

Virtual Attendance at Governors' Meetings

1 Introduction

1.1 Article 126 of the Articles of Association of Heart of Mercia Multi-Academy Trust state that:

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

- a. he has given notice of his intention to do so detailing the telephone number on which he can be reached and/or appropriate details of the video conference suite from which he 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”*

1.2 In relation to this, the Local Governing Body of King Edward VI College has determined the following arrangements will apply to meetings of the Local Governing Body-

2 Policy guidelines

Virtual Attendance at Face-to-Face Meetings

2.1 The intention of this policy is to make provision for meetings to be quorate when governors are unable to attend, not to give governors the choice as to whether to attend in person or virtually.

With this in mind, any governor wishing to attend virtually should clear this not less than 24 hours before the meeting with the Chair and the Clerk. In the event of a short notice emergency, the Clerk must be contacted at the earliest opportunity.

2.2 Where a governor wishes to attend a meeting of the governing body by either telephone or video link the Chair and Clerk must be notified at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be made where possible. The governors 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 body 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 informed immediately.

- 2.3** Governors 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 (eg by taking a telephone call off speaker phone and the governor sharing their vote verbally with the governance professional). Where this is not possible the governor will be required either to vote publicly or abstain.
- 2.4** 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 it has become inquorate.
- 2.5** The meeting will be chaired by a governor who is present in person.
- 2.6** If, after all reasonable efforts, it does not prove possible for a governor to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.

Virtual Meetings

- 2.7** Where possible, Local Governing Body 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 is 'present' on the call.
- 2.8** Where a meeting is taking place virtually, every effort will be made to enable all governors to access the meeting.
- 2.9** 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.
- 2.10** Virtual meetings will be minuted in the same way as other meetings, either by the Clerk being present virtually or by a governor who is present, other than the Principal, taking the minutes, and these will be presented to the next meeting of the Local Governing Body.
- 2.11** Remote attendees must be aware of their surroundings. Confidentiality and sensitivity of information must be considered, and conversations must not be conducted in a place where they will be overheard, for example in an open public space. Confirmation of confidentiality should be declared at each meeting.
- 2.12** Virtual meetings should not be recorded by any governor or the governance professional without the approval of the governing body and for a specified purpose.

Review of this Policy

- 2.13** 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.

3 Equality Impact Assessment

The College's equality, diversity and inclusion policy has been taken into account when considering this policy.

Date of review	Date agreed	JCC	Governors	Review date *	Comments
September 2024	18 September 2024	N/A	LGB 18/09/24	September 2026	