

## **The Whitby Secondary Partnership**

# **Virtual Meetings Policy For the Governing Body**

<b>Date of review</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>Date approved by Governors</b>
July 2021	Governors	15 July 2021
July 2022		

**Signed by the Chair:**

*Pen Cruz*

## 1. Aims

The aims of this virtual meetings policy are to:

- Enable the 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 can attend meetings virtually where they would otherwise have had to miss them

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on:

- The Department for Education's (DfE's) school governance update – March 2020
- The DfE's guidance on actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak
- The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012

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.

### COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, we can agree to hold meetings via telephone or video conferencing without having to meet first.

The chair or clerk can contact governors directly to agree these alternative arrangements.

The board has determined that the following arrangements will apply.

## 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 Zoom

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

### 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 Executive headteacher
- 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, for example due to loss of connection.

### 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
- Prevent unauthorised individuals overhearing conversations (for example, by using headphones or being in a separate room)
- 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 responding to the chairs' invitation to speak in order to avoid speaking over each other
- 4.4 IT specialist

A member of IT staff will review the security of Zoom

## **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 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 governors 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 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.

### **5.3 Quorum**

All governors attending virtually count towards the quorum.

### **5.4 Voting**

Governors may vote on any agenda item for which they've been fully present.

If deemed necessary secret ballots will be allowed. 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 text or phone call.

## **6. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body. At every review, it will be approved by the full Governing Body.

## **7. Links with other policies**

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

- Data protection policy and privacy notices
- Governor code of conduct
- ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Risk Assessment for COVID 19