



Virtual Attendance at Meetings Policy

**Approved : October 2023
To be reviewed: October 2024**

Purpose

The School Governance (England) (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) Regulations 2013 make provision for governing bodies 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”.

For the purpose of this policy “meeting” is defined as either a formally convened Governing Board (GB) or GB Committee meeting.

The rationale is to ensure each governor can make an informed decision through consideration of all papers submitted and governor discussion prior to voting.

Equality impact

This policy sets out how the GB will enable governors to attend meetings remotely on the occasions this is required allowing them to have the ability to take part in meeting discussions and decisions.

This policy will ensure no governor suffers from unfavourable treatment because of their work or caring duties.

Responsibilities of school

The school will ensure there will be available, provision of a secure method of virtual presence as required at all full governing board meetings and meetings of the governing board’s committees.

Remote attendees will ensure:

1. Remote attendees must be aware of their surroundings. Confidentiality and sensitivity of information must be considered, and conversations must not be conducted in a place where they will be overheard, for example in an open public space. Confirmation of confidentiality should be declared at each meeting.
2. Governors in virtual attendance at any meeting of the GB must, under no circumstances, make any form of electronic recording of any part of the meeting, without the express permission from those in attendance at the meeting.
3. Those in virtual attendance must ensure they give full attention to the matters being discussed and avoid undertaking other tasks that may

cause distraction for example, watching television, listening to background music, answering emails etc.

4. Virtual attendees must agree to undertake full participation in the whole meeting.
5. They advise the Chair of Governors/Committee Chair as soon as practicable and within at least 7 days of the meeting, of a request to attend by virtual method and the reason for non-attendance in person. In the event of an unforeseen emergency, then as much notice is to be given as possible. In this situation it is to be at the sole discretion of the Chair as to whether remote participation is possible.
6. They can identify themselves to the satisfaction of the other attendees.

All governors and Clerk should note:

1. Remote attendees may only vote on items where they have been presented with all the papers to be considered.
2. A request to attend a meeting remotely may be made by any governor to the Chair of the meeting. Priority will be given to requests of an emergency or equality nature.
3. A meeting may not be chaired remotely unless there are exceptional circumstances identified by the Chair.
4. If technical difficulties occur governors should vote as to whether the remote attendee is still considered to be present at the meeting to ensure the meeting remains quorate. Technical difficulties would not include loss of visual communication providing there is still sound communications.
5. Indicate on the agenda whether virtual attendance has been agreed. Indicate on minutes when declaration of interest requested, a declaration of confidentiality is made by any virtual attendee.
6. Secret Ballots. The remote attendee may decide to either vote openly or to cast their vote with only the clerk and one governor (already having cast their vote) present.
7. All committee meetings will be virtual meetings unless they precede an FGB meeting (agreed on 23.10.2023).

Date approved – 23.10.2023

Next review date – October 2024

Chair's Signature