ST LAURENCE CHURCH
JUNIOR SCHOOL

Virtual Meetings Policy

Date of Publication: September 2025
To be reviewed: September 2027
(To be reviewed on a two year cycle)

'Learning, Loving and Sharing, guided by Jesus'

Contents

1. Aims 2
2. Legislation and guidance 2
3. The board's ability to make alternative arrangements for meetings 2
4. Roles and responsibilities 2
5. Virtual meetings 3
6. Virtual attendance at face-to-face meetings 4
7. Monitoring arrangements 5
8. Links with other policies 5

---

1. Aims

The aims of this virtual meetings policy are to:

- Provide a framework in which to run meetings virtually and include those attending virtually
- Provide flexibility so governors can attend meetings virtually where they would otherwise have had to miss them
- Enable the governing board to continue its work and maintain strategic oversight where face-to-face meetings aren't possible

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy complies with the following legislation:

- The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 (regulations 13 and 14)
- The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 (regulation 3)

3. The board's ability to make alternative arrangements for meetings

Under The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013, the governing board can approve alternative arrangements for governors to participate or vote at meetings of the governing board, including, but not limited to, by telephone or video conference. This includes at full governing board meetings and committee meetings.

If the government or public health officials impose or recommend restrictions on face-to-face contact, the governing board may vote to hold all regular meetings virtually until it is practical to resume normal procedures.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The chair

The chair will chair virtual meetings, and meetings in which some participants are attending virtually, in the same way as face-to-face meetings.
The chair will make sure all governors:

- Are set up on Teams
- Have tested their connection and access to the platform
- Are aware of the expectations on attendees set out in section 4.3

The chair will read the privacy terms and conditions of Teams and make sure its security features are enabled.

4.2 The clerk

The clerk will give written notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda at least 7 clear days in advance to:

- Governors
- The headteacher
- Associate members
- The local authority (LA) where an agenda item involves a change of school category

Where there are matters demanding urgent consideration, written notice and a copy of the agenda can be given within a shorter period as the chair directs.

The clerk will minute virtual meetings, and meetings in which some participants are attending virtually, in the same way as face-to-face meetings.
The clerk will make sure the minutes reflect that the meeting is virtual, or if a governor is attending virtually.
The clerk will minute all decisions, and whether anything needs to be ratified at a later date, e.g. due to loss of connection.
The clerk will read the privacy terms and conditions of Teams and make sure its security features are enabled.

4.3 All governors

To ensure confidentiality and the smooth running of the meeting, governors attending virtually will:

- Attend the whole meeting
- Attend with the webcam/video switched on where possible
- Focus on the business of the meeting in the same way as if they were attending in person
- Remain on mute unless they are speaking
- Say their name before they start speaking
- Prevent unauthorised individuals overhearing conversations (e.g. by using headphones)
- Be mindful of their surroundings – they will consider the privacy of the room, including, but not limited to, who or what is visible or audible in the background
- Ask questions during the meeting by raising virtual hand or using the messaging board on Teams.

4.4 IT specialist

A member of IT staff will review the security of Teams regularly.

5. Virtual meetings

Fully virtual meetings will only be held if face-to-face meetings are not possible.

5.1 Difficulty joining the meeting

If after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for a governor to participate by telephone or video conference, the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.
The clerk will record in the minutes that the governor in question attempted to participate but was unable to do so.

5.2 Recording the meeting

The clerk may wish to record the meeting to aid them when writing the minutes.
At the start of the meeting the clerk will make sure all governos agree to the meeting being recorded via Teams.
Where approval is granted, it is the clerk alone who has permission to record the meeting. No one else has authority to record the meeting unless they have explicit authority from governors to do so.

The recording will be handled in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and once it is no longer needed the recording will be deleted.

5.3 Quorum

All governors attending virtually count towards the quorum.
If individual governors lose connection to the meeting, they will no longer count towards the quorum. The meeting can continue undisrupted if it is otherwise quorate.
If the meeting becomes inquorate then discussions may continue, but no votes can be held unless the meeting is quorate.

If all governors lose connection to the meeting then the clerk will postpone the meeting and reschedule. Where this is not possible, the clerk will send the matters for consideration via email, and will expect comments from governors within 7 days.

5.4 Voting

Governors may vote on any agenda item for which they've been fully present.
Secret ballots will be allowed where possible. Governors can share their vote privately with the chair/clerk via email or in a private phone call.
Where a virtual secret ballot cannot be arranged, then each governor can decide to vote publicly or abstain.

5.5 Conflicts of interest

Where a governor declares a conflict of interest, they will withdraw from the meeting by leaving the call.
Once the governing board is ready for the governor to re-join, the clerk will notify them by phone call.

6. Virtual attendance at face-to-face meetings

Governos may attend meetings virtually if they are unable to attend in person.
Any governor wishing to attend a meeting virtually should give 7 days notice to the clerk where possible.

The governor will explain why they're unable to attend physically, and their virtual attendance at the meeting will be subject to the governing board's approval at the start of the meeting.
Where the board does not grant approval, the clerk/chair will notify the governor immediately and the clerk will minute this decision.
The meeting will be chaired by a governor present in person.

6.1 Difficulty joining the meeting

If after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for a governor to participate by telephone or video conference, the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.
The clerk will record in the minutes that the governor in question attempted to participate but was unable to do so.

6.2 Quorum

Any governor attending virtually counts towards the quorum.
If the governor loses connection to the meeting, they will no longer count towards the quorum.
The meeting can continue undisrupted if it's otherwise quorate.
If the meeting becomes inquorate then discussions may continue, but no votes can be held unless the meeting is quorate.

6.3 Voting

Any governor attending virtually may vote on any agenda item for which they've been fully present.
Secret ballots will be allowed where possible. The governor can share their vote privately with the chair/clerk via email or in a private phone call.
Where a virtual secret ballot cannot be arranged, then the governor can decide to vote publicly or

abstain.

6.4 Conflicts of interest

Where a governor attending virtually declares a conflict of interest, they will withdraw from the meeting by leaving the call.

Once the governing board is ready for the governor to re-join, the clerk will notify them by phone call.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the governing body. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing body.

8. Links with other policies

This policy will be used in conjunction with the following policies:

- Data protection policy and privacy notices
- Exclusion policy
- Admissions policy
- Conflicts of interest policy
- Governor code of conduct
- ICT and internet acceptable use policy