



Growing Partnerships

Building a relationship with Maintained Schools in your Parish



LEARNING WITH MEANING AND PURPOSE
TO KNOW GOD AND SHAPE THE WORLD

This initiative is designed to equip our church communities to initiate and grow a relationship with the maintained schools in their locality as part of our shared outreach to our communities.

Key Aims

1. We seek to grow a love and a desire for God within our localities.
2. In working with schools, our church communities demonstrate a desire to “serve the common good” and be role models for how Christians should live a life based on love and care for others.
3. In working with schools, our church communities seek to support schools to offer families a sense of a “life enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ” (Going for Growth 2010).
4. At the core of any successful partnership is a meaningful relationship with individuals within the school context. This includes developing relationships with Governors, school leaders, teachers, students and families.

How will these be achieved?

Maintained schools have no obligation to welcome churches into their schools and any external organisation is there with the permission of the Headteacher. That permission can be withdrawn at any point.

This sets the tone of the relationship and we would urge clergy and their teams to remember the following:

- Safeguarding will always be a top priority and the school’s leadership of this must be accepted.
- Our role is one of service and the starting point needs to be a focus what the school needs.
- Any relationship of substance will need to be built on trust.
- Trust takes time and care to build so do not rush.
- Collective Worship remains a legal requirement and this could be where some are grateful for any support or expertise they can access.
- This is a mission field with great potential and we can share what life in all its fullness can look like.

The relationship will be most effective when the church community is offering something unique that the school genuinely needs. This resonated when it is a free resource to schools whose budgets are tight but their need is high.

How do we measure success?

Success is not easily measured. Obviously a fully supportive and open relationship where the church and school have a warm and trusting partnership is the ideal. However, there will be markers along the way that will highlight success and these points may be as far as your journey goes. These targets might include:

- Annual services such as the school coming to church for Christmas.
- Regular services around key festivals such as Christmas, Easter and the end of the school year.
- Church visits and clergy input as part of the RE curriculum.
- Regular involvement in Collective Acts of Worship.
- Weekly involvement in Collective Acts of Worship.
- Corporate partnership where the church and school community work regularly together.
- Individual pastoral support and where appropriate support in times of crisis such as bereavement in the school community.
- Involvement in school extra curriculum programme such as Lunch Clubs, After School Clubs, Summer Schools or enrichment weeks.
- Develop staff Prayer or Reflection Spaces in Schools (generally in a time limited model).
- An ongoing relationship based on active dialogue where individuals are properly known and mutually valued.

These markers are not necessarily linear and may be subject to ebb and flow.

Success may not only be measured in what the church gives the school as there are many ways in which all schools seek to serve their local communities and this offers opportunities for further partnership. These could include:

- Providing volunteering opportunities for accredited schemes such as Duke of Edinburgh Awards and the Archbishops' Young Leaders Award.
- Supporting at cross generational groups and events.
- Volunteering in a church's children and young people settings.

The Tools of Partnership

Each locality is different and we must avoid seeking a "one size fits all model". Individual circumstances are different but as a congregation you might decide to explore some of the following opportunities.

The Church community can:

1. Pray for the school regularly.
2. Help to lead Collective Worship as regularly as appropriate.
3. Offer support and the church building for key Christian and school celebrations.
4. Ensure the church building is accessible and safe whenever used by the school.
5. Create a warm and hospitable environment that encourages the children to belong if they visit.
6. Partner with the school on local or global issues of social justice such as foodbanks and appeals.
7. Offer practical support such as a "Warm Space" After School Club with appropriate safeguarding protocols.
8. Provide pastoral and/or spiritual support to the children, families, staff, leadership and friends of the school when invited.
9. Take on School Governor roles when available.
10. Use resources within the church congregation to get involved with listening to readers schemes, After School clubs and formal initiatives such as Open the Book. (Safeguarding guidance will need to be given).
11. Share life skills and practical talents. The school community goes beyond the student body and includes members of staff, volunteers and families and support is often appreciated.
12. Ensure that engagement with the school is a regular agenda item at PCC Meetings and ensure the congregation are aware of the ongoing work with the school.
13. Provide congregation members for discussion sessions in classes i.e. interesting professions, cross generational history or PHSE projects or testimonies on how faith impacts on work-life sessions.
14. Devise a shared plan on an annual basis to outline and develop partnership work.

Organisations that Can Help

We aware of the following partners who carry out effective work with schools but there will be more known to you in your area. Please let us know so that we can update this resource.

Family Support Work-

<https://www.familysupportwork.org/>

Off the Fence

<https://www.offthefence.org.uk/>

Brighton and Hove City Mission

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

Open the Book

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/>

Splash for Schools and Communities (Crawley area)

<https://splashschools.org.uk/>

Prayer Spaces in Schools

<https://prayerspacesinschools.com/>

Festive (working with Christian Unions in Sixth Form Colleges)

<https://www.festive.org.uk/>

A Covenantal Relationship

Our initial Growing Partnerships document was based around a covenant between the parish and their linked Church of England School. This relationship will be different with maintained schools, but this example is offered as a starting point for reflection. Each situation is unique and everything needs to be adapted but we hope this offers a useful blueprint:

As a mark of the shared commitment between:

[Church]

_____ and

[School]

_____ we both agree to the following actions:

1. A commitment to regular engagement, at least on a weekly basis.
2. The school will lead on safeguarding and the control of access to their pupils and the parish must comply with this.
3. The church community will offer pastoral support in the form of (locally agreed) and any other urgent requests.
4. The church community will willingly offer support in the worshipping life of the school and the school will identify opportunities to include the parish at appropriate points.
5. The church community will explore all ways of practical support for the school.
6. The school and the church community will engage together in at least one agreed campaign to serve the common good each year.
7. The church community will provide support in Governance as both able and required.
8. The school and church community will devise a shared plan to outline and develop their partnership work and review it annually.
9. The church and school relationship will be highlighted in the parish profile during the recruitment process of a new priest.

Signed

_____ (on behalf of)

Signed

_____ (on behalf of)

Date

Education Department

Diocese of Chichester

Diocesan Church House, 211 New Church Road, Hove, BN3 4ED

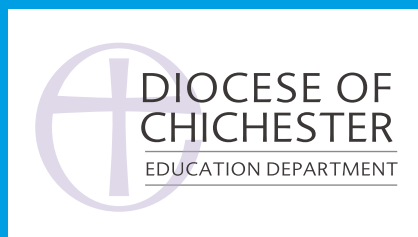
Tel: 01273 425687

Education Department website:

<https://schools.chichester.anglican.org>

Education Department Twitter:

@ChiDioEducation



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