



**THIS POLICY COVERS ALL ACADEMIES/SCHOOLS WITHIN
ARDEN MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST**

Name of Policy	Governor/Trustee Virtual Meeting Attendance Policy	
Lead	Martin Murphy, CEO	
Governor Committee	Business & Personnel	
Policy Status	Awaiting Trustee Approval	No
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Amendments		



HENLEY-IN-ARDEN
SCHOOL



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Any governor or trustee can attend meetings remotely under the DfE's model articles of association for academy trusts (article 126), as long as:
- 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 governors/trustees have access to the appropriate equipment.
 - The model articles add that "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".

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Face-to-face meetings** are meetings where the majority of governors/trustees are physically present at the location listed on the meeting agenda.
- 2.2 **Virtual attendance** at a meeting is where a governor/trustee is not physically present at the location listed on the meeting agenda but participates or votes at a meeting through virtual means including but not limited to telephone or video conference.
- 2.3 **Virtual meetings** are meetings where the majority of governors/trustees 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 Where possible the statutory (three) full Governing Board meetings, Trust Board meetings and termly scheduled Committee meetings will be face-to-face meetings. The decision to hold these as virtual meetings will only be in exceptional circumstances. Additional or extraordinary full Governing Board, Trust Board meetings and Committee meetings can take place as virtual meetings (as long as the usual quorum of governors/trustees are present through virtual attendance).
- 3.2 Meetings will be convened and scheduled by the Clerk to the Trust in line with The School Governance (England) (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) Regulations 2013

4. Quorum

- 4.1 Governors/trustees attending through virtual attendance 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.

5. Virtual attendance at face-to-face meetings

- 5.1 Where a governor/trustee wishes to attend a meeting of the Governing Board or Trust Board by either telephone or video link, 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 governors/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 Governing/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 minuted and the governor/trustee informed immediately.
- 5.2 Governors/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 governor/trustee sharing their vote verbally with the Clerk or by email to the Clerk). Where this is not possible the governor/trustee will be required either to vote publicly or abstain.
- 5.3 Governors/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. This will be noted within the minutes.
- 5.4 The meeting will be chaired by a governor/trustee who is present in person.
- 5.5 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.

6. Virtual meetings

- 6.1 Where a meeting is taking place virtually every effort will be made to enable all governors/trustees to access the meeting.

- 6.2 Where a meeting is taking place virtually the usual statutory notice arrangements will apply. The Clerk will convene the meeting 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.
- 6.3 Virtual meetings will be minuted in the same way as other meetings by the Clerk being present virtually. Only in exceptional circumstances will they be recorded by a governor/trustee who is present, other than the Associate Headteacher, and these will be presented to the next meeting of the Full Governing Board/Trust Board.
- 6.4 Virtual meetings should not be recorded by any governor/trustee or the Clerk without the approval of the Governing/Trust Board and for a specified purpose and will be destroyed as soon as the Clerk is satisfied the minutes are recorded.

7. Review of this policy

- 7.1 This policy is reviewed every year by the AMAT Trust Boards, Audit & Risk Committee. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

Appendix

The Key for School Governors virtual meetings suggested protocols:

Getting started:

- Make sure all governors/trustees have access to a decent internet connection. Most people's connections at home are good enough, but if in an area with poor connectivity additional arrangements may need to be made.
- Everyone should be encouraged to call in with their webcam/video switched on, if possible. It's much harder for everyone to participate, and for the Chair to moderate the meeting, if someone is not visible.
- The Chair or Clerk should set up the call on whatever platform you choose, and circulate the link to everyone else.
- If possible, the platform or system being used should be tested before the meeting.

During the meeting:

- Meetings should be shorter if possible – remote meetings are harder to manage, so shorter is better.
- Time delays can happen, so the Chair should ensure everyone has the opportunity to contribute and ask questions.
- If an attendance record is usually signed at the start of a meeting, you'll need to manage this in a digital format instead. It's fine to have the Clerk record who's present (and indicating that they're remote).
- If the meeting will be discussing confidential information, the Chair should make sure everyone can be in an appropriate location (to avoid other people overhearing confidential details).
- The Chair should check in regularly with the Clerk – time delays and variable sound quality can make it hard to take accurate minutes.
- If you're in a location with lots of background noise, microphones should be muted when not speaking – this improves call quality for everyone.