



VIRTUAL MEETING POLICY

June 2020

Policy Consultation & Review

The policy is provided to all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) at induction.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Trustees on an annual basis. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Trustees in June 2020.

Signature

Principal

Date:

Signature

Chair of Trustees

Date:

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Statement of Intent

Beacon of Light School is committed to supporting their Trust Board and their Clerk when having to hold virtual meetings in the event that face-to-face meetings are not possible. This policy addresses the procedures which must be followed when conducting virtual meetings.

Trust Boards should always have due regard for the academy's Articles of Association.

1. Legal Framework

1.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013.

1.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- ICT Policy
- Records Management Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Trustee Code of Conduct

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Clerk to the Governing Board/Trust Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the protocol for conducting virtual meetings is agreed by all Trust Board members prior to the meeting taking place.
- Recording the detail of the virtual meeting within written minutes.

2.2 The Chair of the Governing Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring all Trust Board members are aware of the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Notifying Trust Board members in advance that the meetings will be conducted virtually.
- Considering any objections to meetings taking place virtually.
- Deciding whether a recording is appropriate during the virtual meeting and notifying Trust Board members that a recording is taking place, prior to the meeting.
- Ensuring that recordings of any meetings are properly dealt with in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

2.3 Members of the Trust Board will:

- Be aware of, and act in accordance with, the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Act in accordance with the agreed Code of Conduct.
- Not take covert recordings of meetings.
- Notify the chair of any objections they have to the meeting being held virtually.

- Notify the chair of any objections they may have to a recording of the meeting being made.
- Be respectful of the rights of individuals who do not wish to be recorded.

2.3 In the absence of either the Chair or the Clerk their responsibilities as outlined in the policy will be carried out by a designated member of the Trust Board.

3. Conduct Remote Meetings

3.1 Any Trustee will be able to participate in meetings by telephone or video conference provided that:

- They have given notice of their intention to do so at least 48 hours before the scheduled meeting.
- They have detailed the telephone number they will be contactable on and/or appropriate details of the video conference suite from which they will be taking part at the time of the meeting, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.
- They have access to the appropriate equipment.

3.2 If a remote attendee is not available for any reason the meeting will go ahead without their participation as long as the meeting is otherwise quorate.

3.3 The attendance of remote attendees will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and on the published meeting attendance record.

3.4 If a vote takes place during the meeting, the remote attendee will be entitled to participate in the vote as usual. In an open vote, the remote attendee will be asked directly what their vote is. In a closed vote, the clerk will ensure the remote attendee is asked to confirm their vote in a confidential manner. For example, the conference video and speakers will be turned off whilst the remote attendee casts their vote to the clerk.

3.5 In the event of a Trustee being unable to confirm their closed vote remotely they will be required to vote publicly or abstain.

3.6 The vote of the remote attendee will not be recorded separately in the minutes of the meeting.

4. Chair's Emergency Powers

4.1 In the event of unexpected or unavoidable circumstances, where it is unsafe for the Trustee to meet face to face and alternative arrangements cannot be made the Chair of the Trust Board is permitted to make the decision for a remote meeting to be held.

5. Remote Meeting Processes

- 5.1 Meetings will be convened by the Clerk.
- 5.2 Each Trustee will be given at least seven clear days' notice before the day of a meeting. They will receive:
 - Notice in writing, signed by the Clerk, and sent to each Trustee at the address provided by each from meeting to meeting.
 - A copy of the agenda for the meeting and any documentations for consideration
 - Notification may be circulated electronically.
- 5.3 If there are matters which require urgent consideration it will be sufficient if the written notice of the meeting and a copy of the agenda are given within shorter periods.
- 5.4 The Chair will be appointed from the Trustees in attendance, excluding any members of staff who work for the school.
- 5.5 The meeting will be clerked in the same way as any other meeting. If the Clerk is unavailable normal procedures will be followed to ensure their duties are fulfilled in their absence. Members of staff who work for the School will not be appointed as interim Clerk.
- 5.6 Any existing conflict of interest pertaining to the agenda will be declared at the start of the meeting. If a conflict of interest prevents an attendee from participating in any part of the meeting the Clerk will ensure the attendee ceases participation until the business is concluded.
- 5.7 Minutes of any meetings will be recorded in line with normal procedures.
- 5.8 Minutes will be agreed by all attendees and signed by the Chair at the next meeting. If the next meeting is held remotely the minutes will be agreed at the meeting and signed by the Chair outside of the meeting.

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1 Attendees must ensure all voice controlled devices are switched off during the meeting (for example Alexa, Google Assistant).
- 6.2 The meeting shall not be recorded on any digital device or programme used by the Clerk, Trustees unless:
 - The intention to record the meeting is made clear to all attendees prior to the recording being made, with an opportunity for attendees to express any objections.
 - All attendees provide consent to the recording taking place.

- It is agreed that recording the meeting will assist with the accuracy of creating a written record of the meeting.

6.3 If attendees agree to the recording of the meeting, the following must apply:

- At the meeting, before recording is commenced, the Chair will notify all attendees that recording will take place.
- Attendees who are not present at the start of the meeting will be notified upon their arrival that a recording is being made.

6.4 Within the minutes of a meeting, details of the following will be noted:

- Any objections to the meeting being recorded.
- The Chair's consideration and final decision regarding the commencement of recording.

6.5 Any devices used to record a meeting, whether it is school or personally owned, will be used in line with the school's E-Safety Policy.

6.6 Whether attendees other than the Clerk are permitted to make recordings is at the discretion of the Trust Board. When this decision is being made the purpose of the recording will be taken into account.

6.7 All actions taken by the Trust board, including the creation, storage, retention and disposal of recordings will be in line with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR and Freedom of Information Act 2000 where relevant.

6.8 Where a confidential item is on the agenda attendees will be informed of this at the beginning of the meeting, prior to the commencement of the recording.

6.9 Confidential items will only be included within a recording of a meeting if the purpose and intention of the recording of the item is clear and justifiable.

7. Monitoring and Review

7.1 The effectiveness of this procedure will be monitored by the Chair and the Clerk of the Trust Board.

7.2 Any amendments to this procedure will be agreed upon by all members of the Trust Board, discussing and addressing any objections which may be raised.

7.3 This policy is to be reviewed annually by the whole Trust Board.