



Virtual Trustee/Governor Meetings Policy

The Children's Endeavour Trust comprises:

- Abbot's Hall Community Primary School
- Bosmere Community Primary School
- Broke Hall Community Primary School
- Chilton Community Primary School
- Combs Ford Primary School
- Freeman Community Primary School
- Springfield Junior School
- Whitehouse Community Primary School

Document Control

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1 Introduction

At CET we recognise that communication in meetings is optimal if those people are in the same room. This enables a better understanding of tone and body language; the chair is better able to ensure that effective turn taking is established. We also recognise that this is not always possible and value the potential of virtual meetings to allow Trustees and Governors to attend.

Article 126 of the Trust's Articles of Association states:

Any Trustee shall be able to participate in meetings of the Trustees by telephone or video conference provided that:

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

2 Local Governing Bodies (LGBs)

The proceedings of meetings of LGBs are determined by the trust board (article 100) therefore virtual attendance at face to face meetings and virtual meetings as described in this policy are enabled by the Trust Board by adoption of this policy. The Trust has

determined the following arrangements will apply. These arrangements apply to meetings of the Trust Board, Local Governing Bodies and to Committee Meetings.

3 Virtual Attendance at Face to Face Meetings

- Where a Trustee/Governor wishes to attend a meeting of the Trust Board/Governing Body 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 Trustee/Governor 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/Governing Body 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 Trustee/Governor informed immediately.
- Trustees/Governors 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/Governor sharing their vote verbally with the clerk). Where this is not possible the Trustee/Governor will be required either to vote publicly or abstain.
- Trustees/Governors 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.
- The meeting will be chaired by a Trustee/Governor who is present in person.
- If, after all reasonable efforts, it does not prove possible for a Trustee/Governor to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.

4 Virtual Meetings

- It is expected that unless there are exceptional circumstances the three statutory full Trust Board/Governing Body meetings and termly scheduled committee meetings will be face to face meetings. However additional and extraordinary meetings can take place via telephone or video conference call as long as the usual quorum of Trustees/Governors is 'present' on the call.
- Where a meeting is taking place virtually every effort will be made to enable all Trustees/Governors to access the meeting.
- 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 days in advance of the meeting, except where the chair has exercised his/her right to waive the usual notice in an emergency situation.

- Virtual meetings will be minuted in the same way as other meetings, either by the clerk being present virtually or by a Trustee/Governor, other than the CEO/headteacher, and these will be presented for approval to the next meeting of the Trust Board/Full Governing Body Meeting.
- Virtual meetings should not be recorded by any Trustee/Governor or the clerk without the approval of the Trust Board/Governing Body and for a specified purpose.

5 Review of this Policy

The policy will be reviewed bi-annually, but any Trustee/Governor with any concerns about its operation can request that it is reviewed at any time.

6 Pros and Cons to Consider During Review

Pros

- You can set up a meeting quickly
- You do not all need to travel to a certain place to meet
- Members of your board in different regions and countries can meet at short notice. This could be particularly helpful when you are meeting to approve something quickly, such as a tender

Cons

- Tone is harder to convey leading to poorer quality conversations between governors
- Chairs struggle to manage the flow of the conversation owing to time delays
- Your board could overlook someone if they are not physically in the room, leading to the remote attendee not having a say
- The remote attendee can unwittingly disrupt the meeting due to delays
- It could be hard to make sure the conversation is confidential

Mitigate the cons

- Have a clear process in place for what to do if (and when) these problems arise
- If you intend to embed teleconferencing into your processes, invest in reliable teleconferencing services or equipment
- Clarify that the Trustee/Governor attending remotely still needs to meet the expectations around confidentiality