



## Archdiocese of Southwark Policy on Extended Schools

### 1. Principles

The Diocese supports the creative use of school premises in ways which are in keeping with the teachings of the Church and which serve the Catholic and wider local community, especially those that are disadvantaged. Many schools already extend their mission through, for example, the provision of breakfast and after school clubs, or catechetical activities. It is an opportunity for the school community to live out its witness to the Gospel through this ministry of service.

The 2002 Education Act allows a governing body to take on a wider responsibility to extend the use of its school premises by providing a range of activities and services, to its pupils and people from the wider community, within and beyond the school day. This must not constrain the governing body's statutory duty to educate pupils and promote high educational achievement.

The governing body of a Catholic school has an additional statutory duty to act in accordance with the Diocesan Trust Deed particularly in '...establishing, maintaining or advancing the Roman Catholic religion in the Diocese and in one or more of the charitable objects promoted or served by the Roman Catholic Church within the Diocese.' In this context, this means that the governing body must ensure that the Catholic identity and character of the school is preserved and promoted within any extended school programme and that all provision is in keeping with the teachings and Canon Law of the Catholic Church. In particular, these developments must go hand-in-hand with our constant desire to support and encourage family life as the vital context for the upbringing and nurturing of our Catholic children.

### 2. Ownership of Diocesan school premises

Most Catholic schools are established on land held in trust by the Diocese. The Trustees of the Diocese have a legal responsibility for ensuring compliance with the terms of the Trust.

School premises must therefore not be used for any activity or service which is contrary to the teachings and Canon Law of the Catholic Church or which may be perceived to compromise the ethos and reputation of the school within the Catholic community.

Activities and services can be put on either by the school, or in the school by outside agencies and providers from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Arrangements with outside agencies Normally require a "letting" or "rental" agreement. A governing body should not consider entering into any such agreement as the premises are owned by the Trustees. Permission must be given by the Trustees and application for this should be made to the Finance Secretary.

Outside agencies and providers should be made aware of the Diocesan requirements regarding the use of part of a Catholic school.



The governing body must not enter into any agreement, contract or relationship which could make the Trustees liable (financially or in other ways) should a claim be made against an activity or service. The governing body is responsible for ensuring appropriate insurance is in place.

It is local authority policy to locate Childrens' Centres in schools, especially where accommodation is available owing to surplus places. A governing body must refer any discussion with a local authority about the location of a Childrens' Centre to the Diocesan Education Commission.

### **3. The Extended Catholic School**

The extended school programme is intended to help schools achieve the five outcomes of Every Child Matters. Programmes in Catholic schools should give equal importance spiritual and religious development.

'Parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children' (Gravissimum Educationis). Activities and services, including child care, should support parents in this duty, but should not result in parents delegating their duty to the school.

The governing body must be actively involved at all stages of any extended school provision, including the analysis of needs, the discernment of services required, and the setting up of structures and facilities to enable those services to be carried out on school premises. The governors must take responsibility for the overall monitoring of the provision.

Governors are responsible for promoting the common good in education and should ensure activities and services within a programme cater for and are accessible to the poor and marginalised within the community served by the school. They must make sure that the services are an authentic expression of the Catholic ministry of social care and should recognise that there may be a need for active involvement in facilitating partnerships between the different providers using the school buildings. The Catholic Children's Society (Southwark, Portsmouth and Arundel & Brighton) has experience of issues which may arise and has offered support to schools.

The partnership of school, home and parish is central to the Catholic school. Established links between the parish, Catholic community and the school should continue, and new ones explored, within the activities and services of the programme.