

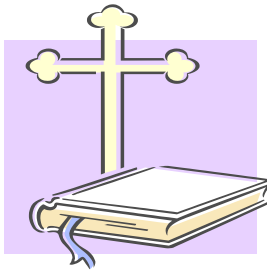
### Useful Addresses:

Commission for Schools and Colleges  
St Edward's House  
St Paul's Wood Hill  
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BR5 2SR  
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Coordinator of School and College Chaplains  
Archdiocese of Southwark:  
Barbara Ring - (above address)

Christian Education Centre  
21 Tooting Bec Road  
London  
SW17 8BS  
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Southwark Catholic Youth Service  
St Vincent's Centre, Castle Road  
Whitstable, Kent  
CT5 2ED  
Tel: 01227 272900

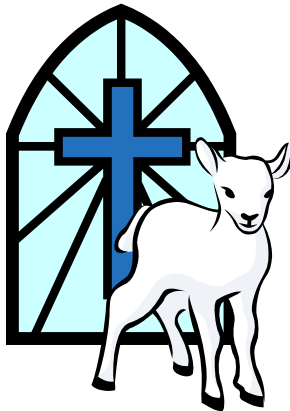


# The Role of the Clergy in the Catholic Primary School



Archdiocese of Southwark

This document builds on previous Diocesan Guidelines ***'The Role of the Clergy in the Catholic Primary School'***



**Recommended Reading:**

The Parish Child Protection Guidelines

**School documentation** such as:

Child Protection Guidelines

Policies for Religious Education, Collective Worship, Personal Social Health Education and Sex and Relationships Education

Special Educational Needs documentation

The Religious Education programme of study used by the school e.g. *'Here I Am'* *'The Way, the Truth and the Life'*

The Common Good in Education (CES publication 1997)

The Distinctive nature of a Catholic School (*CES Publication 1999*)

Chaplaincy - The Change and the Challenge - (*pub on behalf of ACCE 1996*)

A Guide to the Employment of Lay Chaplains in Schools & Colleges (*CES*)

Guidelines for Schools & College Chaplaincy -2007

General Directory for CATECHESIS (Catholic Truth Society 1997)

On the Threshold (The Report of the Bishops' Conference Working Party on Sacramental Initiation - Matthew James Publishing Ltd 2000)

Archdiocese of Southwark *'Becoming More Like Christ'* Guidelines for the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation (Christian Education Centre Publication 2009)

Archdiocese of Southwark: Our Vision for Catholic Education



## Suggested ways in which clergy can be involved in the life of the Catholic Primary School

- Regular visits.
- Planned programme of children's Masses for school/church as well as planned programme of class or whole school visits (to be logged in the school diary of events).
- Celebrating school/class Masses, Reconciliation services, assemblies involving the school community, including parents.
- Participating in activities which support the school programme for religious education (e.g. visits to the church to talk about its history, artefacts, vestments, signs and symbols of Baptism).
- Attending classroom celebrations (these could be pupil or teacher led).
- Sharing own interests with the pupils to support other areas of the curriculum (e.g. ICT, map reading, music and travel).
- Accompanying groups of pupils and teachers on school outings or school journeys.
- Chatting with pupils at lunchtime, playtimes, etc.
- Introducing other visitors to the school (e.g. Missionaries on home visits, workers from diocesan agencies, key figures in the local community, other faith leaders).
- Reading stories to younger pupils.
- Contributing to whole school events (e.g. Book Week, RE Week, sports day)
- Helping to prepare and celebrate liturgy for staff (welcoming new members of staff, celebrating the beginning/end of the school year).
- Attending relevant staff in-service on such issues as Child Protection, Whole School Development Planning, Review of the Mission Statement.
- Participating in the social life of the school (e.g. bazaars, school/staff celebrations, productions, prize-giving).
- Finding ways to promote and celebrate the life of the school through displays of work in the parish or parishes served.
- Liaising between school and parish on a range of ventures such as Harvest Festival, Holy Childhood, CABRINI Society.

## Introduction

Catholic Education is of the highest importance. Where clergy and school work together in partnership, the life and mission of the church is immeasurably enhanced.

We stand on holy ground.  
Every child,  
every young person,  
every adult  
is a unique image of God.

*(Archdiocese of Southwark:: Our Vision for Catholic Education)*

***The Role of the Clergy in the Catholic Primary School*** seeks to provide a structure within which schools and clergy can work together in partnership. It is important to stress that this document is concerned with highlighting general areas. The individual school and priest/deacon will need to adapt the document to the particular situation, recognising that there are a variety of pastoral contacts with the school. It is hoped that it will encourage fruitful and harmonious collaboration. This is a challenge for both schools and clergy and we hope this document will be helpful in further developing the role of the clergy in Catholic primary schools.



## General Principles:

Good communication is essential in any relationship, as is the need to value each other's role. It is advisable at the beginning of each school year that clergy discuss and agree the degree of availability and involvement with the school. Where circumstances change there should be an opportunity to reassess the situation. Always remember the need for flexibility and mutual respect.

Confidentiality should be respected at all times. This applies to both school staff members and clergy. It is important to remember that in matters of child protection this cannot always be the case (see school's Child Protection Policy for further guidance).

Clergy should be ready to support the ethos and values of the school and be aware of the school's mission statement.

Clergy should have an awareness of current developments and pressures in education generally and in religious education in particular. In the same way, the school should have an understanding and appreciation of the pressures and difficulties under which clergy operate, bearing in mind that we are living at a time when priests are getting fewer, older and have more pastoral responsibilities, thus reducing the time they have available for work in schools.

The roles of governor and that of pastoral care are distinct. Where clergy are also governors there must be clarity on both the part of the school and the member of the clergy as to the purpose of any visit or involvement in the school. This is particularly important when working in classrooms.

The school should ensure that clergy are aware of daily procedures and routines e.g. in the dining-room, playtimes, dismissing class.

Clergy should value the wide diversity of cultures which may be present in the school community.

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## Aims for Clergy visiting and involved in a Catholic Primary School

**Accompanying and sharing** the story of all within the school.

**Helping** all in the school community to appreciate the work of God in their lives.

**Supporting** all in the school community as they attempt to answer life's problems and helping them shape the questions.

**Being** a living witness to the Christian way of life.

**Listening** to the concerns of all in the school community and helping to deal with them.

**Animating** the liturgy, including school and class masses.

**Being** a presence around the school and meeting members of the community informally, e.g. in the dining room, staff room, playground, school gate.

**Giving** encouragement where and when it is needed.

**Having** the courage to try things out and then reflect on failure as well as success.

**Knowing** your people -the pupils, staff and all who work within and for the school.

**Being** what you need to be: **prophet, presence, bridge-builder.**

**Appreciating and Enjoying** the happiness and inspiration that being part of the school community can give and sharing its joys and sorrows.

Adapted from **Being a Chaplain**, Association of Catholic Chaplains in Education.

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### Parents:

Clergy have a key role in the parish-school-home partnership. Clergy and parents develop their relationship in many different ways, not only by clergy meeting families at Sunday Mass and visiting them in their own homes but also by meeting them after school, at class Masses or assemblies, the school gate, open evenings and other social events in the life of the school.

*Partnership with parish communities and deaneries is vital for the identity and 'belonging' of the school. The school will be able to offer expertise in communicating the faith to children and young people. Parish priests will provide sacramental and pastoral ministry to schools and promote Catholic schools as the first choice for parents. (Archdiocese of Southwark, Our Vision for Catholic Education p23)*

There may be times when, in order to support a family within the school, information needs to be shared about the family between the member of the clergy and the headteacher, always remembering the need for confidentiality.

Priests who provide information and are also governors in the school must not be members of an admissions committee and must not take part in the governors' discussions relating to applications and decisions on who should be offered places.  
*(Diocesan Guidance on Admissions)*

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### Children:

Clergy need to be familiar with whole school policies on: Child Protection, Behaviour Management, Special Needs, Anti-bullying, Anti-racism, Personal Social Health Education, Sex and Relationships Education, and support them.

The role of the clergy in the classroom needs to be negotiated by both clergy and the staff.

Clergy can take the opportunity for getting to know the children in informal situations, such as at playtimes, or when working with a small group of children in class (see section on ways in which clergy can be involved in the life of the Catholic Primary School).

There is a need to be aware of, and sensitive to, those children with special educational needs.

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### Staff:

In order for the priest/deacon to develop his role within the school successfully it is important for the member of the clergy and the headteacher to develop a good working relationship.

It is important for clergy to get to know all members of staff by name and the various roles they play in the life of the school, particularly the Special Needs and Religious Education coordinators. All new members of staff should also be introduced to the clergy who are involved with the school.

Clergy need to be familiar with the Collective Worship Policy and Procedure, as well as the policies and programmes of study for Religious Education, Personal Social Health Education and Sex and Relationships programmes used by the school.

Many schools have a staff handbook and it may be helpful if the member of clergy is included in the handbook and given a copy. Likewise, if the parish produces a parish directory it would be helpful if this could be made available to the school.

There are times when the school community comes under great stress. At such times the support and affirmation of the clergy are of great value.

It would be good practice to provide a 'pigeon hole' alongside those of staff where information, newsletters, invitations and liturgies, etc., could be placed for the attention of the clergy.

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### **Liturgy:**

Liturgy can be celebrated in many ways. Schools and clergy need to be open to a variety of liturgical celebrations. On some occasions, it would be appropriate for clergy to lead, whilst on others, the teacher or children would lead.

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### **Governors:**

The priest or deacon who regularly visits the school is there to support all members of the school community, including the governors.

As has already been said, he may or may not be a member of the Governing Body. If he is, a distinction should be made between the two roles which is clear to all. If he is not a member of the Governing Body, there may be times when the Governing Body needs to make him aware of certain issues in order for him to exercise his pastoral role in the school.

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### **Parish Links:**

It is the task of both school and clergy to foster good relationships between school and parish and they should act collaboratively in this endeavour. While the school is a community in its own right, it should be remembered that it is part of the wider parish community.

*Catholic families will support local Catholic schools where the importance of Catholic education is emphasised within the parish, and especially by parish priests. (Archdiocese of Southwark, Our Vision for Catholic Education p16)*

The school as part of the parish-school-home partnership also has its part to play. It would be desirable if all children attending the school, who are being prepared in the parish for the sacraments, are supported by both the clergy and the school.

*Sacramental preparation has its rightful place within the parish catechesis programme. It is good practice for schools to liaise as closely as possible with local parishes in order to ensure appropriate support and connections between parish sacramental preparation and school religious education programmes. (Archdiocese of Southwark, Policy on Religious Education and Collective Worship)*

Both clergy and school should be willing to support their families and to liaise with other parishes where necessary. It is recognised that some schools may serve more than one parish. Where this is the case, the clergy can act as the bridge and be proactive in promoting the school in the parish or parishes it serves.

*Good communication between the home, school and parish is vital. Notice boards in both parish and school could be used to create a link using themes common to the curriculum and the sacramental preparation. Hymns used in parish preparation could be used in school assemblies and Collective Worship. (Archdiocese of Southwark 'Becoming More Like Christ' p32)*

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