

This Policy has been adopted and approved by Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust and is to be used by all members of the Trust.

POLICY FOR GOVERNOR/TRUSTEE/MEMBER VIRTUAL MEETING ATTENDANCE	
Approved by GCET	22.3.24
Date of next Review	Spring Term 2024-2025 (Annually)
Responsible Officer	CEO
Policy Number	TF13

Definition of a Parent

- All biological parents, whether they are married or not.
- Any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- Any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

Introduction

Maintained schools

The School Governance (England) (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) Regulations 2013 make provision for governing boards 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”.

Academy trusts

Article 126 of the model articles of association state;

126. Any Trustee shall be able to participate in meetings of the Trustees by telephone or video conference provided that:

- a. he/she has given notice of their intention to do so detailing the telephone number on which they can be reached and/or appropriate details of the video conference suite from which they shall be taking part at the time of the meeting at least 48 hours before the meeting; and
- b. the Trustees have access to the appropriate equipment if after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for the person to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.

Local governing bodies (LGBs)

The proceedings of meetings of LGBs are determined by the Trust Board (article 100) therefore virtual attendance at face to face meetings and virtual meetings as described in this policy can be enabled by the Trust Board on adoption of this policy.

In relation to this the governing/Trust Board of Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust has determined the following arrangements will apply. These arrangements apply to meetings of the full governing/Trust Board and to committee meetings.

Virtual Attendance at Face to Face Meetings

- Where a governor/trustee wishes to attend a meeting of the governing/Trust Board by either telephone or video link the chair must be notified at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be made where possible.
- The governor/trustee 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/Trust Board 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/trustee informed immediately.
- Governors/trustees 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/trustee sharing their vote verbally with the clerk). Where this is not possible the governor/trustee will be required either to vote publicly or abstain.
- Governors/trustees 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/trustee who is present in person.
- If, after all reasonable efforts, it does not prove possible for a governor/trustee to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.

Virtual Meetings

- It is expected that unless there are exceptional circumstances the three statutory full governing /Trust Board meetings and termly scheduled committee meetings will be face to face meetings. However additional and extraordinary meetings can take place via telephone or video conference call as long as the usual quorum of governors/trustees is 'present' on the call.
- Where a meeting is taking place virtually every effort will be made to enable all governors /trustees 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 /trustee, other than the principal / CEO, and these will be presented for approval to the next meeting of the full governing/Trust Board.
- Virtual meetings should not be recorded by any governor/trustee or the clerk without the approval of the governing/ Trust Board and for a specified purpose.
- When a Trustee or a member of a LGB or other invited person 'virtually' attends an academy or GCE Trust business related meeting, the need for confidentiality and the GDPR implications must be carefully considered. For example, where a laptop or other electronic device or telephone is used to attend the meeting, the Trustee, Governor or any other attendee must ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained, particularly in the home or in the individual's work environment. The discussion and any other material shared at the meeting must not be overheard or overseen by any party who is not entitled to access that information.

- The preferred software for use to attend any 'virtual' meeting within the GCE Trust is Microsoft Teams. That is the software that must be used for all Trust business when a 'virtual' meeting is held. No other software should be used unless the express permission to join a Trust or academy Governance meeting using a different software solution has been gained from the IT Manager or in his absence, the senior IT team member covering for the IT Manager at that time.

Members' Meetings

It is agreed that any Members' Meetings can be held in the same virtual way as described above for LGB/Trust Board Meetings.

Review of this Policy The policy will be reviewed at least annually, but any governor /trustee with any concerns about its operation can request that it is reviewed at any time.