

Governing body virtual meeting policy including meeting etiquette guide

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Regulation 14 of 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"*.
- 1.2 In relation to this, the governing body of Emneth Nursery School has determined the following arrangements will apply to full governing body and committee meetings.
- 1.3 The governing body will ensure all arrangements are adequately secure to protect confidentiality of discussions and supporting documents.

2. General

- 2.1 The governing body will agree the preferred format of meetings for the coming term with reference to the school's risk assessment, government guidance plus local and governors' circumstances.
- 2.2 Where a meeting is taking place virtually, every effort will be made to enable all governors to access the meeting.
- 2.3 The meeting will be chaired by the elected chairperson or vice chair if unavailable.
- 2.4 The 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 their right to waive the usual notice in an emergency situation.
- 2.5 Meetings should be minuted by the clerk or if the clerk is not present by a governor/staff member (other than the Headteacher/Chair). The draft will be approved and circulated in the normal manner and presented to the next meeting for formal sign off.

3. Virtual attendance at meetings

- 3.1 Where a governor wishes to virtually attend a meeting of the governing body either by telephone, video link or another agreed medium, the Clerk must be notified at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting to ensure that appropriate arrangements have/can be made. The governor must provide the reason for wishing to attend remotely, if the meeting has been designated as a face to face meeting, and the Chair of Governors will decide on whether to approve the request; approval will not be withheld without good reason.
- 3.2 Requests made due to exceptional circumstances that fall outside the timeframe will be considered on an individual basis.
- 3.3 Virtual attendance at the meeting will be recorded as such in the minutes. Where approval has been withheld the reason for this will be minuted.
- 3.4 Governors attending the meeting virtually will be entitled to vote on any item discussed providing that they have participated (i.e. heard/engaged) for the whole agenda item which the vote relates to. Where a secret ballot is required, this will be facilitated where possible by the Clerk utilising an agreed method (e.g. by taking the telephone call off speaker phone and the governor sharing their vote verbally with the Clerk or via an agreed online anonymised voting platform).
- 3.5 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 there is no longer a quorum. The governor with the lost connection will attempt to re-join the meeting immediately.
- 3.6 If the technological link for the clerk is lost, meeting discussions should either be ceased to allow the clerk the opportunity to return to the meeting. Or a designated governor, nominated before the meeting starts, takes over. They will capture the discussions, action points and decisions which are shared with the clerk so they can be incorporated into the minutes. These will be captured in the meeting notes section of the Teams meeting or an agreed alternate arrangement.
- 3.7 The governor/s attending remotely must ensure that they meet the expectations/etiquette around confidentiality and not participate in the meeting in a public place. The Chair will ensure this with remote attendees at the start of the meeting.
- 3.8 Meetings should not be recorded by any governor, or persons present, by any means.

4. Review of this policy

- 4.1 The policy will be reviewed at least annually, but any governor with any concerns about its operation can request that it is reviewed at any time.

This policy was adopted by the governing board on 8 October 2020.