



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

GUIDANCE ON ALLOWING OTHERS TO USE PARTS OF SCHOOL PREMISES

It is quite common for schools to want to allow a third party to use part of their premises from time to time. Such use might

- support the function of the school -for example a club which looks after pupils

on school premises but outside school hours or

- benefit the community as a whole -for example

Scouts/Brownies/Pilates/Keep fit and in either case the arrangement may result in some income for the school. It is important to understand that the diocese owns the land from which almost all diocesan Catholic schools operate. For that reason, the diocese needs to be named on the document which permits third party use. The exceptions are Order and independent schools.

Please note, Where governing bodies hire school facilities/premises to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) they should ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to **keep children safe**.

When services or activities are provided by the governing body under the direct supervision or management of their school staff, their arrangements for child protection will apply. However, where services or activities are provided separately by another body this is not necessarily the case. The governing body should therefore **seek assurance** that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place (including inspecting these as needed); and ensure that there are arrangements in place to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

The diocesan trustees have recently concluded that it would be sensible to have a standard hiring agreement available for use by schools, and that authority to sign such agreements should be delegated to schools by the trustees.

That standard hiring agreement is now available and should be used for one off events or for hire to organisations which use part of the school once or twice a week.

You will need to agree with the occupier what will go in each blank section of the form. Then arrange for a copy to be signed by a governor, in the case of a VA school, or a MAC director in the case of an academy. If authority is given by the Governors or the Academy Directors, then the hiring agreement may be signed by another person on their behalf. There are instructions on the form for who signs what and how the form is completed.

The hiring agreement should not be used for organisations which use part of the school every or most school days, such as before and after school clubs. Those organisations will need to have a licence.

If a licence is needed, please email Toni Guest at the DES, at t.guest@bdes.org.uk who will work with you to ensure that the licence agreement is completed as necessary.

Occasionally other people approach schools in relation to the use of the school site, for example utilities firms who may want to put a wire or cable over or under the site, or a neighbour wants a right of way, or to use a piece of land for storage. Whenever a third party wants to do something with a school site other than entering into a hiring agreement please contact Toni Guest at the DES at t.guest@bdes.org.uk in the first instance, for help.

Please also consult the DES finance and buildings team when putting up any new structures on the school site, for example security gates and fencing, so that the title can be checked to ensure that the structure is placed so as to avoid future problems.