premium in the school and advise executive team/Directors
- Monitor the impact of the sports premium in the school and advise executive team/Directors
- Implement the diocesan complaints policy
- Ensure effective arrangements are in place for pupil support and representation at the school
- Support the CMAT and the headteacher in the extended school provision in the school

**Communication**

- Ensure the effective implementation of the data protection policies and procedures in the school
- Ensure systems in place are in line with the CMAT's strategy at the school for effective communication with pupils, parents or carers, staff, parish priests, diocese and the wider community including the support of a local parent teacher association (if established)
- Review annually the academy website ensuring that it is compliant with all requirements as set out by the ESFA and the advice provided by the NRCDES and the CMAT

**SEND**

- Appoint a local governor responsible for SEND, LAC and inclusion
- Review and maintain the Trust's SEND and LAC policy
- Provide oversight of the implementation of the policy within the school and compliance with the legal requirements relating to disability and report to the CMAT executive team/Directors

**Safeguarding**

- Appoint a local governor for safeguarding
- Ensure that at least one governor on any recruitment panel has up to date safeguarding and safer recruitment training
- Review and maintain a safeguarding and child protection policy for the school (consistent with the CMAT wide policy)
- Monitor the completion of the single central record (SCR) and its regular updating

**Admissions**

- Work with the NRCDES and the CMAT to implement the standard NRCDES school admission arrangements
- Work with CMAT to ensure the school website contains correct information that ensures it is compliant with the requirements of the School Admissions Code
- Make arrangements for determining applications for admission and hearing admission appeals (using the Catholic Schools' Appeals Service) unless sanctioned by the NRCDES
- Ensure effective arrangements are in place for pupil recruitment liaising with the CMAT
- Contribute to the development of the school prospectus (if there is one)
- Respond as directed by the NRCDES and the CMAT to undertake consultation, publish admissions and determine arrangements as required in accordance with the School Admissions Code

**Finance**

*Local governors will not be responsible for setting and approving the academy budget or monitoring expenditure on a monthly basis (this will be carried out by the headteacher, the executive team and the CEO)*

- Be mindful of the school's annual budget and consider CMAT budget reports
- Scrutinise use of resources for value for money and impact
- Maintain a register of business interests
- Ensure the disaster recovery/business continuity plan for the school is adhered to and remains fit for purpose

**Estates/Health & Safety**

- Adopt a health and safety policy (in line with the CMAT wide policy)
- Review the implementation of the health and safety policy and ensure that appropriate risk assessments are being carried out in the school
- Ensure site inspections are undertaken to review any health and safety issues and the security of premises and equipment
- Monitor the arrangements for the effective supervision of building maintenance and minor works and take up any issues with the CMAT executive team

**Human Resources**

- Support the CMAT Directors in headteacher appointment as requested by the CMAT executive team
- Support the CMAT executive team and Directors as appropriate in the performance and development of the headteacher
- Ensure that the performance and development of school staff is carried out
- Having regard to the CMAT's strategic plans, support the headteacher with the appointment of school staff and to ensure that the school is staffed in accordance with the agreed staffing structure

## **Appendix D: Terms of Reference for the Chairs' Symposium**

The function of this symposium is advisory in nature.

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of the group is to:

- Support and monitor the role of each school chair of governors within the CMAT
- To establish consistent working practices across the CMAT and local governing bodies
- To provide training, advice and a peer networking opportunity for all CMAT appointed chairs
- To ensure effective lines of communication between the Trust Board and local governing bodies

### **2. Membership**

- CEO of the CMAT
- Chair of the CMAT Board of Directors
- Chairs of each member school (should the chair of governors from a school be unable to attend, the vice-chair or another nominated representative should attend the meeting)

### **3. Duties**

The symposium has been established by the CMAT Board of Directors in order to:

- Ensure that the vision of the CMAT and the ethos and values of the CMAT are consistently applied and shared
- Ensure regular and accurate transfer of knowledge to members of the local governing bodies
- Provide an opportunity for chairs to share good practice, debate and discuss areas of challenge
- Provide an opportunity for chairs to feedback to the Trust on 'what is working well' and 'areas for development'
- Develop, establish and implement common and consistent practices in all aspects of school governance
- Develop and implement a diocesan wide policy to encourage succession planning for vice-chairs and aspiring chairs as well as recruitment of future local governors
- Identify and undertake new initiatives which affect the role of chairs through regular training, briefings and peer to peer mentoring
- To act as an input to wider CMAT policies i.e. talent management and succession planning within and across our schools in collaboration with the Diocese of Nottingham
- To be an additional conduit for effective communication

### **4. Meetings**

- The CMAT chairs' symposium will meet as a minimum of 3 times per year. Dates for the new academic year will be set in advance.

## **Appendix E: Prayers for Local Governing Body Meetings**

***These prayers may be used in addition to the school prayer, the Trust prayer or the diocesan prayer.***

Father, encourage and sustain us in our endeavour to move forward in partnership for the good of the people you have placed in our care.

In your name, let us befriend, support and encourage each other in the challenge and demands of our shared responsibilities.

Help us to work together in a spirit of charity and cooperation accepting wholeheartedly that it is in collaboration that we best live out your example and best serve our school community.

We make our prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, teach us to walk in your way more trustfully, to accept your truth more faithfully and to share your life more lovingly; that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may come as one family to the kingdom of the Father, Amen.

With confidence and trust, we gather in the presence of God who loves us.

In the name of the Father who created us; in the name of the Son who calls us to the fullness of life and in the name of the Holy Spirit who guides us with wisdom. Amen.

Spirit of God,

Guide us with your wisdom as we seek to take responsibility for the education of the young people in our care. May each of us give generously our talents growing to know one another. Show us how to build a community sharing a deep concern and common purpose. May we find together the inspiration which is and always will be, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Father, we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the business that is before us.

In planning for the future, give us vision.

In dealing with people, give us love.

Help us in all things to honour your name, to advance your kingdom and to carry out your will.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



**Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service**

The Diocesan Centre

Mornington Crescent

Mackworth

Derby

DE22 4BD