

# **GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CHAPLAINCY**

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## PREFACE

Chaplaincy is a central and integral part of the life and work of our Catholic schools and colleges. For our young people that are not just places in which to learn and acquire skills. They are places where young people grow in faith and in belonging to the Church. Enabling this process is no easy task, living as we do in a highly secularised society often hostile to the Church and the Gospel. I wish to thank all those in our schools and colleges who work to nurture faith and to build up communion. Among them, chaplains and chaplaincy teams have a special role in collaboration with the whole learning community. I welcome these guidelines and hope they will provide direction and encouragement to all who are involved in this vital dimension of the life of our schools and colleges.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Kevin". The plus sign is a simple cross, and the name "Kevin" is written in a cursive, slightly slanted script.

+Kevin McDonald  
Archbishop of Southwark

## INTRODUCTION

School Chaplains are called to be witnesses of the love and care of God and his Church for the school community. Our Catholic schools are a fundamental part of the mission of the Church and the vision of Chaplaincy held by the school must be rooted in Gospel values.

The ministry of the Chaplain demands that he or she is a catalyst for action and reflection and will both enthuse and challenge the whole community to respond to God's call to discipleship in a Catholic context. This primarily achieved by the witness of the Chaplain's own life and also by his or her involvement in the spiritual, liturgical and pastoral life of the school and being available to all members of the school community.

These Guidelines aim to direct and assist those working in Chaplaincy, primarily in secondary and 6<sup>th</sup> Form education and also those in the primary sector, together with the governors and leadership team of the schools that employ them.

Sheila Connolly  
Diocesan Coordinator for School and College Chaplaincy

*(In this document 'school' is taken to mean both schools and 6<sup>th</sup> Form colleges)*

## MODELS OF CHAPLAINCY

*You shall be my witnesses (Acts. 1:8)*

Increasingly, schools and colleges now employ full-time Chaplains, many of whom are lay people.<sup>1</sup> There remain, however, some institutions where Chaplaincy provision is undertaken by a local priest or deacon on a part-time basis, or by a lay person who visits the school regularly, but who does so in a voluntary capacity, and with others who will make up a 'Chaplaincy Team'. In some schools and colleges, the team will include young people and adults. In many places, the shared responsibilities of the lay and ordained demonstrate the best examples of collaborative ministry.<sup>2</sup>

Whatever arrangements are made by the school or college, it is important that there is chaplaincy provision within each institution. Following national guidelines, it is also important that there is a distinction between Chaplaincy and other areas, e.g. religious education, pastoral care and counselling, although the Chaplain may work closely with these and other groups. *A Guide to the Employment of Lay Chaplains*<sup>3</sup> will be helpful to institutions in the appointment of part-time and voluntary chaplains.

In the case of paid chaplains, either full-time or part-time, schools and colleges are responsible for drawing up job descriptions, arranging line-management structures and providing support through performance management and target setting.

When the Chaplain is working on a voluntary basis it is recommended that a job description be drawn up and agreed by both the School and the Chaplain,<sup>4</sup> so that areas of responsibility are clear and support and accountability are ensured.

It is important that proper induction, and ongoing opportunities for training and formation are provided.<sup>5</sup> These should be available to all Chaplains whether ordained, religious or lay, full or part-time, employed or voluntary and should be provided or funded by the employer.

It is expected that the Diocesan Coordinator for School and College Chaplaincy<sup>6</sup> be made aware of all those working as Chaplains in order that information regarding meetings, courses etc. can be passed on and support offered.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that, in Canon Law, a Chaplain is a priest (c.564). The paper concerns the ministry to our young people in schools and colleges that is exercised collaboratively by clergy and laity and is without prejudice to the prescription of Canon Law.

<sup>2</sup> Bishops' Conference of England & Wales, *The Sign we give*, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> CES/ACCE, *A Guide to the Employment of Lay Chaplains*, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Appendices.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Chapter 8.

<sup>6</sup> cf. Diocesan Directory.

## THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAPLAIN

### Appointments

The Chaplain has a distinctive rôle in the life of the school community and works with all the members of the school community, including the Governors.

- The Chaplain is appointed by the Governors
- the Archbishop will be represented on the interviewing panel, usually (in the case of Secondary Schools) by the Secondary Schools Advisor.
- When a Chaplaincy post is to be advertised, the school or college should inform the Commission for Schools and Colleges.

Applicants must be practising Catholics with a clear commitment to the Catholic Church and have the necessary aptitude and skills for the post. References from the applicant's Parish priest must be taken up as a part of the appointment process.

All appointments should be made on the condition that the applicant will have an enhanced CRB check.

The salary of paid chaplains should be established according to national guidelines.<sup>7</sup> Appropriate funding should be provided for those working on a voluntary basis.

### Resources

- It is important that the Chaplain has a room from which to work, which is suitable for private consultations and which satisfies Child Protection policies. This also ensures that Chaplaincy is seen as significant within the school.<sup>8</sup>
- Appropriate facilities such as a telephone, computer or administrative/secretarial support should be available.
- It is strongly recommended that the Chaplain be a member of the Association of Catholic Chaplains in Education (ACCE) and attend Diocesan Chaplaincy meetings.

### Funding

Chaplaincy will require funding for resources, in-service training and supervision. It is suggested that the Chaplaincy budget is separate from any other department and managed by the Chaplain according to the school's financial guidelines.

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<sup>7</sup> cf. A Guide to the Employment of Lay Chaplains, p.21.

<sup>8</sup> cf. A Guide to the Employment of Lay Chaplains, p.21.

## THE ROLE OF THE CHAPLAINCY IN THE LIGHT OF THEOLOGY, SCRIPTURE, GOD AND THE CHURCH

*This Sacred Council of the Church earnestly entreats pastors and all the faithful to spare no sacrifice in helping Catholic Schools fulfil their function in a continually more perfect way, and especially in caring for the needs of those who are poor in the goods of this world or who are deprived of the assistance and affection of a family or who are strangers to the gift of Faith.<sup>9</sup>*

This quotation from the Second Vatican Council provides a context for the rôle of the Chaplaincy: namely, to help each member of the school or college community to become more aware of God's presence and to empower them to celebrate that presence and live out their response to that experience of God.

The Chaplain supports the headteacher and senior leadership team in encouraging the school community to recognise the presence of God in their own lives; in the lives of those people around them; in the world in which they live and in particular in the situations in which they find themselves. The Chaplain helps individuals and the school or college community to recognise and respond to the presence of God in the celebration of Mass, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and through sacramental preparation supported by the school. Assemblies, times of prayer, retreats and the Catholic ethos and atmosphere of the school are other privileged opportunities for recognising and celebrating God's presence.

Chaplains also support the Religious Education staff in helping the young people to make the connection between the academic study of religion and work to support an understanding of human relationships that is in accordance with the teachings of the Church and the Diocesan Guidelines.<sup>10</sup> Many people in schools and colleges need to be assured of the love and mercy of God in the everyday experiences of their lives, in their struggles with studies and survival, with dysfunctional homes and bereavement, in the violence they may experience at home and on the streets. Chaplaincy is involved in the negative and painful experiences as well as in the positive and joyful experiences of the life of the community. Chaplains are convinced that there are no times or limits to God's invitations or challenges to accept salvation. They help young people to work to build the reign of God in their world, as their response to their own realisation of God's love and mercy. They encourage them to build a world of love, justice and peace in collaboration with people of other faiths and with others of good will.

The work of the Chaplain will be informed and inspired by Scripture. For example:

- We are called to be, in the image used by St. Paul, 'Ambassadors of Jesus Christ'.<sup>11</sup>
- We are invited to 'learn of Jesus', to be 'Good Shepherds'<sup>12</sup> towards our young people who are often lost or rootless in their world.
- Another image of the Chaplain's rôle as 'Guardian Angels'<sup>13</sup> may be appropriate when ministering to those who are still growing and developing in their humanity, faith and practice.

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<sup>9</sup> Gravissimum Educationis, n.9.

<sup>10</sup> cf. Diocesan Policy for Education in Human Love.

<sup>11</sup> 2 Cor. 5:20.

<sup>12</sup> Jn.10.

<sup>13</sup> Mt. 18:10.

## THE PASTORAL REALITY AND CONTEXT FOR CHAPLAINCY IN EDUCATION

*Some young people are searching for a deeper understanding of their religion; as they reflect on the true meaning of life they begin to find answers to their questions in the Gospel. Others have already passed through the crisis of indifference and doubt and are now ready to commit themselves – or recommit themselves – to a Christian way of life.<sup>14</sup>*

Many young people are excited by and involved in the Church, both at a parish level and in new movements. Therefore, the Church continues to renew its understanding of how to reach out to and welcome young people, and to communicate to them in a way that is relevant and effective, whilst drawing from the rich tradition of the Church.

*The Catholic school is confronted with children and young people who experience the difficulties of the present time.<sup>15</sup>*

In order to be effective, Chaplains need to be aware of the changing realities in the lives of those to whom they minister, both in the educational environment and in society. This section seeks to highlight some of many generalised trends that make up the pastoral challenges facing Catholic education in serving our young people, the challenges that demand a pastoral response through the ministry of the Chaplain.

### **The National Context**

The Catholic Church finds itself in a society that is increasingly secular. This, in part, is due to the social trends and values held by a significant majority of the population. Our society has become more multi-cultural in its make-up, bringing with this reality exposure to other religious faiths and traditions. Young people are affected by these social realities:

- The search for authentic human relationships in the light of widespread marital breakdown and much instability in the home environment.
- Consumer and media driven society and accompanying pressures.
- Global communications raise issues which cause worry and insecurity and yet provide opportunities to respond to the challenges that these present.
- Stress related issues arising from a continual change in education based on a performance related mentality.

As a result, some young people may turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as alcohol, drugs, pornography, anti-social behaviour and patterns of violence. Other manifestations of a deep unease can be seen in the rise of eating disorders, in self-harming and in the number of suicides among young people. Young people also need help to develop an appropriate understanding of chastity in the highly sexualised culture in which they are growing up. This is an area in which the rôle of the Church and chaplaincy is truly counter-cultural, but

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<sup>14</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, n.18.

<sup>15</sup> *The Catholic School in the threshold of the Third Millennium*, n.6.



experience shows that young people respond very positively when a genuinely Christian vision of marriage and sexuality is presented to them.

Our Catholic youth find themselves within this culture and are just as susceptible to its effects. In addition, many young Catholics can feel alienated from the Church community to which they belong, as they question the relevance of the rituals, teaching and traditions and their place within the Church. Their parents may often have a poor grasp of their faith or can even be ambivalent about its importance.

Consequently, our schools and colleges have become places on the frontline, in terms of faith formation and basic evangelisation of our young people. In fact, for many of our Catholic youth their school community is their only contact with the Catholic Church, in effect becoming their 'parish'.

The challenge is to engage the natural enthusiasm, idealism and generosity of young people. This means giving opportunities to build positive relationships with them.

### **The impact of the school**

In the midst of this situation, it is the responsibility of our educational institutions to be true examples of Christian living:

*The influence of the Church in the field of education is shown in a special manner by the Catholic school. No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue cultural goals and human formation of youth. But its proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and humanity is illumined by faith. So indeed the Catholic school while it is open, as it must be, to the situation of the contemporary world, leads its students to promote efficaciously the good of the earthly city and also prepares them for service in the spread of Kingdom of God, so that by leading an exemplary apostolic life they become, as it were, a saving leaven in the human community.<sup>16</sup>*

Catholic education often finds itself having to be counter-cultural. Our schools and colleges are places where all are welcomed and treated in justice and respect. They are places where a holistic approach to human education and development is at the core of its teaching and where a sense of Christian vocation is fostered. The school leadership and its governors help in ensuring that our places of education are indeed models of Christian community. The Chaplain also has an important prophetic rôle in affirming, challenging and reminding the community of its Catholic ethos and mission.

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<sup>16</sup> Gravissimum Educationis, n.8.

## The Diocesan Context

What has been already commented on at a national level can, for a large part, be applied to our diocesan context. The diocese seeks to meet the educational needs through primary, comprehensive, mixed and single-sex schools, sixth form colleges and private educational establishments. The goal of these institutions is to build community within very diverse social realities encountering the same post-Christian and pluralistic society already mentioned.

Our diocese is multi-cultural. This brings many challenges and opportunities in building community with people of varying cultures, races and faith expression. Whilst this provides opportunities for celebrating diversity and inclusion, it also calls for addressing religious or racial intolerance. Often our Catholic schools are welcoming to students from other Christian traditions, other faiths<sup>17</sup> and 'strangers to the gift of faith'.<sup>18</sup>

This situation creates a new and exciting challenge for Catholic institutions. It requires us to engender and foster a spirit of dialogue among our young people. Our young people need to be equipped for this dialogue and for this two things are essential. One is a strong and firm grounding in their own Catholic faith and a readiness to share it with others. The other is a genuine openness to all that is good and positive in other religions that may be present in our schools and colleges. Chaplains can play a vital rôle in the very delicate task of facilitating and developing a true spirit of dialogue. Our Catholic schools and colleges also are often places of education for the asylum seeker, the refugee and young people and children of economic migrants.

Catholic schools and colleges often serve young people from many feeder parishes. Whilst this adds to the wealth of diversity of these school and college communities, it weakens the traditional school-parish-family link, which creates additional challenges for Chaplaincy. Good educational standards, strong Catholic ethos and good discipline in many of our schools mean that they are over-subscribed. These and the current policy regarding the education for 14-19 year olds raises further questions for chaplaincy provision for Catholic students spending time outside the Catholic structure and issues of welcoming students being hosted by Catholic schools.

Chaplaincy requires a collaborative model of ministry between locally based priests and the lay Chaplain. The value of the presence of a priest remains vitally important because of the sacramental ministry that they are able to offer to our young people. However, it has to be recognised that constraints of time may limit the extent to which priests can be fully involved with the institutions. Chaplains should be encouraged to involve the priests of the local deanery in the life of the school.

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<sup>17</sup> cf. Catholic Schools and Other Faiths

<sup>18</sup> Gravissimum Educationis, n.9.

There are Diocesan Agencies working to support education. The Commission for Schools and Colleges works on behalf of the Archbishop in the mission of education. Its rôle includes advising schools and colleges on the nature, function and purpose of Catholic Education and providing advice and training for governors, teachers and priests on a wide range of education issues.

The Southwark Catholic Youth Service (SCYS) supports our young people in informal education settings. St. Vincent's Youth Residential Retreat Centre in Whitstable, Kent, works effectively to support schools in their mission to the young people of the Diocese.

### **The Local Context**

*Reading the signs of the times*<sup>19</sup>

The chief rôle of the Chaplain in any institution is to facilitate reflection on God's presence and encourage a response. This takes place within the context of the Mission Statement of the particular establishment, which is informed by the Church's teaching.<sup>20</sup>

The precise rôle of the Chaplaincy will be determined in the light of the whole situation. It is important that continuing reflection takes place on the rôle of Chaplaincy. The following questions may be helpful:

- What is the composition of the school community, its needs, the socio-economic environment in which the school is situated, the resources available?
- Is there a clear mission statement with developed aims and objectives? Does the chaplaincy effectively support and maintain the Catholic ethos and reflect the teaching of the Church?
- In relation to the Chaplaincy, to what extent is there collaborative ministry? How is the ministry of the Chaplain supported?
- In prayer, liturgies and assemblies, how can opportunities for the development of spirituality be provided?
- How inclusive is the Chaplaincy to persons with disability, from different races and cultures, from other faiths and denominations, male and female?
- What is relationship between the RE department and chaplaincy?
- Is there a coherent and effective practice for pastoral concerns that involves the ministry of the Chaplain (for example, dealing with bereavement, family breakdown, divorce)? How does chaplaincy policy work alongside existing pastoral systems?
- What links are important for effective chaplaincy ministry? How could you evaluate the building of relationships within the school and in the wider community? Are you aware of local concerns and especially youth issues?
- Does the ministry of the Chaplain reach all the adult members of the school community (for instance, governors, head/principal and senior managers, teachers, support staff, parents/guardians)?
- What provision is there for induction and continuing professional development and personal formation of those who work in Chaplaincy? What development and growth needs to take place?

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<sup>19</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*, n.4.

<sup>20</sup> The Bibliography provides a list of essential documents.

## **THE ROLE OF THE DIOCESAN COORDINATOR FOR SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CHAPLAINCY**

The Archbishop appoints a Diocesan Coordinator to work with and support School Chaplains in their ministry. The Coordinator will:

- Organise meetings each term for all Chaplains.
- Plan, with Chaplains, events for their continuing in-service formation.
- Maintain existing resources and be aware of others which may be helpful.
- Report, to the Archbishop on the working of the Diocesan Guidelines.
- Be available to governing bodies, in an advisory capacity, in the preparation of documentation for the appointment of a Chaplain.
- Offer support and advice to Chaplains in the school situation.
- Promote and encourage the following of the Diocesan Guidelines.
- Assist in carrying out any initiatives which the Archbishop has regarding School Chaplaincy.
- Liaise with the Commission for Schools and Colleges.
- Liaise, as appropriate, with other Diocesan agencies.
- Be line-managed by a representative of the Archbishop.
- Manage the budget for the rôle allocated by the Diocese.

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## MEMBERS OF THE WORKING PARTY

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| Mrs. Loretta Beltrami | Chaplain to Bonus Pastor School  |
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