

Academy Trust Board Virtual Meeting Protocol

Introduction

The Articles of Association for the Trust Board detail the arrangement for any trustee to be able to participate in meetings of the trust board by telephone or video conferencing provided that:

- The trustee has given notice of his/her intention to do so
- Provided a telephone number on which he/she can be reached and/or appropriate details of the video conference suite from which he/she shall be taking part at the time of the meeting
- Provide details at least 48 hours before the meeting; and 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.

The Trust Board of _____ has determined the following arrangements will apply. These arrangements apply to meetings of the full Trust Board and are to be extended for Local Governing Board and Trust Board Committees.

Guidance on virtual meetings and the facilitation of the meeting can be gained via the Clerk to the Board and the LA Governance Services Team

Virtual Attendance at Face to Face Meetings

- 1.1 Where a trustee wishes to attend a meeting of the Trust Board by either telephone or video conferencing the Chair and Clerk must be notified at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be made where possible. The trustees will be asked their reasons for not attending the meeting in person and their attendance virtually will be subject to the approval of the Trust 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 included in the minutes and the trustee informed immediately.
- 1.2 Trustees 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 trustee sharing their vote verbally with the clerk) or via a direct message service. Where this is not possible the trustee will be required either to vote publicly or abstain.
- 1.3 Trustees 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.
- 1.4 The meeting will be chaired by a trustee who is present in person.
- 1.5 If, after all reasonable efforts, it does not prove possible for a trustee to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting may still proceed provided it is otherwise quorate.

Virtual Meetings

- 1.6 The full Trust Board meetings and termly scheduled committee meetings will be face to face meetings, wherever possible. However additional and extraordinary meetings can take place via telephone or video conferencing as long as the usual quorum of trustees is 'present'.
- 1.7 Where a meeting is taking place virtually every effort will be made to enable all trustees to access the meeting.
- 1.8 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/fourteen days in advance of the meeting, except where the chair has exercised his/her right to waive the usual notice in an emergency situation.
- 1.9 Virtual meetings will be minuted in the same way as other meetings, either by the clerk being present virtually or by a trustee who is present, other than the principal/CEO, taking the minutes, and these will be presented to the next meeting of the full Trust Board.
- 1.10 Virtual meetings should not be recorded by any trustee or the clerk without the approval of the Trust Board and for a specified purpose.
- 1.11 Trustees joining or leaving at intervals throughout the meeting should verbally announce this to ensure quoracy and accuracy of the minutes.
- 1.12 To limit background noise and to ensure the focus of the meeting, trustees should 'mute' their microphones when not speaking.
- 1.13 Questions or interjections, where possible, should be made by using the 'reactions' or 'raise hand' function on the software utilised. This helps the Chair to maintain order of the meeting and allows individuals to be heard clearly.
- 1.14 The confidentiality of the meeting must be maintained and trustees should be mindful of their surroundings and whether the discussion of the meeting can be overheard. Meeting in a private room or the wearing of headphones can reduce this risk.
- 1.15 Consideration of conflicts of interest and voting mechanisms will be considered prior to the meeting. Meeting 'lobby areas' or the temporary removal of a trustee from the meeting, who may have a conflict throughout a particular discussion, will be utilised. Secret voting will also be considered for contentious issues in order to protect individuals.

Review of these Protocols

These protocols are to be reviewed at least annually, but any trustee with any concerns about its operation can request that it is reviewed at any time.

Date: _____

(January 2021 updates detailed in red text)