

Worlingham CEVC Primary School  
**GOVERNOR VIRTUAL MEETING ATTENDANCE POLICY**

*Like a tree firmly planted by streams of living water we will grow  
in knowledge, love, faith and wisdom. Based on Psalm 1:*



### **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”.

#### **Academy trusts**

Article 126 of the model articles of association state;

126. Any Trustee shall be able to participate in meetings of the Trustees by telephone or video conference provided that:

- a. he has given notice of his intention to do so detailing the telephone number on which he can be reached and/or appropriate details of the video conference suite from which he shall be taking part at the time of the meeting at least 48 hours before the meeting; and
- b. the Trustees have access to the appropriate equipment if after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for the person to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.

#### **Local governing bodies (LGBs)**

The proceedings of meetings of LGBs are determined by the trust board (article 100) therefore virtual attendance at face to face meetings and virtual meetings as described in this policy can be enabled by the trust board on adoption of this policy.

In relation to this the governing board of Worlingham CEVC Primary has determined the following arrangements will apply. These arrangements apply to meetings of the full governing board and to committee meetings.

## **Virtual Attendance at Face to Face Meetings**

- Where a governor wishes to attend a meeting of the governing 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 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 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 informed immediately.
- Governors 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 sharing their vote verbally with the clerk). Where this is not possible the governor will be required either to vote publicly or abstain.
- Governors 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 who is present in person.
- 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.

## **Virtual Meetings**

- It is expected that unless there are exceptional circumstances the three statutory full governing 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 is 'present' on the call.
- Where a meeting is taking place virtually every effort will be made to enable all governors 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, other than the headteacher, and these will be presented for approval to the next meeting of the full governing board.
- Virtual meetings should not be recorded by any governor or the clerk without the approval of the governing board and for a specified purpose.

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

Policy approved by the Governing Body Board on

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Review date

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

#### Advantages

- You can set up a meeting quickly
- Governor 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 attending remotely still needs to meet the expectations around confidentiality

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