

Christian Ethos Groups and Committees

Recognising their historic foundation, Church schools will preserve and develop their Christian character and distinctiveness in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level. The Diocese of Exeter recommends that an Ethos committee be established to ensure this.

There are several models which can be employed to do this. Governors can establish an Ethos group which could include a local church representative, the member of staff responsible for RE and collective worship, a parent governor and a foundation governor. This group is not necessarily a committee of the governing body, with delegated authority, as there are members which are not governors. However they do report back to full governors through minutes and feedback from one of the governor members. This model may work better in a federation with several church schools where each school needs a local group to support its ethos and Christian distinctiveness.

It is also possible for this group to be a committee, with delegated powers from the full governing body, with a slightly different make up. In this case, the members would all be governors, or associate members of the governing body, with a similar make up to the group above. This committee can represent all church schools in a federation and would need to ensure that there is representation from each Church school (and possibly other schools) in a federation.

Below are suggested models for an ethos committee and a group. Statements from each of the two models could be selected and adapted to form the basis of the terms of reference for your school(s).

An Example an Ethos Committee

Terms of Reference

The main purposes of this committee are:

- to preserve and develop the Christian character and distinctiveness of the school
- to ensure the pastoral care of the children and staff including how the school meets the needs of learners through its distinctive Christian character and teaching
- to promote Community Cohesion including the relationship between the Church and the school(s)
- to review and develop Collective Worship
- to review and develop Religious Education
- to monitor and take forward the SIAMS action plan

Suggested Membership:

There shall be no fewer than (suggested minimum of 4) members including

- the member of staff responsible for RE and collective worship,
- a foundation governor
- the executive head (or heads in co-headship model)
- a parent governor
- an associate member may be included, perhaps a local church representative

Meetings

- The committee will meet at least once per term and at other times as required.
- The committee will have the same procedural arrangements for the scheduling of meetings and circulation of agendas and papers as the full governing body.

Reporting

The committee shall present a report on its activity to the full governing body meeting each term to include:

- all decisions taken under delegated powers
- a monitoring report on progress in addressing the SIAMS action plan

The terms of reference and membership of the committee will be reviewed annually by the full governing body at its first meeting of the school year.

An Example of an Ethos Group

Terms of Reference

The Group shall make such recommendations as are required to ensure the maintenance and development of the Christian Ethos of (name of school or schools).

The main purposes of this group are:

- to preserve and develop the Christian character and distinctiveness of the school
- to nurture the spiritual dimension of children and staff in accordance with the Mission Statement and Aims
- to review and develop Collective Worship
- to review and develop Religious Education
- to advise the governing body on establishing, maintaining and developing a high quality of communication between the school and the parents, the church and the wider community
- to oversee pastoral care of children, staff, governors and the wider community

Membership:

There shall be no fewer than (suggested 6) members including

- a local church representative
- the head of teaching and learning (or head in a co-headship model)
- the member of staff responsible for RE and collective worship
- a parent governor
- a foundation governor

The lead governor/chair will provide a report of recommendations to the Full Governing Body at each meeting.

A suggested impact reporting format can be found on this website.