



Stroud Deanery

Archway School Connector Proposal

A School Connector enhances "a sense of joy, happiness and curiosity" in school so "that everyone is inspired to flourish, grow and learn" and reflect Jesus words in John 10:10, where he says: "I have come so you may have life in all its fullness."

Background

illuminate

In 2017, The Door launched the illuminate project, with a vision to "Inspire and equip Christian young people as culture changers in their school and community. Building on years of working relationships with Archway School in both the pastoral and spiritual wellbeing of students, The Door placed a "distinctive Christian" youth worker into the school community under the banner of illuminate.

The illuminate Youthworker also build on existing relationships with local church communities around youth ministry. Initially a monthly youth worship night was launched, this evolved into a more discipleship focused gathering which continued online through the COVID lockdowns, and re-emerged as the weekly Engine Room Group which has subsequently transferred "ownership" to the Stroud Parish Churches team. Illuminate also based itself in the Church of the Holy Spirit (or Tin Chapel) in Paganhill, offering a twice weekly "drop-in" after school.

The Door received grant funding from The Growing Faith Foundation (a national Church of England Initiative) to enable illuminate to become a learning hub exploring school chaplaincy in a non-church school and focusing on marginalised young people. The hub has been supported by the Youth Connect team at the Diocese of Gloucester, and its findings have helped form the "School Connector" project currently rolling out to three non-church secondary schools in the Diocese.

Whilst the primary focus of illuminate has been Archway School, The Door has sought to develop a similar project in Rednock School, Dursley, and has received enquiries from local churches about other schools in the area, notably Maidenhill, Thomas Keble, and Deer Park.

School Connector Project

The School Connector is employed to provide a Pastoral and Spiritual Wellbeing role within the community of a non-church Secondary School with an openly Christian Distinctiveness. Whilst spending significant time within the school and acting as a member of the community, the School Connector also functions as a co-ordinator for youth ministry in the local church(es), building significant and deep relationships between members of the school and church communities.

The core principle of the School Connector Project is a "Missio Dei" approach to ministry. The School Connector is not there to fix problems or present an agenda from the local church but to understand how God's Kingdom is being fulfilled within the school and to join in and be part of that journey.

Research has shown that students see a School Connector as second only to the head teacher/principal in embodying the culture and ethos of the school. Long term engagement of a School Connector creates stronger, more embedded and "lived out" values across the school community.

Stroud Deanery Proposal

This proposal is that the illuminate project within Archway School be formally “adopted” by the School Connect Project of the Diocese of Gloucester.

Such formal adoption would:

- Enable the ongoing ministry of a Distinctive Christian within Archway School
- Enable The Door to focus on both ministry in Archway, and the exploration and development of illuminate projects within other local secondary schools
- Formalise the relationship between The Door, Stroud Parish Churches, and other churches (Anglican and otherwise) who serve the catchment area of Archway School
- Provide The Door guaranteed funding towards the running of illuminate for three years
- Enable The Door, the local churches and others to develop a sustainable funding plan for the project in the long term.
- Provide the Illuminate Youthworker with additional training, resourcing and support by their inclusion in the growing “School Connect” community across the Diocese of Gloucester
- Further cement the relationship between The Door and The Diocese of Gloucester

Process for Creating a School Connector Project

In order for a School Connector to have maximum impact within the school and wider community, clear roles, responsibilities and relationships in both communities need to be established. To do this, the following should be considered:

The School Community

1. Leadership Buy-In: Ensure the head teacher/principal and the senior leadership team are fully supportive of the School Connector.
2. Understanding School Ethos: Have a clear understanding of the school's ethos and how it is currently communicated, recognised and lived-out.
3. Embodying the Ethos: Determine how the School Connector will embody and live out the school's ethos within the community.
4. Corporate/Community Roles: Define the corporate or community roles and activities the School Connector will undertake.
5. Personal Relational Roles: Identify the personal relational roles the School Connector will undertake.
6. Integration into Leadership: Understand how the School Connector fits into the school's structure and leadership team, including key relationships at the senior level.
7. Monitoring and Feedback: Agree on how the impact of the School Connector will be monitored, and how feedback will be gathered and communicated. Agree on processes for capturing data and information, particularly around safeguarding and individual issues and concerns.
8. Relationship with the wider church community: Agree on how the School Connector will integrate the school and church communities in appropriate ways.

The Church Communities

1. Leadership buy-in: Ensure the Deanery, Rectors, PCCs and leadership teams are fully supportive of the School Connector.
2. Governance and Oversight: Establish how connected churches will have input into the management and direction of the work of the School Connector.

3. Community Role: Define the church community roles and activities the School Connector will undertake and oversee.
4. Development of Team: Identify the needs of volunteers required to deliver activities within the communities, and create training opportunities.
5. Transferring Culture and Ethos: Plan how the School Connector will transfer the school's culture and ethos into the wider community, particularly the parishes within the school catchment area.
6. Integration into Leadership: Understand how the School Connector fits into the Deanery structure and leadership team, including key relationships at the senior level.
7. Monitoring and Feedback: Agree on how the impact of the School Connector will be monitored, and how feedback will be gathered and communicated. Agree on processes for capturing data and information, particularly around safeguarding and individual issues and concerns.
8. Relationship with the School community: Agree on how the School Connector will integrate the school and church communities in appropriate ways.

Gloucester Diocese Board of Finance

In order to secure funding from the GDBF for the project, a paper will be prepared by the Senior Youth Connector for submission and discussion by Bishop's Council. This paper will need to demonstrate the above considerations and their outcomes, the support of the Stroud Deanery Strategic Pathway leadership team, and be sponsored by a Bishop and/or Archdeacon.

The paper would request £25,000 per annum for 3 years, towards the employment of The School Connector. The grant would be made directly to The Door, subject to a Service Level Agreement (appendix B). It is anticipated that the School Connector will be employed on a full-time basis, and The Door will seek to raise additional funds to cover the remaining costs, including but not limited to investment from local church communities.

A paper could be submitted for the June 3rd meeting of Bishop's Council, which would enable the project to be formally adopted into School Connect by September 2026.

Draft Budget

A draft budget is set out below, but final details would be owned and managed by The Door:

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| INCOME | | | |
| GDBF grant | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 |
| <i>Secondary grant</i> | <i>8,000</i> | <i>8,000</i> | <i>9,000</i> |
| <i>Churches in Stroud Deanery</i> | <i>7,000</i> | <i>8,000</i> | <i>9,500</i> |
| <i>Private Donors</i> | <i>2,000</i> | <i>2,500</i> | <i>2,750</i> |
| Total Income | 42,000 | 43,500 | 45,250 |
| | | | |
| EXPENDITURE | | | |
| Salary | 33,901 | 35,257 | 36,667 |
| Employer Pension contribution - 3% | 1,100 | 1,058 | 1,100 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Employer NI contribution | 4,335 | 4,539 | 4,750 |
| Payroll costs | 39,253 | 40,854 | 42,571 |
| Travel costs | 1,242 | 1,242 | 1,242 |
| Expenses | 920 | 957 | 995 |
| Training & CPD | 250 | 260 | 270 |
| Mobile phone | 240 | 250 | 260 |
| Total Expenditure | 41,905 | 43,564 | 45,284 |

Impact Monitoring

Detailed information about the role and example activities of the School Connector can be found in Appendix A.

The School Connector has a significant impact on both individuals and the community within the school through both the specific activities they carry out, and through their ongoing presence as part of the community.

Furthermore, The School Connectors impact spreads to the wider communities of those parishes where students live, through the relationships created between the School Connector, the school community and the local churches.

Key Indicators

The impact of the School Connector is demonstrated through:

- Relationships with and between students, staff, leadership and parents
- Assemblies and times of corporate activity, through speaking about and demonstrating the ethos of the school
- Environment: by creating spaces, displays and culture that mean values and ethos are experienced throughout the school
- Language: the way in which all members of the school community can speak about the values and ethos, and in the way people speak to each other.

Individual Impact

- Independent Listening: Being an available person to listen without prejudice to all students.
- Problem Solving: Helping young people navigate challenges and make decisions.
- Risk Management: Assisting students in understanding and managing risks.
- Anger Management: Providing support for anger management.
- Relationship Building: Helping students build and maintain healthy relationships.
- Staff Support: Providing independent befriending to all staff, particularly in times of community crisis or trauma.

School Community Impact

- Embodiment of Ethos and Values: Representing and promoting the school's core values and ethics.
- Morale of the School: Enhancing the overall morale and spirit of the school.
- Community Building: Fostering a sense of community and belonging.
- Big Picture Spirituality: Promoting spiritual growth and understanding.

- Social Impact: Contributing to the social well-being of the entire school community.

Wider Community Impact

- Building on Established Connections: Extending relationships developed between church and primary school.
- Places to go Outside School: Creating safe spaces before and after school.
- Something Positive to do: Providing activities and events in local communities for young people to enjoy.
- People to Listen: Creating a team of non-judgemental volunteers available for students to build relationships with.

Appendix A – About the School Connector Role

Distinctive Role of the School Connector

The School Connector is the heart and soul of the school. Providing more than just pastoral care, the distinctive role of the School Connector includes:

- Cultural and Ethos Embodiment: The School Connector lives out the values and ethos of the school through their relationships and communication..
- Distinctiveness: The School Connector's role is distinct from other senior management or pastoral roles within the school community because they occupy a position “outside” the normal hierarchy of the school.
- Christian Perspective: This distinctiveness comes in part from their Christian perspective, which influences their approach and interactions. Like a chaplain, the School Connector has a remit to contribute to the spiritual wellbeing of the whole school community.
- Unique Impartiality: The School Connector maintains a unique impartiality, offering unbiased support to both staff and students.
- Distinctive Relationships: The School Connector has distinctive relationships with both staff and students that differ from other relationships within the school.
- Presence of Peace: The School Connector carries a presence of peace into the school community, contributing to a calm and supportive environment.
- Religious or Spiritual Authority: The School Connector are seen as having religious or spiritual authority, which is particularly significant at times of celebration or trauma within the school community.

School Connector Activity

This is a non-exhaustive list of activities a School Connector can offer within the school:

- Being known as a Christian presence within the school community – part of the team of adults within the school but distinctive as a Christian from the local church(es)
- Providing pastoral support, including prayer, for staff and students
- Mentoring for student groups and individuals
- Leading prayer weekly with an opportunity for staff to make prayer requests
- Support for school services in the local church, eg Christmas, Easter, achievement celebrations, working with the Rector and with school staff
- Workshops and events related to pastoral aspects of the school curriculum, including Mental Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Sex Education, Transition, Human Spirituality
- Establishing and developing an extra-curricular group(s) for students who are Christian or curious about Christianity (lunchtimes / after school)
- Building relationships with other Christians engaged in youth work in the catchment area. (eg Church Youth Ministers, Sportily, The Rock, Viney Hill)
- Linking with others to offer students residential experiences at camps etc.
- Exploring the possibility of Youth-led Worship within the school or as an extra-curricular activity
- Growing a team to develop the work – including developing young leaders within the school
- Strengthening connections with local feeder primary schools, with a particular focus on transitions work with Year 6 children.

Appendix B – Example Service Level Agreement

Between Gloucester Diocese Board of Finance (“the Diocese”) and <insert name here> (“the Employer”)

Effective Date:

Term:

1. Purpose

This Service Level Agreement sets out the terms under which the Diocese provides financial support to the employer for the employment of a Christian Chaplaincy Connector (“the School Connector”) to deliver pastoral care and wellbeing services within <insert name> Secondary School (the school) (60% of available hours) and the wider community served by the School (40% of available hours).

2. Objectives

The School Connector will:

- Provide pastoral and emotional support to students and staff;
- Contribute to student wellbeing initiatives;
- Support values-based programmes consistent with the school’s ethos;
- Foster respectful and inclusive relationships within the school community; and
- Refer students to appropriate professional services where required.

With the School, the School Connector will, as directed by a nominated member of the School Senior Leadership:

- Lead assemblies;
- Help deliver the curriculum;
- Be a Mentor;
- Support Christian clubs and activities;
- Offer drop in and support services; and
- Be available to staff.
- Other activities in keeping with the vision of the School Connector role.

In the wider community served by the School the School Connector will, as directed by the Team Rector:

- Promote the development of a network of after school activities for students in conjunction with local churches;
- Sponsor and mentor teams of local volunteers to offer clubs and activities for students; and
- Make use of community resources in the provision of clubs and activities.

The employer will make formal arrangements with the School agreeing the scope, vision and objectives of the School Connector Role.

3. Funding Arrangements

3.1 The Diocese agrees to provide financial support of £25,000 per year for 3 years

3.2 The Diocese will make the first payment in 3.1 upon successful recruitment of the School Connector, and on subsequent anniversaries, subject to reporting requirements in section 5

3.3 Funds shall be used solely for:

- Salary and employment on-costs of the School Connector
- Approved programme materials
- Professional development relevant to the School Connector role

3.4 The employer shall not use funds for purposes outside this Agreement without prior written approval from the Diocese.

4. Employment and Supervision

4.1 The School Connector shall be employed by the employer

4.2 The employer shall:

- Ensure the School Connector holds appropriate qualifications and clearances (e.g. working with children check);
- Provide professional supervision and line management;
- Ensure compliance with all relevant child protection and safeguarding legislation;
- Pay the School Connector each month;
- Provide HR and wellbeing support for the School Connector;
- Maintain HR records for the School Connector (holiday, sick records, etc);
- Advise the Diocese if they have any concerns about the availability or performance of the School Connector on a timely basis.

4.3 To promote alignment and good understanding, the employer (through it's nominated representative) and the Diocese (through it's nominated representative) will meet each term or more frequently as mutually agreed, to review the activity and work programme of the School Connector.

4.5 The School Connector will be part of the community of School and Youth Connectors across the Diocese of Gloucester, accessing ongoing peer support, training and shared learning.

5. Reporting and Accountability

5.1 The employer agrees to provide:

- A termly activity report
- An annual written report summarising activities, outcomes, and impact
- A financial statement of funds received

5.2 Reports shall include:

- Number and type of student engagements (non-identifying)
 - Programmes delivered
 - Observed wellbeing outcomes
 - Any challenges or emerging needs
 - Ideas for future work plans
 - Partnership working with other churches and agencies
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6. Safeguarding and Compliance

6.1 The employer shall ensure that all School Connector activities comply with:

- Child protection laws
- Privacy legislation
- Anti-discrimination laws

6.2 The School Connector shall operate in a manner that is respectful of diverse beliefs and backgrounds within the School community.

7. Confidentiality

Both parties agree to maintain confidentiality of sensitive information, except where disclosure is required by law.

8. Review and Evaluation

This Agreement shall be reviewed annually to assess:

- Programme effectiveness
 - Alignment with the Diocese's charitable objectives
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9. Termination

Either party may terminate this Agreement with 90 days written notice.

Immediate termination may occur if:

- Funds are misused
 - Safeguarding obligations are breached
 - Legal compliance requirements are not met
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10. Dispute Resolution

Any disputes arising under this Agreement shall first be addressed through good faith negotiation between the parties. If unresolved, mediation may be pursued.

11. Bank Details

Please provide details of the bank account funds should be transferred to as detailed in section 3:

Account Name _____

Sort Code _____

Account Number _____

11. Signatures

Signed for and on behalf of the Diocese:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signed for and on behalf of the Employer:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____