

Model policy on virtual attendance and voting at local governing body meetings

1. Introduction

- 1.1 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".
- 1.2 In relation to this, the Board of the Flying High Trust has determined the following arrangements will apply for all local governing bodies of schools within the Trust.
- 1.3 These arrangements apply to meetings of the full governing body and to committee meetings.

2. Virtual meetings

- 2.1 Under normal circumstances, three statutory full governing body meetings and termly scheduled committee meetings will ordinarily be face-to-face meetings and all members should make every effort to attend personally. However, in exceptional times and circumstances e.g. under Coronavirus restrictions, meetings can take place via telephone, video conference call or other agreed medium taking account of the usual expectations for a quorum of governors to be 'present'.
- 2.2 Where a meeting is taking place virtually, every effort will be made to enable all governors to access the meeting.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 Virtual meetings will be minuted in the same way as other meetings, either by the clerk or by a governor/staff member (other than the headteacher) who is present virtually taking the minutes, and these will be presented to the next meeting of the full governing body.
- 2.5 Virtual meetings should not be digitally recorded by any governor or persons present without the express prior approval of the governing body and for a specified purpose.

3. Virtual attendance at meetings in normal circumstances

- 3.1 Where meetings are taking place face-to-face, if a governor wishes to virtually attend a meeting (or part of a meeting) of the governing body by either telephone, video link or other agreed medium, the chair and clerk must be notified at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting (wherever possible) to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be made. The governor will be asked to inform the chair of their reasons for not attending the meeting in person and their attendance virtually will be subject to the agreement of the governing body. Virtual attendance at the meeting will be recorded as such in the

minutes. Where agreement is withheld, the reason for this will be minuted and the governor informed immediately.

- 3.2 Governors attending the meeting virtually will be entitled to vote on any issue providing they have participated (i.e. heard/engaged) for the whole agenda item to which the vote relates. 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.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 The meeting will be chaired by a governor who is present in person.
- 3.5 If, after all reasonable efforts, it does not prove possible for a governor to participate by telephone, video conference or other agreed medium, the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.

4. Review of this Policy

- 4.1 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.