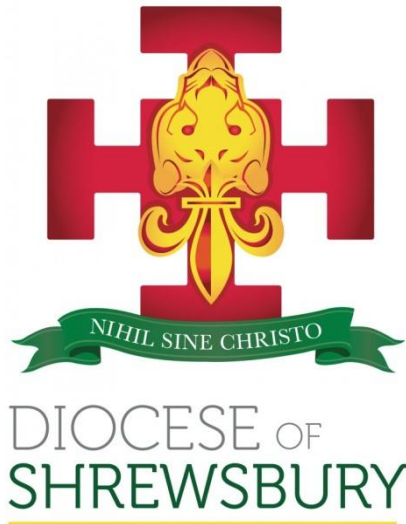


Diocese of Shrewsbury

Department of Education



Appointment of a new Head of Religious Education in a Catholic School

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About this Guidance

This guidance is provided to support schools in the appointment of a Head of Religious Education. Whilst this position has been the norm in schools, in recent times other leadership posts in Religious Education have arisen. Consequently, this guidance also applies to other leadership roles that have parity with, and similar responsibilities to, a Head of Religious Education. In addition, the guidance is relevant to any temporary positions that schools may choose to implement.

1.Appointing Leaders

FOREWORD FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

The appointment to school leadership is probably the most important duty and responsibility entrusted to the governing body of a Catholic school or the board of directors of a Catholic Multi –Academy Trust (MAT). This guidance has been developed so that any governing board has the appropriate guidance and advice concerning the process of making senior leadership appointments, including Heads of Religious Education and School Chaplains. I would ask that you read this document carefully as it provides guidance for determining the entire process of making an appointment of a Head of Religious Education for a Catholic school or Catholic academy, in the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The Diocesan Department of Education wishes to support you in making these important leadership appointments and it is established policy that we work closely with a governing board from the very start of the process in appointing senior leader positions in our Catholic schools. Therefore, as soon as you are aware of the need to appoint a senior leader, please contact your Diocesan School Support Officer so that we are able to support your planning.



Richard Woods
Director of Schools

2.Memorandum on Appointment of Teachers in Catholic Schools

This Memorandum sets out the expectations of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales about the appointment of staff in Catholic schools. This Memorandum applies to all Catholic maintained schools, academies, independent schools, sixth form colleges and non-maintained special schools, including those that are in the trusteeship of a religious order (referred to in this Memorandum as 'Catholic schools').

The Bishops' Memorandum was last issued in 2014, when the Catholic school sector looked very different to the way it looks today. It has therefore been updated to ensure that the Bishops' requirements are clear in the current context. This version does not include any additional requirements to those in the 2014 version, it simply sets out the requirements in a way which reflects the organisation of Catholic schools today. This version of the Bishops' Memorandum supersedes all previous versions.

All Catholic schools must ensure that they are providing an authentic Catholic education as part of the Church's education mission. All staff are part of the Church's mission and are therefore expected to support their employer in this aim, and Governing Boards¹ are required to ensure that their expectations are made clear.

Governing Boards are required to comply with the provisions in their Governing Documents (e.g. Instrument (and Articles) of Government or Articles of Association), and with the requirements of their Trust Deed, which includes the provisions of canon law, are incorporated into these documents. The Diocesan Bishop is responsible for exercising canonical oversight over all Catholic schools, and the issuing of this Memorandum is part of that oversight.

This Memorandum must be consulted prior to all appointments to Catholic schools. Governors, directors, and Catholic school leaders should ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this Memorandum and that all recruitment processes comply with its requirements. Governors, directors and Catholic school leaders should also ensure that their HR advisers and all members of staff involved in recruitment are properly trained and line-managed, that they are familiar with the contents of this Memorandum, and that they use CES contracts and associated documentation. Use of CES contracts and associated documentation is important because these documents contain provisions which help to ensure that the Catholic character of Catholic schools is preserved, maintained and developed.

There is an expectation that all suppliers on the Churchmarketplace framework will have received appropriate training on the matters set out in this Memorandum.

¹ 'Governing Board' is the term used in this Memorandum to denote the entity or entities within the school or multi-academy trust company that exercises the functions of the employer under the appropriate constitutional arrangements.

Purpose of the Guidance

This Memorandum has been provided to help and guide Governing Boards to fulfil their responsibilities. Governors and directors have a legal responsibility to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the Catholic schools for which they are responsible, and following the processes set out in this Memorandum will help to ensure that this legal responsibility is complied with in relation to the appointment of staff. Compliance with this Memorandum is also a requirement of the Diocesan Protocols.

The Bishops of England and Wales require the following:

- Governing Boards must give clear guidelines about the Catholic character of the Catholic schools for which they are responsible, to employees and prospective employees. It must be clear to all employees that they are required to respect and support the aims and objectives of a Catholic school.
- Governing Boards must ensure that they issue CES contracts of employment and associated documentation, these contracts include provisions which require the employee to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the Catholic school.
- Governing Boards must ensure that CES model employment policies are used as these ensure that the ethos of Catholic schools as Catholic employers is clearly articulated.
- Governing Boards must comply with this Memorandum and the requirements set out below in relation to the need for certain senior roles to be occupied by Practising Catholics.
- Governing Boards must ensure that they are familiar with the guidance issued by the Diocese which sets out the definition of a “Practising Catholic”.

Appointment of Leaders in Catholic Schools

The Bishops of England and Wales require the following posts to be filled by Practising Catholics:

- Headteacher / Principal / Head of School (which includes Executive Headteachers)
- Deputy Headteacher / Principal / Head of School
- Chief Executive Officer
- Deputy Chief Executive Officer
- Head or Co-Ordinator of Religious Education (at both school and multi-academy trust company level)
- Chaplain (including Directors of Chaplaincy)
- Members of multi-academy trust company central teams with responsibility for Catholic Life / Mission / Ethos
- Any role which requires the individual to have responsibility for the spiritual and/or liturgical life of the Catholic school or multi-academy trust company (for example,

Prayer and Liturgy Co-ordinator and Director of Primary Education or Secondary Education where it would involve oversight of collective worship and Religious Education).

All of the posts listed above require the postholder to be a Practising Catholic because the roles directly affect the Catholic mission of a Catholic school, and the individual post holders will be responsible for the spiritual leadership and Catholic character of a Catholic school or multi-academy trust company. Such individuals must therefore participate fully in the liturgical life of the Church and be able to articulate their faith, whilst living it out on a daily basis, in order to have oversight of the formation of others.

Whilst the leadership posts listed above are generally in use in Catholic schools the list above is not exhaustive and other senior leadership posts may exist in relation to which there is a requirement to be a Practising Catholic. The principle to be applied is that the requirement applies to the most senior leadership post i.e. the person with overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Catholic school or multi-academy trust company, the person who is the second most senior person in the leadership team whose duties include deputising for the most senior post, and any other person with responsibility for the Catholic life of the Catholic school or multi-academy trust company.

Other Leadership posts that directly affect the Catholic Mission of the school should, wherever possible, be staffed by skilled practitioners who are committed Catholics.

The appointment of chaplains of any kind requires the authority of the local Ordinary. Canonical (priest) chaplains are appointed by the local Ordinary (canon 565). The appointment of a lay chaplain also requires the authority of the Church, and Governing Boards should therefore consult their Diocese in advance and follow any recruitment process set for the appointment of lay chaplains by the Diocese. In the case of Catholic schools under the trusteeship of a religious order, the Governing Board should also consult with the Religious Superior.

Appointment of Leaders of Religious Education

Religious Education is the core subject in every Catholic school and informs every aspect of the curriculum.

Primary: The Bishops of England and Wales require the following:

- The Governing Board must ensure that Religious Education is properly organised, co-ordinated, taught and resourced.
- Governing Boards must ensure that Catholic primary schools have a Co-ordinator of RE.
- Co-ordinators of RE should have at least parity in status and remuneration with those of the other core curriculum areas.

Secondary: The Bishops of England and Wales require the following:

- The Religious Education department in Catholic secondary schools is of particular importance and should have at least parity of status and resourcing with any other core subject department.
- Governing Boards are urged to give the highest possible status to the department and to the person leading that department, and this should be reflected in their status and remuneration.

Recruitment Process

Interview procedures approved by Governing Boards for recruitment must be open to scrutiny. They must be clear, objective and transparent and Governing Boards should follow the process set out in the CES Guidance for Governing Boards which is available on the CES website.

In relation to the leadership appointments listed above, the Bishops of England and Wales require the following:

- The diocesan bishop should be represented at all proceedings relating to the appointment of senior leaders and teachers of Religious Education unless his officer has confirmed in writing that he does not wish to exercise this right in relation to a particular appointment. In the case of the appointment of senior leaders and teachers of Religious Education at Catholic schools under the trusteeship of a religious order, the diocesan bishop has the discretion to exercise this right through a representative of the relevant religious order.
- Governing Boards must facilitate the attendance of the Diocesan Director of Education (or his or her nominee), either by affording them advisory rights or otherwise. These rights may be in relation to all appointments at the school or, more usually, to the appointment of the leadership posts to which the requirement to be a Practising Catholic is applied.
- Governing Boards must give sufficient advance notification to the Diocesan Director of Education of a vacancy for any leadership post to which the requirement to be a Practising Catholic is applied before taking any action, including making an acting or temporary appointment, appointing an acting Head Teacher or Principal, acting Deputy Head Teacher or Deputy Principal, or advertising the vacancy. It is particularly important to agree all meeting and interview dates with the Diocese in advance, to allow Diocesan Officers to be involved from the beginning of the process, including drawing up job descriptions and person specifications. Many Dioceses provide recruitment guidance which should be followed.
- Governing Boards must meet to draw up a shortlist of candidates, conduct interviews and make an appointment.
- Governing Boards may appoint a selection panel to undertake these functions, but appointments may need ratification by the full Governing Board.

A Diocesan representative may also be invited whenever senior posts with pastoral responsibilities are being considered.

Appointment of Teachers in Catholic Schools

The preservation and development of the quality and distinctive nature of Catholic schools depends on the faith, practice and commitment of the teachers in the schools, working

with their Governing Board. The Catholic Church understands the vocation of a teacher as a form of ministry within the Church.³ All teachers and leaders in Catholic schools are employed to participate in the Church's teaching office, exercising this ministry in accordance with the Church's teachings and as a collaborator of the Diocesan Bishop.⁴ This requires teachers to be witnesses in word and deed to the Divine Teacher, Jesus Christ.⁵

To find Catholic teachers who combine personal conviction and practice of the faith with the required professional qualifications and experience, especially in specialist subjects, is always a high priority.

The recognition of the role that Catholic teachers play stands alongside the value we place on teachers of other Christian denominations, other Faiths and other teachers who contribute to and support the Catholic ethos in Catholic schools. We recognise the great contribution they make in helping to ensure that our pupils are equipped to be at the service of and contribute to society.

Governing Boards have a duty to ensure that the Catholic character of Catholic schools is maintained and developed. The Bishops of England and Wales expect that Governing Boards will employ Catholic teachers who combine personal conviction and practice of the Faith with the required professional qualifications and experience, in order to ensure this. Governing Boards should be aware that legislation allows them to prefer Catholic teachers for roles in Catholic schools and to prefer them in terms of their pay and promotion prospects.

Induction and Continuing Professional Development and Formation

Governing Boards should ensure an appropriate formation and induction programme is in place, which emphasises the distinctive nature of Catholic education, and ensures that staff understand the Church's mission and their part in it.

Appropriate and tailored ongoing formation is both an entitlement and an expectation for all staff for the whole of the duration of their employment in a Catholic School. Governing Boards should ensure that all members of staff participate regularly in an appropriate ongoing formation for their work in Catholic education.

Questions relating to the implementation of the requirements in this Memorandum should be addressed to your Diocese.

Bishop Marcus Stock
Chairman, Department for Catholic Education and
Formation 24th September 2024

³ *Gravissimum educationis*, Declaration on Christian Education (Vatican II, 1965) 8.

⁴ *Apostolorum Successores*: Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops (Congregation for Bishops, 2004).

⁵ *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982), 32.

3.Procedures for Appointment of Head of Religious Education

STAGE 1 – A Vacancy Arises

- Headteacher to contact the Diocese to arrange initial discussion and meeting

STAGE 2 - Initial Discussion / Meeting with Headteacher / Chair of Governors

- Diocesan checklist below used to inform discussion
- Appointments Panel membership considered

STAGE 3 – Recruitment Process

<p>a) Bishops’ Memorandum on Appointment of Teachers http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/employment-documents/bishops-memorandum</p>	
<p>b) Diocesan Update for Headteachers and Chairs on Senior Appointments www.educationshrewsbury.org Education-Information for Schools-Appointments Documentation (password-Education)</p>	
<p>c) Agree Job Description – provided by the school aligned to other core leadership roles</p>	
<p>d) Agree Person Specification – provided by the school using Diocesan guidance</p>	
<p>e) Confirm salary in line with school Pay Policy & existing core leadership roles</p>	
<p>f) Agree Appointment Panel - At least one Safer Recruitment trained panel member</p>	
<p>g) Dates agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advert ‘live’ • Closing date and time • Shortlisting (Appointment Panel must be available for both shortlisting and interview) 	
<p>h) Interview dates</p>	
<p>j) Advertisement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where; when; display/lineage; content; closing date • TES tel:02037338230 / website • Catholic Teachers Gazette adverts@ctgonline.co.uk, tel: 01302 239001 • Diocesan website: Malgorzata.Kowalska@dioceseofshrewsbury.org or Julie.English@dioceseofshrewsbury.org, tel: 0151 652 9855 • LA Website • Free service-https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk/ 	
<p>k) Documentation for candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from Headteacher • Advert • Job Description • Person Specification • Guidance for applicants in securing Faith Reference (Diocesan website) • CES Documentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CES Model Contract CES Notes to Applicants information 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CES Consent to obtain references information ensure GDPR section completed by school ✓ CES Rehabilitations of Offenders Act Disclosure Form ✓ CES Recruitment Monitoring Form - ensure GDPR section completed by school <p>Download from CES Website https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/recruitment-process for CES documents including application forms.</p>	
<p>12) Completed Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All application forms returned to....XXX 	

STAGE 4 - Shortlisting

- All applications to be shared with the appointment panel via school & diocesan email addresses as soon as possible following closing date and time.

PART 1

a) Consideration and discussion of applications against person specification	
b) Agree shortlisted candidates or decision to re-advertise	

PART 2

<p>a) Format of the selection process - consideration given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer / Celebration of the Word • Lesson Observation • Meetings with pupils / School Council • Data task • Presentation • Review of candidates performance to determine which candidates, if any, will progress to formal interview stage <p>Schedule details can be discussed and decided outside of the shortlisting meeting with Chair / sub group</p>	
b) Consideration given to online searches - KCSIE 2022	
<p>c) Informing shortlisted candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial 'phone / email invitation • Formal invitation documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Letter from the school ✓ Candidate's Declaration ✓ CES Contract (template contracts - most recent) ✓ Recruitment Monitoring Form – ensure GDPR section completed by school ✓ Rehabilitation of Offenders - ensure GDPR section completed by school ✓ Equality Statement 	
<p>d) Visits to school-who and when? (This would be the same person for each visitor and in practice this should be the School Business Manager or equivalent or a governor. It is important that all visitors receive the same information.)</p>	
e) Request faith and professional references- The Diocese will send for faith references and advise the appointment panel accordingly	
f) Agree panel arrival time for Interview Day	

STAGE 5 – INTERVIEW DAY SELECTION PROCESS

<p>a) Panel meet to finalise Schedule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tasks for the day made available ✓ Panel members assigned ✓ Feedback process and protocols agreed ✓ Hospitality arrangements – external venue 	
b) Confirmation of positive faith references received & no safeguarding concerns	
c) Feedback from tasks & initial deliberations as required	
d) Questions for panel interviews confirmed and assigned (Diocese can provide bank of questions for consideration)	

<p>e) Final deliberations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to Person Specification • Preferred candidate identified • Consideration of references for preferred candidate • Any areas for support and development considered to inform possible future induction • Decision to appoint made 	
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f) Confirm salary starting point	
g) Verbal offer of appointment may be made by 'phone subject to relevant checks including candidate declaration form	
h) Confidentiality of appointment process re-visited with appointments panel	

STAGE 6 – POST INTERVIEW

i) School to send offer letter to successful candidate (start date, salary starting point, checks etc)	
j) Contracts and appropriate paperwork completed as per school's usual HR processes. Inform the successful candidate that the school and diocese will be keeping copies of the application form and references on file according to the retention schedule.	
k) School to inform unsuccessful candidates of the outcome via telephone	
l) LA / Diocese to offer feedback to unsuccessful candidates if requested	

4. Job Description for Head of Religious Education

Schools are free to determine the specific job description details for this role for a practising Catholic. They must ensure that the job description for this position aligns with existing school job descriptions for other core subject leadership posts giving parity and status to RE as the 'core of the core'.

5. Person Specification for Head of Religious Education

Schools are free to determine person specification details for this role, but they must ensure that the details outlined below are included as part of the school's person specification criteria.

Faith Commitment

		Essential	Desirable	Source
1.	Practising Catholic	E		A/I/R
2.	Involvement in parish community		D	A/I/R
3.	A commitment to working with the Diocesan Education Team to support Religious Education within the school	E		A/I/R

Qualifications

		Essential	Desirable	Source
4.	Qualified teacher status	E		A/CC
5.	Degree level qualification	E		A/CC
6.	Degree level in Religious Studies or Theology		D	A/CC
7.	CCRS/CTC or commitment to obtaining the certificate		D	A/CC/I

6.Guidance for Applicants in Securing a Faith Reference

You have applied for a position in one of our Catholic schools which is reserved for a practising Catholic. This means that the person specification will state that is essential that you meet this criterion, and you must be able to evidence this with a positive faith reference from the priest(s) of the parish(es) where you attend the Sunday Eucharist and receive the sacraments. It is also vital that this reference is **current** and that the priest's knowledge of your practice is not historical. Priests will be asked to confirm a minimum of **12 months continuous practice**. A period of 12 months practice will also be required for those recently received into the Church

It is vital that the priest can verify your attendance at Sunday Mass and is not simply the priest linked to the school that you currently work in.

The Governing Body will be seeking to appoint a practising Catholic who joins in the parish celebration of the Sunday Mass and receives the sacraments regularly as well as living in accordance with the teachings of the Church

At a time when priests are increasingly assuming responsibility for larger pastoral areas it is becoming increasingly common for priests not to know parishioners as well as they might have in the past. In the light of this we offer the following advice when seeking faith references **prior to making an application**.

1. Speak to the priest before completing your application and ask if he agrees to your including him as a referee. (Do not simply email or leave a message on the parish answer phone)
2. Provide him with an outline of
 - your involvement in parish life e.g., Eucharistic minister, reader, etc (it may be that currently you are not heavily involved in parish life due to other commitments)
 - your present post – school, areas of responsibility
 - the post to which you are applying – name of school, post, etc
3. If you worship in more than one parish, then in order to satisfy weekly attendance of Mass you may need to specify more than one referee.

By following the above advice you are able to prepare the priest for the reference request and so ensure it will be completed as fully as possible.

Invitation to interview

If you are shortlisted, and receive an invitation to interview, then the governors will have made the **assumption** that your practice will be evidenced **prior to interview** by a supportive priest's reference. We therefore advise that on receiving notification of an interview you contact the priest again to check that he has received the reference request and he is still able to support your application. If the governors are not in receipt of a positive faith reference **prior to interview** then they will deem that you have not met one the essential criterion and will have to **withdraw** the invitation to interview. If there are circumstances that may prevent the priest replying within the given time frame (holidays, illness etc.) then please inform the relevant Diocesan officer as soon as this is known.

7.CES Online Searches Guidance



The 2022 update of Keeping Children Safe in Education includes a new step in the shortlisting process as follows (CES emphasis):

*“as part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges **should consider** carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview”.*

As Keeping Children Safe in Education is statutory guidance anything recommended as good practice should be followed unless there is a very good reason not to. The CES has discussed this requirement with the Department for Education as we are concerned that schools have not been provided with enough guidance as to what searches should be carried out and how. The Department for Education’s view is that recruiters will need to use their professional judgement in determining what searches to carry out and what weight to put on any information uncovered.

The CES expects Governing Boards to seek advice from their advisers as to the checks that should be carried out, the appropriate methods for carrying out such checks, what information should be retained about the checks carried out and the process that should be followed. Governing Boards will need to consider whether to carry the checks out internally or employ an external provider to carry out the checks on their behalf. Having taken advice, Governing Boards may decide that it is worth engaging an external adviser in order to ensure that consistent, independent checks are made for each candidate.

Before such searches are carried out by internal staff, Governing Boards will need to consider the following:

- Governing Boards should ensure that they have a written policy which sets out clearly what searches will be carried out and by whom. What training will individuals receive in order to ensure that they are able to follow any published policy? It may be sensible for the individual carrying out the searches to be somebody unconnected with the recruitment process in order to ensure that there is no bias.
- How will you ensure that the process is carried out consistently for each applicant? For example, how will you ensure that you always look for publicly available information in the same places for each shortlisted applicant?
- How will you record the searches carried out and the information uncovered?
- Who will be responsible for determining that any information uncovered is material and warrants either bringing the recruitment process to an end or asking further

questions at interview? If the recruitment process will be brought to an end this will need to be considered very carefully and advice should be taken.

- What information will you need to request from shortlisted applicants in order to conduct appropriate searches, for example Twitter handles? At shortlisting it will be necessary to ask for former names in order that searches can be carried out. What will the response be if the individual refuses to provide the information?
- How far back will you search?
- Do you need to update the privacy policy that you issue to applicants to make sure that they know what searches you will be carrying out?
- What is your policy for destroying any data once you no longer need it? Governing Boards should seek advice from their data protection advisers about whether any changes are needed to retention policies.
- What account will you use to conduct the searches? For example, you would not expect an individual member of staff to conduct a search from their personal Twitter account.
- How will you ensure that the information uncovered is not used in order to unlawfully discriminate against any of the candidates?
- Should a column be added to the single central register to confirm that the checks were carried out?
- How will you communicate any information uncovered internally?
- Will the firewalls in use at School enable the searches to be carried out?

Governing Boards must remember that the purpose of these searches is to uncover information which may indicate that the individual is unsuitable to work with children and/or where, if the information were discovered by students or parents it could lead to significant reputational damage for the School.

Any information uncovered must be publicly available and must be considered through this lens. Records should be kept of the decisions made and the reasons for them.