



CARDINAL POLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Protocol on Governing Body Virtual Meetings

Guiding Principles:

A virtual meeting of the Governing Body (or a committee) may be held in exceptional circumstances where a face-to-face meeting is not possible or is impractical.

Governors participating in a virtual meeting must be in a location that is private so that the confidentiality of the discussions can be maintained.

Governors may not record a virtual meeting. A formal written record of the meeting will be made by the Clerk.

The agenda for a virtual meeting must be short and limited to the essential. The related paperwork must be kept to the minimum.

Governors should join the meeting on time and keep queries and comments to the minimum necessary. During the meeting, the Governors participating in it must be identifiable visibly or audibly. Voting or attendance by proxy is not permitted.

Preparation:

Prior to holding a meeting by teleconference or video call, the Governing Body will circulate a copy of this policy to Governors. This can be done by email.

Any variation of the terms of this policy must be agreed by Governors before the meeting takes place. Before the first meeting, a test of the system used will be carried out.

Prior to the Meeting:

Details of the system to be used and call details will be included on the agenda for the meeting and sent out to all Governors seven days in advance of the meeting, with the papers for the meeting. If using an external system, the Governing Body will ensure that no unauthorised recording of the meeting is made. Where possible, the Governing Body will select a system that all Governors can access. Any licence costs will be borne by the school, not individual Governors.

The agenda for a virtual meeting will include standard items, including declarations of interest.

Clerking:

Virtual meetings of the Governing Body must be clerked by the Clerk to the Governing Body. If he or she is not available, a Clerk for the meeting must be appointed. Committee meetings must also have an appointed Clerk, if the Clerk of the Governing Body is not joining the meeting.

Governor Absence/Apologies:

The Governing Body will generally give permission for absence for Governors who are not able to attend a virtual meeting while the current circumstances continue. However, Governors should be mindful of the need for a quorum and join meetings wherever they are able.

Conduct of the meeting - Commencement of the Meeting

The Chair will ask all Governors participating in the meeting to identify themselves.

Quorum:

The quorum for a virtual meeting is the same as for any other meeting of the Governing Body (or committee). If the technological link enabling a Governor to participate in the meeting is lost, that Governor will cease to contribute to the quorum. That will not prevent the meeting from continuing in their absence, unless the meeting has become inquorate. A meeting that has become inquorate can continue while inquorate but any actions or decisions that are taken or agreed must be ratified by a quorate Governing Body meeting. That can be done if the link is restored before the end of the meeting so that the number of Governors participating in the meeting satisfies the quorum.

**Confidentiality:**

Governors have an individual responsibility to ensure that Governing Body discussions remain confidential and cannot be overheard.

Voting

Governors attending the meeting, either by telephone or video conference, are entitled to vote on any issue. If a secret ballot is required, this will be facilitated where possible by the Clerk. This may require adjournment to allow the Clerk to gather the votes.

Discussion During Items

During a conference call, a Governor must state his/her name before speaking to ensure the Clerk can minute the meeting accurately. If multiple Governors speak at the same time, the Chair of the meeting shall determine who will speak first. Governors may be asked to mute their microphones when not speaking.

At the Conclusion of an Item

The Chair and/or Clerk will recap on any decisions taken. The minutes of the meeting will show the decisions taken at the meeting. The minutes will be distributed to all Governors as appropriate.