

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON

DIOCESAN DIRECTIVES

September 2026

Diocesan Directives issued by the Diocesan Bishop for the General Regulation of all Catholic Schools and Colleges in the Diocese pursuant to canon 806.

General

1. These Directives concern the general regulation of Catholic schools in the Diocese, and apply to all Catholic schools, regardless of the nature of their trusteeship. In the case of schools in the Trusteeship of a Religious Order, the Mutual Relations Protocol will be respected, and the Directives will be implemented by way of mutual consultation and collaboration between the Diocese and the Religious Order Trustees that springs from a mutual respect, trust and care of each other.
2. Catholic schools are part of the mission of the Church in the Diocese, as expressed, co-ordinated and directed by the Diocesan Bishop. Accordingly, they are to respond generously to Diocesan initiatives and co-operate with them.
3. If any action contemplated by these Directives relates to a Religious Order school, the Diocese will consult the Religious Superior before taking action, which will, ideally, be an agreed course of action. In Religious Order schools, the Bishop has the discretion to appoint a member or officer of the Religious Order to be his representative in matters coming within these Directives.
4. In these Directives 'School' means any Catholic school (including its Senior Leadership and Governing Board) and includes maintained schools, independent schools (including academies), non-maintained special schools and sixth-form colleges.

Admissions

5. The admission arrangements of Catholic schools shall always give priority to Catholic applicants above all other applicants.

6. The definition of Catholic for the purposes of school admission shall be defined in accordance with diocesan guidance. If any question arises in relation to membership of the Catholic Church or the practice of the Faith it is to be determined authoritatively by the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate in accordance with the norms of canon law.
7. The Governing Boards of Catholic schools are to co-operate with each other and with other Catholic admission authorities to ensure that the maximum number of Catholic parents are able to take advantage of a Catholic Education for their children.
8. The membership of any admissions committee is not to include any person who is likely to have a conflict of interest when determining applications to the school, including those involved in the provision of Certificates of Catholic Practice for any applicants to the school.
9. In maintained schools and academies:
 - a) no function relating to the admission process or admission appeals is to be delegated to any other person (including any local authority) without the written consent of the Diocese and its Trustees;
 - b) the admission policies shall follow (or follow as closely as circumstances allow) the diocesan model admission policy; and
 - c) the Published Admissions Number (PAN) shall not be changed without written consent from the Diocese and its Trustees.

Staffing

10. Certain posts in a Catholic school are required to be held by practising Catholics. The posts to which this requirement applies are set out in the Bishops' Memorandum. The recruitment process set out in the Bishops' Memorandum is to be followed in the appointment of any staff covered by the Bishops' Memorandum. In case of doubt in the interpretation of the Bishops' Memorandum, the question is to be determined by the Diocesan Bishop.
11. Schools are to use the model employment documentation produced from time to time by the Catholic Education Service. This includes using model contracts and adopting model policies. Any substantive change to the model documentation requires the consent of the Diocesan Education Service.
12. Schools are to ensure that all new members of staff participate in an appropriate induction programme which emphasises the distinctive nature of Catholic education.
13. Appropriate and tailored ongoing formation is to be an entitlement and an expectation for all staff for the whole of the duration of their employment. Schools are to ensure that all

members of staff participate regularly in an appropriate ongoing formation for their work in Catholic education. The same expectation and entitlement applies to all governors and directors. All teaching members of staff who do not already hold the Catholic Certificate (or equivalent) are to be encouraged and supported to obtain it (or an equivalent or higher qualification) as part of their ongoing formation.

Governance

14. Before making or consenting to any amendments to a School's governing documents, the Governing Board shall submit the proposed amendments to the Diocese and its Trustees and request confirmation in writing that the amended governing documents comply with the requirements of canon law and that the school will continue to be a Catholic school. The School shall not make or consent to any such amendments until it receives the consent in writing of the Diocese and its Trustees to do so.
15. When accounting for any assets owned by its Trustees, a school shall follow any accounting and auditing requirements established by the Diocese or its Trustees.
16. Schools shall pay the diocesan levy which contributes towards the expenses of the Diocese in providing episcopal oversight of Catholic schools.
17. Schools shall co-operate with any inspections or visitations carried out in the name of the Diocesan Bishop (or any other Ordinary) and shall defray the expenses of the same. The school shall comply with and implement any findings of the Ordinary or Visitor following an inspection, visitation or review of governance.
18. A school shall notify the Diocese and its Trustees immediately if:
 - a) any formal notices are received from the local authority, the Department for Education, the ESFA, Ofsted, Estyn or ISI;
 - b) a complaint is received relating to the School's Catholic character, ethos and mission, religious education, collective worship or relationships and sex education; or
 - c) a serious incident takes place (as defined in Charity Commission Guidance).

In the case of (c) above, or in any other circumstances which might harm the reputation of the school, its Trustees, the Diocese or the Church generally, the school shall co-operate with the Diocese and its Trustees in managing the content and method of any public response, including any media strategy.

19. A school shall notify its Trustees immediately if a request is made by any body for information which relates to the property of the Trustees, or any communication is received relating to the Trustees' property.

Curriculum and Religious Education

20. Schools shall implement a broad and balanced Catholic curriculum which follows the teachings of the Church and which has Catholic Religious Education at its core. Religious Education is to be given no less than parity with other core subjects, and is to inform all other subjects on the school's curriculum. At least ten per cent of curriculum time (five per cent at key stage 5) is to be devoted to it.
21. The teaching of Catholic Religious Education is subject to the authority of the Church. It is for the Bishops' Conference to issue General Norms on the subject and for the Diocesan Bishop to regulate and watch over it (canon 804). It is to be carried out in accordance with the Bishops' Conference Religious Education Directory.
22. In conformity with the decision of the Bishops' Conference in 2016, in teaching GCSE Religious Studies, Catholic schools may only select an examination specification which requires:
- a) A study of Catholic Christianity as the primary religion;
 - b) A 50% study of Catholic Christianity, covering all four topics:
 - i. Beliefs and Teachings,
 - ii. Practices,
 - iii. Sources of Wisdom and Authority,
 - iv. Forms of Expression and Ways of Life;
 - c) A study of Judaism as the second religion.

This paragraph, unless revoked, remains in force during the period that the criteria document entitled: *Religious Studies GCSE Subject Content* published by the DfE in February 2015 remains effective.

23. General Religious education provided at key stage 5 is to be an academic subject at a level commensurate with the level of study of the student's other courses, taught on the normal curriculum plan, assessed and recorded.
24. Only materials approved by the Diocesan Bishop are to be used in the teaching of Relationships and Sex Education.

Ecclesiastical Property

25. Governing Boards are to comply with any requirements which the Trustees may from time to time set out for the stewardship and administration of ecclesiastical property occupied or used by the school.

26. Governing Boards shall diligently discharge in their entirety the responsibilities of dutyholder under any relevant health and safety regulation, whether the Governing Board is the dutyholder by virtue of the law itself or is appointed to discharge the responsibilities of dutyholder on behalf of its Trustees. Each Governing Board shall appoint a competent person to assist it in discharging the responsibilities of dutyholder and all other requirements of the relevant statutory provisions.

Censuses and Data Protection

27. Schools are to use the latest model privacy statements and consent forms approved from time to time by the Diocese. They are to keep records of all consents given (or withheld) and retain these at least for the period that the relevant data subject is connected with the school, whether as a pupil, member of staff, alumnus or otherwise.

28. Schools shall complete the annual Catholic Education Service school census each year, and shall do so by the requested date. This includes any supplementary questionnaire issued alongside the annual census.

29. Each school shall provide the following data to the Diocese and to its Trustees:

- a) details of applicants for, and those appointed to, posts covered by the Bishops' Memorandum;
- b) details of all governors and associate members of any Governing Board;
- c) any details necessary to enable the Diocese or the Trustees to assist, support or advise the school on any matter.

30. In addition to the data collected in connection with the annual Catholic Education Service school census, each school shall provide the following data to the Catholic Education Service:

- a) any details necessary to enable the Catholic Education Service to assist, support or advise the Diocese or the Trustees on any matter relating to the school;
- b) any details necessary to enable the Catholic Education Service to assist, support or advise the school directly on behalf of the Trustees or the Diocese.

Interpretation, revocation and commencement

31. In these Directives:

- a) any communication required with the Diocesan Bishop or the Diocese is to be undertaken via the Diocesan Education Service;
- b) unless the context requires otherwise, 'Diocesan Bishop' includes any person exercising Ordinary jurisdiction in his name;

- c) 'Bishops' Memorandum' means the *Bishops' Memorandum on the Appointment of Staff in Catholic Schools* or any successor document approved for this purpose by the Bishops' Conference;
- d) 'Catholic Certificate' means the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) or any successor qualification approved for this purpose by the Bishops' Conference;
- e) 'Diocesan Schools' Commissioner' is the principal representative of the Diocesan Bishop in matters relating to education and is also known as the Diocesan Director of Education;
- f) 'Ecclesiastical Property' means any property which is regulated by the Code of Canon Law, whether by virtue of the law itself, by particular statutes, or by the provisions of a Decree of Recognition;
- g) 'Governing Board' refers to the legal entity which has the authority to make decisions on behalf of the school including any other body to which that authority has been delegated;
- h) 'Mutual Relations Protocol' means the Protocol entitled Mutual Relations between Religious Orders, Dioceses and the CES in the Service of Catholic Education or any successor document approved for this purpose by the CES Management Committee;
- i) 'Trustees' means the Public Juridical Person on behalf of which the Governing Board conducts the school within the meaning of canon 803 (whether a Diocese, an Institute of Consecrated Life, a Society of Apostolic Life or any other ecclesiastical body). In the case of a school exceptionally recognised by the Diocesan Bishop under canon 803, it shall be interpreted in accordance with the Decree of Recognition in force for the school.

32. All previous Diocesan Directives for the general regulation of Catholic schools are hereby revoked.

33. A copy of these Directives will be sent to every school in the Diocese and to all Trustees of schools in the Diocese, and they come into force one month after publication on the diocesan website and in a communication to schools.