



Policy for Governor/Trustee Virtual Meeting Attendance

Introduction

Maintained schools

The School Governance (England) (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) Regulations 2013 make provision for governing boards of maintained schools in England to: “approve alternative arrangements for governors to participate or vote at meetings of the governing body including but not limited to by telephone or video conference”.

Virtual Attendance at Face to Face Meetings

- Where a governor/trustee wishes to attend a meeting of the governing/trust board by either telephone or video link the chair must be notified at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be made where possible.
- The governor/trustee will be asked their reasons for not attending the meeting in person and their attendance virtually will be subject to the approval of the governing/trust board at the beginning of the meeting, though this approval will not be withheld without good reason. Where approval is withheld the reason for this will be minuted, and the governor/trustee informed immediately.
- Governors/trustees attending the meeting either by telephone or video conference will be entitled to vote on any issue providing they have been ‘present’ for the whole agenda item which the vote relates to.
- Where a secret ballot is required this will be facilitated where possible (e.g. by taking a telephone call off speaker phone and the governor/trustee sharing their vote verbally with the clerk). Where this is not possible the governor/trustee will be required either to vote publicly or abstain.
- Governors/trustees attending the meeting virtually will contribute to the quorum for the meeting. If the technological link is lost, they will cease to contribute to the quorum, but this will not prevent the meeting continuing in their absence unless it has become inquorate.
- The meeting will be chaired by a governor/trustee who is present in person.
- If, after all reasonable efforts, it does not prove possible for a governor/trustee to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.



Virtual Meetings

- It is expected that unless there are exceptional circumstances the three statutory full governing /trust board meetings and termly scheduled committee meetings will be face to face meetings. However additional and extraordinary meetings can take place via telephone or video conference call as long as the usual quorum of governors/trustees is 'present' on the call.
- Where a meeting is taking place virtually every effort will be made to enable all governors /trustees to access the meeting.
- Where a meeting is taking place virtually the usual statutory notice arrangements will apply and all papers to be considered will be circulated at least seven days in advance of the meeting, except where the chair has exercised his/her right to waive the usual notice in an emergency situation.
- Virtual meetings will be minuted in the same way as other meetings, either by the clerk being present virtually or by a governor /trustee, other than the headteacher / principal / CEO, and these will be presented for approval to the next meeting of the full governing/trust board.
- Virtual meetings should not be recorded by any governor/trustee or the clerk without the approval of the governing/ trust board and for a specified purpose.

Review of this Policy The policy will be reviewed at least annually, but any governor /trustee with any concerns about its operation can request that it is reviewed at any time.

Policy approved by the Governing Body _

11th October 2022 Norman Kelly, Chair Cockfield CEVCP School

Review date ____September 2024_____

What to consider when setting up a policy and during the review:

Advantages

- You can set up a meeting quickly
- Governor/trustees do not all have to be in the same place.



- If reaching a quorum is sometimes a challenge the option for virtual attendance could help to resolve the issue
- Members of your board in different regions and countries can meet at short notice. This could be particularly helpful when you need to discuss or approve something urgently before the next scheduled meeting

Potential issues

- It may be best to reserve detailed discussion for face to face meetings since it can be difficult to communicate as effectively
- Time delays can interrupt the flow of the conversation
- If someone is not physically in the room, they may play a lesser part in the meeting
- It could be hard to make sure the conversation is confidential

Mitigate the potential issues

- Have a clear process in place for what to do if and when these problems arise
- Invest in reliable teleconferencing services or equipment, or research virtual meeting platforms
- Clarify that the governor/trustee attending remotely still needs to meet the expectations around confidentiality