



**ALL SAINTS
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST**
BIRMINGHAM
GOD'S LOVE IN ACTION

Virtual Attendance policy

All Saints Multi Academy Trust

Approved by: Trust Board **Date:** 07.09.2023

Last reviewed on: 14.09.2023

Next review due by: September 2024

| Contents | Page | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| 1. | Aims | 3 |
| 2. | Legislation and guidance | 3 |
| 3. | The board’s ability to make alternative arrangements for meetings | 3 |
| 4. | Roles and responsibilities | 3 |
| 5. | Virtual meetings | 4 |
| 6. | Virtual attendance at face-to-face meetings | 5 |
| 7. | Monitoring arrangements | 6 |
| 8. | Links with other policies | 6 |
| Appendix | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Mission Statement

Teach children in the way they should go and when they are older, they will not depart from it

Children are at the heart of everything we do. Through Christian values, relationships, living and learning together we celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of everyone in our family. We nurture a sense of self belief, mutual respect and belonging to build the foundations for happy and successful lives

1. Aims

The aims of this virtual meetings policy are to:

- Provide a framework in which to run meetings virtually and include those attending virtually
- Provide flexibility so governors/trustees can attend meetings virtually where they would otherwise have had to miss them
- Enable the governing board to continue its work and maintain strategic oversight where face-to-face meetings aren't possible

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association, item 11 and 126.

3. Legislation and guidance

Under our articles of association, any trustee can participate in a meeting of the trustees by telephone or video conference if:

- They've given notice of their intention to do so and provided the telephone number on which they can be reached and/or the video conferencing platform they'll be using at least 48 hours before the meeting, and
- The trustees have access to the appropriate equipment

If the government or public health officials impose or recommend restrictions on face-to-face contact, the governing board may vote to hold all regular meetings virtually until it is practical to resume normal procedures.

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 or trustees:

- Are set up on Teams / 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 each trustee written notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda at least 7 clear days in advance of the meeting.

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 or trustee 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 or trustees 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
- Remain on mute unless they are speaking
- Say their name before they start speaking
- Prevent unauthorised individuals overhearing conversations (for example, by using headphones)
- 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 e.g. adding them to the video conferencing platform's messaging board, or waiting until the chair invites questions at the end of each agenda item

4.4 IT specialist

A member of IT staff will review the security of Teams / Zoom Annually.

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 or trustee 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 governor or trustee 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 or trustees agree to the meeting being recorded via Teams / Zoom.

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 or trustees to do so.

The recording will be handled in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), and once it is no longer needed the recording will be deleted.

5.3 Quorum

All governors or trustees attending virtually count towards the quorum.

If individual governors or trustees lose connection to the meeting, they will no longer count towards the quorum. The meeting can continue undisrupted if it is otherwise quorate.

If the meeting becomes inquorate then discussions may continue, but no votes can be held unless the meeting is quorate.

If all governors or trustees lose connection to the meeting then the clerk will postpone the meeting and reschedule. Where this is not possible, the clerk will send the matters for consideration via email, and will expect comments from

Governors or trustees within 2 working days.

5.4 Voting

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

Secret ballots will be allowed where possible. Governors or trustees 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 governors or trustees can decide to vote publicly or abstain.

5.5 Conflicts of interest

Where a governors or trustees declares a conflict of interest, they will withdraw from the meeting by leaving the call.

Once the board is ready for the governors or trustees to re-join, the clerk will notify them by email or a phone call.

6. Virtual attendance at face-to face meetings

Governors/trustees may attend meetings virtually if they are unable to attend in person.

Any trustee wishing to attend a meeting virtually should act in accordance with the arrangements set out in section 3 of this policy.

The governor/trustee will explain why they're unable to attend physically, and their virtual attendance at the meeting will be subject to the governing board's approval at the start of the meeting.

Where the board does not grant approval, the clerk/chair will notify the governor/trustee immediately and the clerk will minute this decision.

The meeting will be chaired by a governor/trustee present in person.

6.1 Difficulty joining the meeting

If after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for a governor/trustee 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 governor/trustee in question attempted to participate but was unable to do so.

6.2 Quorum

Any governor/trustee attending virtually counts towards the quorum.

If the governor/trustee loses connection to the meeting, they will no longer count towards the quorum.

The meeting can continue undisrupted if it's otherwise quorate.

If the meeting becomes inquorate then discussions may continue, but no votes can be held unless the meeting is quorate.

6.3 Voting

Any governor/trustee attending virtually may vote on any agenda item for which they've been fully present.

Secret ballots will be allowed where possible. The governor/trustee 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 the governor/trustee can decide to vote publicly or abstain.

6.4 Conflicts of interest

Where a governor/trustee attending virtually declares a conflict of interest, they will withdraw from the meeting by leaving the call.

Once the governing board is ready for the governor/trustee to re-join, the clerk will notify them by email or phone call.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually and approved by the board of trustees.

8. Links with other policies

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

- Data protection policy and privacy notices
- Exclusion policy
- Admissions policy
- Conflicts of interest policy
- Governor code of conduct
- ICT and internet acceptable use policy