

St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation

Blackboys C.E. School
School Lane
Blackboys
Uckfield
East Sussex
TN22 5LL



Framfield C.E. School
The Street
Framfield
Uckfield
East Sussex
TN22 5NR

ADOPTED 20 MARCH 2020

REVIEW MARCH 2022

Virtual Governance Policy

Our Vision is to raise the aspiration of all pupils to “Be the Very Best they can Be”, through providing an engaging and Christian environment alongside an exciting broad and balanced curriculum striving to develop the skills, attitudes and Christian values of the whole Federation Community to face the new challenges of the 21st century with confidence.

Our Christian ethos, vision and values underpin all we do.

Introduction

- The School Governance (England) (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) Regulations 2013 make provision for Governing Bodies of maintained schools in England to: “approve alternative arrangements for Governors to participate or vote at meetings of the Governing Body including but not limited to by telephone or video conference”.
- In relation to this the Governing Body of St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation has determined the following arrangements will apply.
- These arrangements apply to meetings of the Full Governing Body and to Committee Meetings.

Virtual Attendance at Face to Face Meetings

- Where a Governor wishes to attend a meeting of the 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 Governors 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 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 Governor informed immediately;
- 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 Governor sharing their vote verbally with the clerk). Where this is not possible the Governor will be required either to vote publicly or abstain;
- The virtual Governors must make every effort to participate in the whole Agenda discussions and not just one item or one vote. However, any Governors may leave the meeting at any time. Should this make the meeting “not quorate” then it may continue (but decisions may not be taken);
- If an urgent item is tabled at the meeting and the virtual Governors do not have access to the papers being presented or discussed, then the meeting may (if agreed) proceed on the understanding that the input from the virtual Governor will not be one that is fully informed;
- 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 Governor who is present in person;

- If, after all reasonable efforts, it does not prove possible for a Governor to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate;
- Virtual Governors will take due care of their surroundings and will consider confidentiality and “sensitivity of information” issues at all times. They will not place themselves in a location where they may be overheard and will never take part in a meeting whilst in a public place (e.g. a train);
- Virtual Governors will focus on the matters being discussed at all times and not multi-task (e.g. read emails, watch TV etc.);
- Governors should refer to the Governors’ Allowances Policy for the reimbursement of any costs.

Virtual Meetings

- The statutory Full Governing Body Meetings and termly scheduled Committee Meetings will be face to face meetings, except in exceptional circumstances. However additional and extraordinary meetings can take place via telephone or video conference call as long as the usual quorum of Governors is ‘present’ on the call;
- Where a meeting is taking place virtually every effort will be made to enable all 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 Governor who is present, other than one of our Headteachers, taking the minutes, and these will be presented to the next meeting of the Full Governing Body;
- Virtual meetings should not be recorded by any Governor or the clerk without the approval of the Governing Body and for a specified purpose.

Remote Meeting Best Practice Guidance is attached as Appendix One.

Review

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but not less frequently than every two years. The policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body’s Policies Working Party.

Appendix One – Remote Meeting Best Practice

Before the Call

- Please test equipment prior to the call.

Starting the Call

- Join the call at least a minute or two before the scheduled meeting time.
- Don't start unless the expected people are there so you don't have to repeat things.
- Take time for everyone to make introductions so that everyone knows who is on the call.
- Advise people not to interrupt or speak over people.
- Begin with a summary of the Agenda and purpose of the meeting and advise if the Agenda is not to be taken in the order set.

Conducting the Call

- If the meeting is being recorded, ensure everyone is in agreement of this.
- Address someone by name if you want them to respond so that people are sure who needs to answer something.
- Provide regular checks so everyone knows where they are and check whether there are any other comments before moving to the next item.
- When not speaking, attendees should mute their phone/mic, especially if they are in a place where background noise is present or possible.
- Make sure all attendees speak audibly and clearly and that everyone can hear them – please ask for clarification if it is not clear.
- Ensure that it is clear what Agenda Item and/or page is under discussion.
- Item presenters to be succinct and only to talk about the item under discussion and not move around the Agenda.

Ending the Call

- Provide a meeting recap at the end of the call.
- Confirm that everyone is in agreement with next steps, responsibilities and deadlines.