**Role specification for lay chaplains in schools**

The role of a lay chaplain will vary in different school contexts and therefore need to be described in different ways. It is unlikely that any two school chaplaincy roles will be completely identical.

However, there are some clear common elements in school chaplaincy and this document will set out some essential requirements for any chaplaincy in schools role and also suggest some important requirements depending on the different roles the lay person may have.

We advise that a formal job description is developed as soon as an agreement with a school has been made. A job description will define expectations and clarify the role, and it will be a useful document against which the role can regularly be reviewed and, if need be, adjusted.

|  |
| --- |
| **Essential requirements for lay chaplains in schools** |
| **You are a committed Christian and a regular church-goer with a strong personal faith in Jesus Christ.** |
| **You have a strong sense of love, commitment and enthusiasm for your school community, it's vision and ethos** |
| **You have excellent communication skills and the ability to build and maintain relationships with staff, parents and children at the school as well as with the wider community and the Church** |
| **You are committed to working collaboratively as a team member** |
| **You are able to “think outside the box” and find new and creative ways of building relationships and engaging in your school community** |
| **You are able to reflect theologically upon various issues and keen to improve your understanding of theology** |
| **You have strong personal integrity and will comply fully with the safeguarding and confidentiality policies of the school** |

Depending on the defined role of the lay chaplain in each specific school, there will also be different sets of desirable requirements varying from one school to the other.

Below is a description of “typical roles” commonly carried out by lay chaplains in schools[[1]](#footnote-1), with examples of accompanied tasks and desirable requirements/skills.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role specific requirements for lay chaplains in schools** | | |
| **Role** | **Description** | **Desirable requirements** |
| Chaplain as priest | Prayer  Leading others in worship/assemblies  Encouraging people towards baptism and confirmation  (Communion services, blessings) | The ability to organize and lead acts of worship  Have good connections to the local church  Theological knowledge |
| Chaplain as pastor | Walk alongside members of the school through the changing seasons of life  Be a confident/listening ear for the headteacher  Conflict resilience/conflict management  Coaching | Excellent interpersonal and networking skills  High level of communication skills both oral and written  Can be trusted with sensitive information  Has the capability of finding new and creative ways of interacting and building relationships  Experience with social work, children's work, healthcare, management/leadership etc.  Experience with performance management/appraisals |
| Chaplain as prophet | “Carrier” of the school's Christian ethos and aim for it's principles and values to be owned by governors, leadership and staff  Facilitate a dialogue between the ideals of achievement and results (school) and the ideals of the grace and love of God (church)  Hold head teacher/governors/others to account | Able to work alongside and under the head's authority but still have the ability to question and challenge the school's leadership in a tactical and sensitive manner  Ability to think independently and disrupting “group think”  Strong interest in children's spirituality and in giving the school community an opportunity to explore faith and develop both morally and spiritually |
| Chaplain as missioner | Listening and understanding the people and the various subcultures at the school and at the same time listening to God and applying the values and language of His kingdom to the school  Alpha groups | Theological knowledge  Able to reflect theologically and apply this knowledge practically without being too “overt” or proselytizing  Being able to inspire others to a Christian life by the stories you tell and the actions you do |
| Chaplain as discipler | Be a resource who brings insights from the Bible and helps translate and apply them to members of the school community  Be involved in specific projects at the school | Theological knowledge  Knowledge of and links with relevant local organisations/projects  Links with other chaplains/chaplaincy organisations |
| Chaplain as servant | Work alongside people in the school and in the wider community  Social issues, fundraising, community action, environmental issues | Links with the local community  Experience from working or volunteering with children/young people (e.g. teaching/social work/youth work/sports coaching/health services for young people) |
| Chaplain as teacher | RE/teaching sessions for children and/or for teachers  Interpret national educational policies and look at them from a Christian perspective  Christian extra-curricular activities  Children with special needs | Theological knowledge  Understanding of the educational system and issues in modern education  Understanding of children's spirituality and/or the theology of childhood  Experience from teaching/the educational sector  Experience with leading small groups |

1. From the book “Fresh Experiences of school chaplaincy” by Diane Tregale [↑](#footnote-ref-1)