



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

## Protocol for virtual meetings\*

<p><b>Ground Rules</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Join on time</li> <li>• Keep to the agenda</li> <li>• Governors should identify themselves to the satisfaction of the other attendees</li> <li>• Use webcam if possible (this may not be appropriate if there are lots of people in the meeting – please follow guidance by the Chair)</li> <li>• Use mute button for minimizing background noises</li> <li>• Allow additional time for participants to refer to documents that they may have to open in another application</li> <li>• Ensure that the same precautions that are used in face to face meetings, continue to be used during virtual meetings, particularly around Data Protection security.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Confidentiality</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors must <b>guarantee confidentiality</b> is maintained throughout the meeting to ensure that there is no breach to the Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• Remote attendees must be aware of their surroundings when discussing confidential and sensitive information and must not conduct these conversations in a place where they will be overheard.</li> <li>• Items that are confidential must be made known at the start of the meeting and recorded separately.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Security of Data / Information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governing Boards must consider the security of the virtual platform that is being used. All participants <b>should confirm they have read the privacy terms and conditions of the virtual platform they are using and ensure all security features have been switched on.</b></li> <li>• The meeting ID or link must not be shared on public platforms.</li> <li>• Participants must take 'reasonable measures' to protect the information they hold at home from unauthorised loss and access. All paperwork and electronic devices should be kept in a safe place.</li> <li>• Do not leave paperwork on view for other members of the household to see</li> <li>• Lock your screen when you are not using your device</li> <li>• Ensure all necessary security updates, are installed on your device.</li> <li>• Do not share passwords with others for access to documents or applications</li> <li>• Take precautions against theft and loss of your device if it contains Governing Body information.</li> <li>• Be mindful of what you are putting in emails / chats</li> <li>• Do not place any papers / documents that you have finished with in your household waste. These must be kept and taken back to school to dispose of confidentially.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Declaration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors must declare any conflicts of interest with the Agenda at the start of the meeting and would need to withdraw from discussion and voting when the item is debated.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Participation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants should give due attention to all matters being discussed and multi-tasking e.g. by reading emails or watching TV must be eliminated.</li> <li>• Full participation in the whole meeting should be made, not just the items on the agenda in which the governor has an interest or is voting.</li> <li>• If, after all reasonable efforts, it does not prove possible for a governor to participate in the meeting virtually, the meeting should continue with its business provided it is quorate.</li> <li>• Governors should be mindful not to speak over others.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair may ask all participants to only speak when invited to do so.</li> </ul>
<b>Respect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important that everyone gets the chance to speak.</li> <li>Participants will need to pause more to give other participants a chance to join the discussions.</li> <li>Participants using video cameras should dress appropriately and have some consideration to their background.</li> <li>Virtual meetings are a place of mutual respect and collaboration.</li> <li>All Governors are expected to comply with the Governors code of conduct.</li> </ul>
<b>Quorum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quorum for a virtual meeting of the Governing Body and for any vote on any matter at such meeting is half of the governing body (excluding vacancies) rounded up. If the technological link is lost, the Governor will cease to contribute to the quorum, however this would not prevent the meeting continuing in their absence unless it has become inquorate. Technical difficulties would not include loss of visual communication or fleeting sound irregularities.</li> </ul>
<b>Voting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governors attending the meeting virtually will be entitled to vote on any issue providing they have been 'present' for the whole agenda item which the vote relates to.</li> <li><u>Secret Ballots</u> – the Clerk will ensure arrangements are in place for any secret ballots to take place.</li> </ul>
<b>Notice of meeting</b>	Notice of the meeting must be given to all Governors at least 7 days before the meeting. In the event of an unforeseen emergency, then as much notice should be given as possible.
<b>Apologies</b>	All apologies should be given to the Clerk or the Chair in advance of the meeting.
<b>Before the meeting</b>	<b>There is an expectation that all attendees have read through all documentation and prepared some questions in advance of joining the meeting. These questions should ideally be shared with the Head beforehand.</b>
<b>Recording the meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those attending meetings or hearings must be informed in advance of the intention to record the proceedings. Any objections to recording must be considered by the Chair and the Chair will ultimately decide whether the recording is appropriate after considering all objections.</li> <li>Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chair must notify all attendees that recording will take place.</li> <li>The recording must stop at the formal close of the meeting or hearing.</li> <li>Attendees who were not present at the start of the meeting must also be notified that recording is taking place.</li> <li>Covert recordings must not be taken and to do so will be considered a disciplinary offence.</li> </ul>
<b>During the meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is better to keep a virtual meeting short and focussed.</li> <li>Time delays can happen, so make sure everyone can contribute and ask questions.</li> <li>If discussing confidential information, make sure rules around confidentiality are being adhered to.</li> <li>Check in regularly with the clerk to ensure sound quality and time delays are being managed when taking minutes.</li> <li>The minutes should reference that the meeting had been held virtually.</li> <li>If sharing your screen, clear your desktop of any extra tabs or programs you may have open and make sure any private or sensitive information is hidden.</li> </ul>
<b>After the meeting</b>	Minutes of the previous meeting should be agreed virtually by the full Governing Body and hard copies presented to the Chair at future meetings for signature.

\*With thanks to North Tyneside Governor Services.