St Giles CE Primary School

Governor Virtual Meeting Attendance Policy

1. Introduction

1.1

The School Governance (England) (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) Regulations 2013 allow governing boards to approve alternative arrangements for governors to participate in meetings, including attendance by telephone, video conferencing, or other electronic means.

1.2

The Governing Board of St Giles CE Primary School recognises that virtual attendance can support governor participation where attendance in person is not possible and has therefore adopted the arrangements set out in this policy.

1.3

This policy applies to:

- Full Governing Board meetings
- Committee meetings
- Extraordinary meetings
- Emergency meetings

The policy should be read alongside the school's governance procedures, constitution and terms of reference.

2. Virtual Attendance at Face-to-Face Meetings

2.1 Requesting Virtual Attendance

Governors who wish to attend a face-to-face meeting remotely via telephone or video conference must notify both the Chair of Governors and the Clerk to Governors wherever possible at least **48 hours before the meeting**.

This will allow appropriate arrangements to be made to facilitate participation.

The governor will normally be asked to provide a reason for requesting virtual attendance.

The governing board will formally approve remote attendance at the start of the meeting. Approval will not be unreasonably withheld.

Where approval is not granted:

- The reasons will be recorded in the minutes.
- The governor will be informed of the decision as soon as possible.

2.2 Voting Rights

Governors attending remotely shall have the same rights and responsibilities as governors attending in person.

A governor may vote on any matter where they have been present for the entirety of the discussion and decision-making process relating to that item.

Where a secret ballot is required:

- Every reasonable effort will be made to facilitate confidential voting.
- If confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, the governor may choose to:
    - Vote openly, or
    - Abstain from voting.

2.3 Quorum

Governors attending via approved virtual methods shall count towards the quorum for the meeting.

Should the connection be lost:

- The governor will cease to count towards the quorum until reconnected.
- The meeting may continue provided it remains quorate.

2.4 Chairing Meetings

The Chair of the meeting must normally be physically present at the meeting venue.

2.5 Technical Difficulties

Where reasonable efforts have been made to establish or maintain a virtual connection but participation proves impossible, the meeting may continue provided it remains quorate.

3. Fully Virtual Meetings

3.1 Circumstances for Virtual Meetings

The Governing Board recognises that there may be circumstances where meeting virtually is necessary or beneficial.

While the three statutory full governing board meetings and scheduled committee meetings will normally take place in person, meetings may take place virtually where:

- Exceptional circumstances exist.
- Urgent decisions are required.
- Public health advice restricts in-person meetings.
- Severe weather or travel disruption prevents attendance.
- A majority of governors agree virtual attendance is appropriate.

Additional and extraordinary meetings may also take place virtually.

3.2 Accessibility

Every effort will be made to ensure all governors can access virtual meetings through:

- Suitable video conferencing platforms.
- Telephone access where needed.
- Distribution of meeting information and joining instructions in advance.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where required.

3.3 Notice and Documentation

The normal statutory notice period for meetings will apply.

Meeting papers shall normally be circulated at least **seven clear days before the meeting** unless:

- An urgent matter arises; and
- The Chair has exercised their authority to waive the normal notice period.

Documentation will be shared securely using approved school systems.

3.4 Minutes

Virtual meetings will be minuted in the same manner as face-to-face meetings.

The Clerk to Governors will normally take the minutes.

Where the Clerk is unavailable:

- Another governor may take the minutes, provided they are not the Headteacher.

- Draft minutes will be presented for approval at the next governing board meeting.

3.5 Confidentiality and Recording

Governors must maintain confidentiality at all times when attending virtual meetings.

Governors should ensure:

- Meetings are attended from a private and appropriate location.
- Documents are not accessible to unauthorised individuals.
- Screens cannot be viewed by others.

Meetings must not be recorded by governors, the clerk, or any attendee unless:

- Prior approval has been granted by the Governing Board; and
- The purpose of the recording has been clearly identified and agreed.

Any approved recordings must be stored securely and deleted once no longer required.

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4. Conduct During Virtual Meetings

Governors attending virtually are expected to:

- Attend punctually.
- Participate fully in discussions.
- Follow the Governing Board's Code of Conduct.
- Ensure professional behaviour at all times.
- Mute microphones when not speaking where appropriate.
- Notify the Chair if they need to leave the meeting temporarily.

All governors should contribute in a manner that supports respectful, constructive and effective governance.

5. Equality and Inclusion

The Governing Board is committed to ensuring that all governors have equitable opportunities to participate in governance activities.

Appropriate arrangements will be considered to support governors who:

- Have disabilities or medical needs.
- Experience temporary health issues.
- Have caring responsibilities.
- Face unavoidable barriers to attendance.

6. Data Protection and Information Security

Virtual meetings must comply with:

- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018
- School Data Protection Policy
- Confidentiality Procedures

Governors must:

- Use secure internet connections wherever possible.
- Protect meeting links and passwords.
- Store governing board papers securely.
- Dispose of confidential papers appropriately.

Any suspected data breach must be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors and Headteacher.

7. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Board will review this policy annually to ensure it remains effective, lawful and appropriate.

Any governor may request an earlier review if concerns arise regarding its operation or application.

Approval

Approved by: Full Governing Board
School: St Giles CE Primary School
Date of Approval: 11.11. 2026
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