



Transferor Representatives' Council

TRANSFEROR GOVERNOR HANDBOOK



“LET NO ONE
DESPISE YOU FOR
YOUR YOUTH, BUT SET
THE BELIEVERS AN
EXAMPLE IN SPEECH,
IN CONDUCT, IN
LOVE, IN FAITH,
IN PURITY.”

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

FOREWORD

The Transferor Representatives' Council wishes to thank those who have agreed to serve in the important and influential role of transferor governor in a controlled school and hope that this booklet will be of help in clarifying and highlighting the following:

- a) The creative opportunities and responsibilities of governors in the promotion of a positive Christian ethos in their school.
- b) The importance of implementing the statutory core syllabus in Religious Education.
- c) The legal and statutory rights of the transferor Churches, (i.e. the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland) which are enshrined in an Act of Parliament.

With grateful thanks and prayerful best wishes in your influential work as a governor.

+ Ken Derry and Raphoe

Bishop Ken Good
Chairman, Transferor Representatives' Council

February 2018





INTRODUCTION



This short handbook seeks to provide transferor representatives with some basic information on:

- 1) The Christian principles which claim priority for education in the Church's witness both nationally and locally.
- 2) The values which shaped the Protestant Churches' involvement in educational development in Northern Ireland.
- 3) The nurture of the ethos and identity of the controlled school and the necessary contribution which Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist ministers and lay people make in upholding the same.
- 4) The role of a transferor governor.
- 5) Specific areas of transferor influence.

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES

Undergirding, informing and shaping the transferor Churches' involvement in education are certain basic biblical, Christian principles.

- 1) We believe that children are a gift from God. Each and every child has a unique value before God and must be enabled to flourish in his or her potential as a child of God.
- 2) True education must encourage the spiritual, mental, and physical development of each pupil.
- 3) The distinctiveness of controlled schools includes a commitment to put Christian faith and spiritual development at the heart of the curriculum.
- 4) High quality Religious Education and collective worship, as well as being statutory requirements, make an important contribution to the ethos of the school.
- 5) In our multi-faith society, schools must respect members of other faith traditions and welcome their presence and their contribution as enriching the school and its community.
- 6) Sensitivity, respect and tolerance are core values of controlled schools.



THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES, TRANSFERORS AND CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

Controlled schools are 'church-related schools' because in the 1930s, 40s and 50s, the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches transferred (hence the origin of *transferors*) their school buildings, pupils and staff into state control on the understanding that the Christian ethos of these schools would be maintained. During the transfer process, the Church leaders stressed that it was not simply buildings which were being transferred, but pupils, and a concept of education directly informed and shaped by Christian teaching and values.

In return for transferring their schools into state control the transferor churches were accorded statutory rights of representation. Schedule 4 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 details the provisions for transferor representation on the Boards of Governors of controlled schools.

In addition to statutory rights of representation the transferor churches secured legislative assurance in respect of the provision of Religious Education and daily collective worship in controlled schools as detailed in Part III Section 21 of The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.

The statutory rights accorded to the transferor churches and the consequent responsibilities placed upon the state combine to ensure the continued existence of a Christian ethos within controlled schools.

The transferor Churches work together at policy level, through the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) in respect of education matters in Northern Ireland.

The Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 provides the transferor Churches with a statutory right of representation on the Board of the Education Authority in accordance with the provisions set out in Schedule 1, Section 2(c) (I) of the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. The Department of Education recognises the Transferor Representatives' Council as the body representing the transferor Churches.



ETHOS

Ethos is reflected in a school's spirit, tone and atmosphere, and will reflect the school's core values. There may be opportunity for a school Board of Governors to discuss a mission statement and core values, perhaps when framing or reviewing the school prospectus or other policy documents. The TRC encourages such reflection and offers the following as a transferor's contribution to a discussion of the distinctive aims of a controlled school.

CORE VALUES

As Transferors, we understand the world and the place of humanity in it within the context of belief in God and the Christian faith. We urge that schools reflect the foundational Christian value of the revelation of God and humankind's response, through our concern for, and attitude to, others and the world in which we live.

An ethos of love and care should be highlighted through the development of the full human potential of each person - whether pupil, parent, governor or member of staff. The school should foster tolerance of, and respect for, the beliefs of others and should also respect the rights of those with no religious belief.

Controlled schools should place great value on high-quality Religious Education and collective worship in the promotion of their ethos. Religious Education should be afforded a proper position in time-tabling and resourcing, positively acknowledging its basic and fundamental value to the school (the provision of both Religious Education and collective worship are statutory requirements).

We encourage the inclusion of core values within the life of the school and its community, based upon the Bible and shared Christian understanding, which reflect:

- The rights and responsibilities of the individual
- Relationships within the school
- Preparation for adult life



OVERARCHING CHRISTIAN EMPHASES

Schools should promote Christ-like principles of:

- Forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Justice, compassion and peace in the world.
- Responsibility in using God-given talents.
- Love of God and neighbour.
- Stewardship of creation.



INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Schools should promote:

- Reflection on the purpose of life.
- The intrinsic value of the individual.
- The encouragement of the individual's gifts and talents.
- A sense of self-worth and self-esteem.
- Life-long learning.
- The acceptance that rights and privileges bring responsibilities.
- The role of conscience in discerning right or wrong attitudes or actions.

INTERRELATIONSHIP LEVEL

Schools should promote:

- Faithfulness in relationships.
- Friendship / loyalty.
- Appreciation of individual differences.
- Tolerance and a capacity to share.
- Interdependence and team work.
- Fairness / equality of opportunity.
- Honesty / integrity.
- Caring attitudes.
- Positives ways of resolving conflict.



PREPARATION FOR ADULT LIFE

Schools should promote:

- Responsible citizenship.
- Exploration of the values which build community.
- The importance of strong family relationships.
- Development of social skills.
- Awareness of environmental issues.
- A willingness to challenge injustice.
- An appreciation of the Christian heritage of this land and in the world.
- An appreciation of culture and the arts.
- An appreciation of the richness of cultural traditions.



THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME OF THE SCHOOL

Boards of Governors have the statutory responsibility to ensure that pupils have the opportunity of following a programme of study in Religious Education based on the Common Core Syllabus. This programme is part of the school curriculum and is organised in line with other subjects in the curriculum with attainment targets and statements of attainment. The Core Syllabus gives continuity so that the same materials are not always being repeated throughout the pupil's school career.

The Core is Bible-based with the following three learning objectives developed throughout the key stages:

- 1) **The Revelation of God** which explores ideas about God and the Bible (mainly Old Testament) and The Life of Jesus;
- 2) **The Christian Church** which explores the beginning and growth of the Church and aspects of worship and prayer;
- 3) **Morality.**

Schools may include, as appropriate, the study of other world religions. Indeed, currently at Key Stage 3 there is an intentional learning objective to facilitate this.

THE ROLE OF A GOVERNOR

Being a governor is both a rewarding and challenging role. Governors are asked to attend meetings in their school on a regular basis. They will deal with all aspects of governance of the school including finance, staffing issues, appointments, forward planning, safeguarding, complaints and inspections. The governance of a school is also subject to inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

Outside the regular meetings governors will be encouraged to be part of the life of the school and attend events and activities within the school. Transferor governors should participate fully in governor training, as provided by the Education Authority, the Controlled Schools' Support Council and the TRC, and be thoroughly acquainted with the contents of the Guide for Governors produced by the Department of Education (DE), and the DE approved Scheme of Management for their school along with their school's policies and procedures.

The role of governors can be challenging and you may have to deal with specific issues within the school such as staff discipline or complaints. This can be time consuming and difficult but as Christians we believe that service to the local community is a vital witness.

Governors have statutory duties and responsibilities. Governors can be liable if they are proven to have acted in a deliberately fraudulent manner, but no governor will incur personal liability in respect of any action taken in good faith in the exercise of the school Board's delegated duties and responsibilities. The Board of Governors is legally liable for decisions it makes and can access legal support from the Education Authority at any time. The Public Service Ombudsman's remit now extends to Boards of Governors for complaints concerning the school.

The responsibilities placed upon governors are entirely consistent with Christian principles of honesty and integrity. In addition it should be recognised that you are not alone as a governor. The Education Authority provides a comprehensive training programme for all governors, as well as advice and guidance services to cover every aspect of school management and education. The school principal is also there to provide professional leadership and management for the school on a daily basis. The Controlled Schools' Support Council (www.csscni.org.uk) has local support staff who can help with governor issues and there is support available from each of the three denominations. Each denomination has a representative for education and they can be contacted at the addresses and numbers found on the back cover.



SPECIFIC AREAS OF TRANSFEROR INFLUENCE

1) RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM - MONITORING AND RESOURCING

Governors have the legal duty of ensuring that provision is made for the teaching of Religious Education and collective worship. The statutory duties are set out in Appendix 2 but in addition transferor governors should ensure that:

- There are sufficient resources within the school for teaching Religious Education;
- Teachers of Religious Education have appropriate access to in-service training and that the in-service provision matches the identified needs of the school;
- Where programmes for development do not match the identified needs of the school, steps should be taken to ensure these needs are met;
- A head of Religious Education or a co-ordinator of Religious Education is appointed to guide and support other teachers who take part in the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum;
- Religious Education is allocated finance on a par with other major subjects/departments in the school to enable teachers to plan and carry out an appropriate programme for all pupils;
- The subject is adequately inspected and assessed;
- Religious Education is included in the school development plan to ensure that teaching and learning in the subject is being adequately monitored and developed.

2) COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Governors should ensure that the legal requirements for daily collective worship are being fulfilled in a sensitive and satisfactory manner. The law states that “the school day... shall also include collective worship whether in one or more than one assembly” – Article 21, The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. (See Appendix 2 for full details of the statutory requirements).

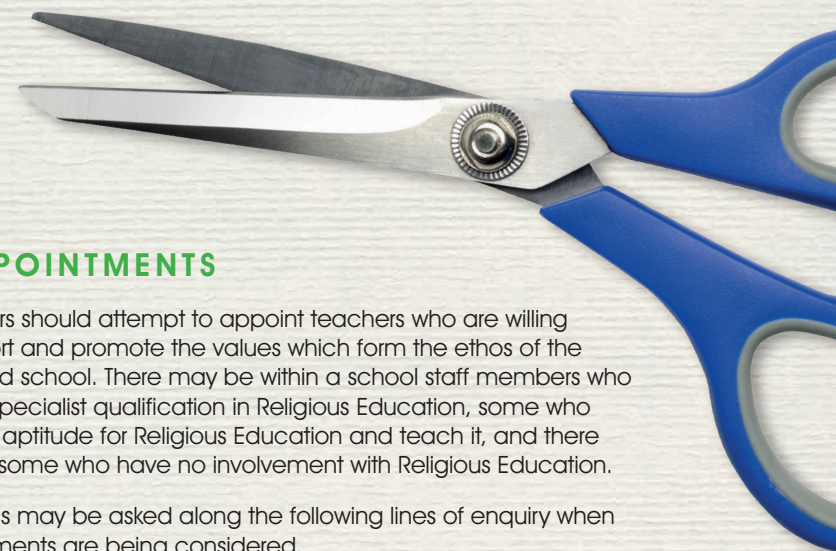
3) APPOINTMENTS

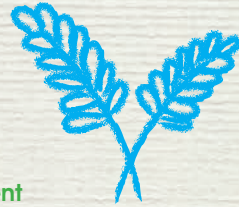
Governors should attempt to appoint teachers who are willing to support and promote the values which form the ethos of the controlled school. There may be within a school staff members who have a specialist qualification in Religious Education, some who have an aptitude for Religious Education and teach it, and there may be some who have no involvement with Religious Education.

Questions may be asked along the following lines of enquiry when appointments are being considered.

i) Interview for Principalship

- a) Religious Education and daily worship are key factors influencing the ethos of a school. By what means would you encourage and promote effective R.E. teaching and school assemblies and what relationships with the Churches in the community would you actively encourage?
- b) The Education Reform Order speaks of the aims of the Northern Ireland Curriculum as being, amongst other things, to ‘promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of the pupils’. How would you seek to do this in your school, in terms of spiritual and moral values?
- c) How important would a morning assembly be to you - and what would you be aiming to achieve through it?
- d) The Education Reform Order calls for the Principal to organise a daily act of worship in the school. Have you ever had to organise public worship before? If not, have you given any thought to how you might go about it?
- e) Religious Education is often seen as a relatively unimportant subject in the school curriculum. What would you as the Principal do to at least place it on a par with other subjects?





ii) Interview for Head of Religious Education Department

(The following questions may also be adapted for use when appointing a teacher to undertake the role of RE Co-ordinator in a primary school.)

- a) As Head of the Religious Education Department, how would you encourage the Principal and other teachers to treat your subject as being every bit as important as other specialisms?
- b) What role, if any, do you think the local clergy ought to have in helping you to provide an effective Religious Education programme in your department?
- c) At the end of five years of teaching, what would you hope a pupil would have gained as the result of the work that you and your colleagues have done in the R.E. department?
- d) If you were allocated teachers whom you knew were not enthusiastic or keen to teach R.E., what would you do to encourage and motivate them?
- e) Many pupils come from homes where religion and spiritual matters are not a high priority. How would you hope to convince such pupils that what you have to offer is at least as important as English and Mathematics?
- f) How would you establish and maintain the status of R.E. as a key subject on the curriculum of every pupil and in what ways do you see the subject being integrated into and influencing the whole life of the school?
- g) The statutory R.E. syllabus is a 'core' syllabus. What additional topics would you add to this core and why?
- h) Are there any special difficulties which may be encountered in the teaching of R.E. in schools and in particular in building on the core syllabus? How can these be overcome?
- i) What resources are important for the efficient and effective work of an R.E. Department?

iii) Interview for a teacher of a specific or general subjects with Religious Education

- a) What can you as a teacher do, to make Religious Education attractive to young people, and to help them consider the significance of a spiritual/religious dimension in their lives and the life of their community?

iv) Interview with any teacher, including Principal or Head of Department

- a) This school claims that it aims, amongst other things, to create a Christian ethos. How would you hope that a visitor to the school might recognise it? What do you think you can do to help fulfil that aim?



APPENDIX 1



AN EXAMPLE OF A POLICY STATEMENT ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

AIMS:

- 1) To encourage the development of a Christian ethos throughout the school community.
- 2) To help pupils to see that worship is a relevant part of daily life.
- 3) To illustrate the practical outworking of faith in the lives of people, both biblical and historical, as guides to pupils in the living of their daily lives.
- 4) To encourage pupils to reflect on their own existence, and the questions which life poses.
- 5) To develop a sense of 'community' in the school.
- 6) To provide an opportunity for general school announcements, and for the presentation of awards, etc.

APPENDIX 2



(The following is an extract from the DE Guide for Governors.)

STATUTORY DUTIES OF BOARDS OF GOVERNORS IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP.

The Boards of Governors of all controlled schools have a statutory duty to ensure that provision is made for Religious Education in the curriculum. The programme for Religious Education must be in line with the core syllabus for Religious Education specified by DE, which can be accessed on the Curriculum and Assessment page of the

DE website. Schools are then free to build upon this in a way that best suits the needs of their pupils and the ethos of the school.

The Board of Governors is responsible for ensuring that:

- In a controlled school, the programme of Religious Education is nondenominational.
- The core syllabus for Religious Education as specified by DE, is taught in the school.
- The school is accessible to pupils of all religious denominations for teaching in subjects other than Religious Education.
- No pupils will be excluded directly or indirectly from the other advantages provided by the school.
- Pupils are partly or wholly excused from attendance at Religious Education if their parents make such a request.
- There is no variation in payments from public funds in respect of a pupil because of their non-attendance at Religious Education.
- Ministers of religion and other suitable persons, including teachers, to whom parents do not object, are given reasonable access at convenient times to pupils other than in nursery and special schools, to provide Religious Education according to the tenets of a particular religious denomination or otherwise.
- Ministers of religion and other suitable persons, including teachers, to whom parents do not object, are given reasonable access at convenient times to pupils other than in nursery and special schools, to inspect and examine the Religious Education provided.
- Teachers who request part or whole exemption from teaching Religious Education, are granted it provided the request to the Board of Governors is made solely on the grounds of conscience.
- Teachers who are so exempted by the Board of Governors, are not paid at a lesser rate or deprived of, or disqualified from, promotion or any other advantage because of this exemption.



The Inspection of Religious Education

When a school is being inspected, the inspectors will not inspect Religious Education except with the agreement of the Board of Governors of the school.

Collective Worship

School Boards of Governors have a statutory duty to ensure that the school day includes collective worship through one or more pupil assemblies. At an assembly, the Board of Governors should make arrangements to ensure that:

- pupils are partly or wholly excused from attendance from acts of worship if their parents make such a request.
- there is no variation in payments from public funds in respect of a pupil because of their non-attendance at collective worship.
- teachers who request part or whole exemption from conducting or attending collective worship, are granted it provided the request to the Board of Governors is made solely on the grounds of conscience.
- teachers who are so exempted by the Board of Governors, are not paid at a lesser rate or deprived of, or disqualified from, promotion or any other advantage because of this exemption.

Complaints about Religious Education or Collective Worship

In the event of a complaint that the Board of Governors has acted or is proposing to act unreasonably with respect to the exercise of its powers or the performance of its duties relating to Religious Education or collective worship, the complaint will be considered by an Independent Complaints Tribunal. This tribunal will be established by the EA.

The Law

Primary Legislation

The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 - Article 21 (*Religious Education and collective worship in controlled and voluntary schools, other than nursery or special*)

The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 - Articles 22 (*duties of teachers in controlled schools as to Religious Education and collective worship*)

Education (NI) Order 2006 - Article 25 2(d) (*complaints relating to Religious Education and collective worship*)

Education (NI) Order 2006 - Article 11 (*Core syllabus for Religious Education*)

The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 - Article 5(1)(a) (*Religious Education*)

The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 - Article 12 (*the curriculum*)

The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 - Article 13 (*core syllabus for Religious Education*)

The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 - Article 30(7) (*duties of Inspectors*)

Guidance

Further information on Religious Education can be accessed on the Curriculum and Assessment page of the DE website at:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/religious-education-core-syllabus>

APPENDIX 3



Sources of further information and guidance:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/schools/school-governors/>

<http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/school-governors/school-policy-documents-and-resources/a-guide-for-governors/>

<http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/school-governors/school-policy-documents-and-resources/scheme-of-management/>

<http://www.csscni.org.uk/>



CHURCHES' BOARDS/COMMITTEES

The Church of Ireland

The Secretary
The General Synod Board of Education (Northern Ireland)
Church of Ireland House
61-67 Donegall Street
Belfast BT1 2QH
Tel: (028) 9082 8860

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Public Affairs Officer
The State Education Committee
Assembly Buildings
2-10 Fisherwick Place
Belfast BT1 6DW
Tel: (028) 9041 7204

The Methodist Church in Ireland

The Secretary
The Board of Education
1 Fountainville Avenue
Belfast BT9 6AN
Tel: (028) 9032 4554

