



Soar Valley College

A SPECIALIST MATHS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE

ASPIRE ENJOY ACHIEVE

Governors Virtual Meeting Policy

- **Virtual Attendance Policy**
- **Virtual Meeting Etiquette**
- **Guidance on Secret Ballots**

Virtual/Remote Attendance Policy

Introduction

- 1.1 The governing board of Soar Valley College determine that the following arrangements apply to full governing board meetings and committee meetings.
- 1.2 Regulation 14 of The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 make provision for the governing board to “*approve alternative arrangements for governors to participate or vote at meetings of the governing board including but not limited to by telephone or video conference.*”

Virtual Attendance at Meetings

- 2.1 Any governors wishing to attend a meeting remotely must inform the Chair of Governors, Headteacher and Clerk to Governors 5 days before the meeting. The governor must provide the reason for wishing to attend remotely and the Chair of Governors and Headteacher will decide on whether to approve the request. Requests made due to exceptional circumstances that fall outside the timeframe will be considered on an individual basis.
- 2.2 A maximum of a third of governors in post may attend a meeting virtually at each meeting. The majority of governors must be present in person.

Note: In the event of an emergency such as Covid-19, where the majority or all governors are unable to attend a face-to-face-meeting an exception may be made.
- 2.2 If any governor is attending remotely this must be clearly stated in the minutes of the meeting.
- 2.3 Governors attending remotely count towards the quorum of the meeting. If there are technical issues and connection is lost, the meeting will continue in their absence unless it results in it becoming inquorate.
- 2.4 Governors attending remotely are entitled to vote on any matters discussed. If a secret ballot is required, this will be arranged using an online platform which allows each governor to vote once and will be anonymised.
- 2.5 The governor/s attending remotely must ensure that they meet the expectations/etiquette around confidentiality and not participate in the meeting in a public place. The Chair will confirm this with the remote attendees at the start of the meeting.
- 2.6 A governor attending remotely cannot chair the meeting, unless the whole meeting is a virtual one.

- 2.7 The Chair of Governors will ensure that the governor/s attending remotely are able to fully participate in the meeting.
- 2.8 The Clerk to Governors, Headteacher and Chair of Governors will ensure that all paperwork is circulated prior to the meeting to allow governors participating remotely to access everything discussed.
- 2.9 Any documents tabled will be emailed to the governor/s attending remotely during the meeting.
- 2.10 Consideration is needed if a presentation is planned. If video conferencing is not available, copies should be sent to all governors prior to the meeting so those participating remotely can participate fully.
- 2.11 To assist with minute taking, the meeting may be recorded. This will be agreed with governors at the beginning of the meeting, prior to any recording. The recording will be kept until the draft minutes have been approved by the Chair at which point it will be destroyed in line with GDPR requirements.

Virtual Meeting Etiquette

The following will support the governing board and Clerk to Governors when undertaking virtual/online full governing board and committee meetings.

Test the technology beforehand – Consider offering a test meeting with individual governors for anyone new to virtual meetings. This could be done by the Clerk or Chair.

Ensure normal procedures are followed - The governing board should abide by their normal rules, procedures and code of conduct and give particular regard to the duty to maintain confidentiality. If you are not able to attend a meeting send apologies as you would for a face to face FGB or committee meeting and ensure the agenda and papers are sent out 7 days in advance.

Join the meeting early – To ensure the meeting starts on time, join the meeting before the start time (i.e. 5 – 10 minutes beforehand). This will also ensure that any technical issues can be resolved prior to the start.

Consider your environment – Mute your microphone when not speaking to limit the disruption from background noise. Utilise the 'raise hand' function when you want to ask a question/make a comment.

Encourage the use of cameras – Being able to see other people in the meeting aides more effective communication, engagement and also supports minute taking

Send in questions beforehand - Consider asking governors to send in questions in advance. The chat function can be useful for governors to note down questions during the meeting, however, ensure that this is not used for general discussion whilst the meeting is taking place.

Allocate a Governor to manage the technology during the meeting - It is difficult to manage the meeting technology and take minutes at the same time so it may be easier if this was not the Clerk to Governors. Allocate the management of the meeting to another governor who can let people into the meeting and support the sharing of documents if needed.

Meeting length - Focus during virtual meetings can waver during long meetings so consider limiting the length of the meeting.

Review and evaluate – After the meeting consider what has worked well and whether any measures/processes need to be put in place to ensure it works better next time.

Virtual Attendance – Secret Ballots

This guidance is to be used alongside the Virtual Attendance Policy and Virtual Meeting Etiquette. If a secret ballot is needed during full virtual meetings or where some governors are attending virtually the following sites offer the options needed to undertake this online.

Microsoft Office 365 – Forms

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Forms interface for a form titled "Elections". The form is currently in the "Settings" view. The "Who can fill in this form" section is highlighted with a red box, showing the following options:

- Anyone with the link can respond
- Only people in my organisation can respond
- Record name
- One response per person

The "Options for responses" section includes the following options:

- Accept responses
- Start date
- End date
- Shuffle questions
- Customise thank you message

The "Notification" section includes the following options:

- Send email receipt to respondents
- Get email notification of each response

Microsoft Forms allows you to send a question to people within an organisation with the option of one response per person. This can be found in settings (selected using the 3 dots in the top red square).

This is only an option if the clerk and all governors have school Microsoft 365 email addresses.

Note: This option does not work when sending out a link to non-organisational emails.

Doodle Poll (<https://doodle.com/create>)

The website Doodle Poll allows you to create polls for free with the options needed for a secret ballot.

Under Step 2 – Select **Text** in the Options for the poll

Under Step 3 – Select Limit participants to a single vote and Hidden poll options

	Yes, no, if need be Participants can indicate if an option is not ideal for them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
	Limit the number of votes per option First come, first served. Once the spots are filled, the option is no longer available.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
	Limit participants to a single vote Participants can only select one option.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
	Hidden poll Participants' names, comments and votes are confidential. Only you can see the results.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		

Once you have finished the poll, the site generates a link which can then be sent to the governing board.