



Virtual Meetings Policy

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Version	Date	Author	Changes
V1.0	April 2020	Louise Beale	Initial Issue
V1.1	March 2022	Louise Beale	LGB replaced with AGC throughout. Re-write of section 3. Previous paragraphs 4.2 and 4.4 removed. New paragraphs 5.6 and 5.7 added.
V1.2	February 2024	Louise Beale	Addition of 1.3, amendments to 4.2 and 5.7

Review frequency	2 years
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Ratified by	Trust Leadership Team
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Lead/owner	Head of Operation and Compliance
Target audience	Directors, AGC members, Trust Leadership Team, Staff
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The electronic version is the definitive version of this document.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This policy sets out the requirements for Virtual Attendance or Virtual Meetings where Face to Face attendance may not be possible or where a virtual meeting is preferable.
- 1.2. These arrangements apply to meetings of the Multi Academy Trust Board and its committees, including Academy Governance Committees
- 1.3. The Trust recognises that virtual meetings can reduce travel which has a positive impact on Trust priorities in relation to both workload and the journey towards Net Zero.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. A **Face to Face Meeting** is a meeting where the majority of attendees are physically present at the location listed on the meeting agenda.
- 2.2. **Virtual Attendance** at a meeting is where an attendee is not physically present at the location listed on the meeting agenda but participates or votes as a **Virtual Attendee** at a meeting through virtual means including but not limited to telephone or video conference.
- 2.3. A **Virtual Meeting** is a meeting where the majority of attendees are not present at the same physical location and participate or vote at a meeting through **Virtual Attendance**.

3. SCHEDULING OF FACE TO FACE AND VIRTUAL MEETINGS

- 3.1. Meetings can take place as Virtual Meetings (as long as quorate where necessary). Unless a special exemption is in place, Members must meet face to face once per year and this would usually be at the Annual General Meeting.

4. VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE AT FACE TO FACE MEETINGS

- 4.1. Where an attendee wishes to attend a Face to Face Meeting through Virtual Attendance, the Chair and Clerk must be notified when possible at least 2 working days in advance of the meeting to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be made.
- 4.2. Consideration should be given to who chairs a face to face meeting if the normal Chair is attending virtually.
- 4.3. A Virtual Attendee will be entitled to a 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 Virtual Attendee sharing their vote verbally with the Clerk).

Where facilitation is not possible, the Virtual Attendee will be asked to vote publicly or abstain.

- 4.4. Virtual Attendees 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.
- 4.5. If, after all reasonable effort, it does not prove possible for a Virtual Attendee to participate the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.

5. VIRTUAL MEETINGS

- 5.1. When a Virtual Meeting is taking place, all reasonable efforts must be made to enable all attendees to access the meeting through Virtual Attendance.
- 5.2. When a virtual meeting is taking place, the usual statutory notice arrangements will apply and all papers to be considered must be circulated in the advance of the meeting at the normal required timescales, except where the Chair has exercised their right to waive the usual notice in an emergency situation.
- 5.3. Virtual Meetings must be quorate. If the technological link to an attendee 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.
- 5.4. Virtual Attendees will be entitled to a 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 (see 4.5).
- 5.5. Virtual meetings will be minuted in the same way as Face to Face meetings with either the Clerk or another Virtual Attendee taking the minutes which will be provided for approval at the next meeting or by virtual means in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.6. Discussion during virtual meetings should not be recorded. Please note that recordings of meetings would be in scope in the event of a relevant Subject Access Request. Virtual presentations or training sessions can be recorded with the agreement of all attendees on the call.
- 5.7. It should be noted that chat functions for virtual meetings may be accessible to all invitees of a virtual meeting, during and after the call.