



[Name of Board]

Standing Order for Virtual Governance Meetings

This model document maybe amended for use in multi academy trusts in line with academy articles of association and academy committee terms of reference

Guiding Principles from Legislation

For maintained schools - [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#) – item 14 Proceedings of the Governing Body

The process must be agreed by the board prior to use

Factors the board should consider in agreeing their process:

- It is for the full Governing Body (GB) to decide and agree locally the best format for different types of meetings and interactions in order meet the needs of the board, individual governors, availability of technology and the circumstance (e.g., monitoring visits, full GB or committee meetings), in order to maintain effective governance.
- Hybrid meetings (where attendance is split between those present in the room and those attending virtually) can offer flexibility and can maximise attendance by providing governors, who may have otherwise missed the meeting, the opportunity to attend virtually. How would this work in practice, for attendees, the governance professional and the school? You may find it helpful to talk your circumstances through with your area governance officer.
- The GB would need to ensure that meetings meet the requirements of UK GDPR (UK General Data Protection Regulations) and ensure that the DPO (Data Protection Officer) confirms that the systems to be used are in line with the school's agreements and policies.
- Be sure to include your governance professional/ clerk in any discussions; there may be challenges for them personally as there may be for governors; the governance professional/clerk may also be expected to have to access to and run any system/s or format/s that the GB agrees.
- The expectations for using the GB's agreement for virtual working should be understood by all; this will ensure meetings run smoothly and are productive. In the agreement, the GB should provide clarity on the following:
 - joining times
 - notification of how a governor is to attend a meeting, and to whom e.g., where expectation is face to face and this changes to virtual, or vice versa; if a notice period required; the governance professional/clerk will need clarity to ensure that the board meets and acts within legal requirements (quoracy) – including and especially if systems fail and attendees 'drop out' of a meeting
 - the need to obtain consent from all attendees (including visitors) if the session is to be recorded
 - how the integrity of confidentiality is upheld
 - how virtual voting will be managed, especially by secret ballot
 - the need to keep to the agenda (a timed agenda may prove helpful)

- the use of the mute facility to minimise interruptions and background noise
- the allowance of additional time for participants to access documents
- the need for all to use webcams (where possible) to aid engagement
- if the chat and/or hands up function/s will be used
- the need to apologise prior leaving to the meeting, abandoning/moving away from the screen/webcam, using a mobile phone during the meeting (unless being used for attending the meeting i.e., calls and messaging)
- the need to continue to abide by the agreed Code of Conduct for behaviour and expectations

Example

1. *The full Governing Board agree to the use of virtual governance for the following meetings/interactions (list here as required - full GB, committees, hybrid, monitoring etc.).*
2. *Notice will be provided to the governance professional by (as required email/phone) if mode of attendance is to change (hybrid meetings, to ensure quoracy).*
3. *All participants will join the meeting 5 minutes prior to the start time, making sure that they have all meeting documentation open/to hand.*
4. *Consent will be sought from all attendees (including visitors) if a session is to be recorded*
5. *The mute facility will be used by all virtual attendees who are not speaking in order to minimise interruptions and background noise.*
6. *Webcams will be used by all attendees (where possible); an explanation and/or agreement where webcam use is not possible.*
7. *The chat facility (will or will not) be used.*
8. *The hands-up function will be used to indicate when we wish to speak; the chair will check at the end of each item prior to moving to a new agenda item, to ensure that all attendees have been given the opportunity to take part in discussions.*
9. *Apologies will be provided prior leaving to the meeting, abandoning/moving away from the screen/webcam, using a mobile phone (unless being used for attending the meeting i.e., calls and messaging).*
10. *We confirm that our governance professional/clerk has been included in discussions prior to the agreement of this document and at the time of agreement, they are able to provide a service that meets the needs of the GB.*
11. *We confirm that we have considered any limitations there may be regarding governance professional/clerk service level agreements/contracts.*
12. *We confirm that the DPO (Data Protection Officer) has been advise of and agrees that the systems to be used are in line with the school's agreements and policies.*

Agreed by the board: dd/mm/yyyy

Review date: dd/mm/yyyy