

JOHN TAYLOR MULTI ACADEMY TRUST



Trustee/Governor Virtual Meeting Attendance Policy

Implementation date: September 2018

Reviewed: March 2023

Owner: S Boyce

1. Aims

The aims of this virtual meetings policy are to:

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

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

Under our articles of association, any trustee can participate in a meeting of the trustees by telephone or video conference if:

- They've given notice of their intention to do so and provided the telephone number on which they can be reached and/the platform (Teams or Zoom) they'll be using at least 48 hours before the meeting, and
- The trustees have access to the appropriate equipment

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 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/trustees:

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

3.2 The clerk

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

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/trustee is attending virtually.

The clerk will minute all decisions, and whether anything needs to be ratified at a later date, for example due to loss of connection.

3.3 All trustees/governors

To ensure confidentiality and the smooth running of the meeting, governors/trustees 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
- Prevent unauthorised individuals overhearing conversations (for example, 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 adding them to the video conferencing platform’s messaging board, or waiting until the appropriate time in the meeting.

3.4 IT specialist

A member of IT staff will review the security of Microsoft Teams/Zoom.

4. Virtual meetings

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

4.1 Difficulty joining the meeting

If after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for a governor/trustee to participate by telephone or Teams/Zoom, the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.

The clerk will record in the minutes that the governor/trustee in question attempted to participate but was unable to do so.

4.2 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 governors/trustees agree to the meeting being recorded.

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/trustees to do so.

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

4.3 Quorum

All governors/trustees attending virtually count towards the quorum.

If individual governors/trustees 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/trustees 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/trustees within 3 days.

4.4 Voting

Governors/trustees may vote on any agenda item for which they’ve been fully present.

Secret ballots will be allowed where possible. Governors/trustees 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/trustee can decide to vote publicly or abstain.

4.5 Conflicts of interest

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

Once the governing board is ready for the governor/trustee to re-join, the clerk will notify them by email.

5. Virtual attendance at face-to-face meetings

Governors/trustees 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 chair/clerk where possible.

Any governor/trustee wishing to attend a meeting virtually should act in accordance with the arrangements set out in section 3 of this policy.

The governor/trustee 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/trustee immediately and the clerk will minute this decision.

The meeting will be chaired by a governor/trustee present in person.

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The clerk will record in the minutes that the governor/trustee in question attempted to participate but was unable to do so.

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