**Virtual Governors Meetings Policy 2020**

Provisions marked in red are non-statutory. This model is based ona model policy provided by BFfC.

**1. Introduction**

* 1. The School Governance (England) (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) Regulations 2013 make provision for governing bodies of maintained schools in England 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”
  2. In relation to this the governing board Thameside School has determined the following arrangements will apply

1.3 These arrangements apply to meetings of the full governing board, to Finance and Staffing meetings and are appropriate for use in all other governor panels and meetings.

**2. Virtual Attendance at Face to Face Meetings**

2.2 Where a governor is required to or wishes to attend a meeting of the governing board by either telephone or video link the chair and clerk must notify members or be notified at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be made where possible.

The governors will be told or asked their reasons for not attending the meeting in person. Where Governors have requested virtual attendance, this will be subject to the approval of the governing 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 informed immediately.

Where Governors are required to meet virtually (for example on advice from Public Health England) Individual Governors should make every effort to attend where practicable

2.3. It is the responsibility of individual governors, participating virtually, to ensure they are able to do so through a secure method in an environment conducive to confidential and private communication. Anyone participating in a meeting using technology must declare that they are in an environment which is a secure and which protects confidentiality.

2.4 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 (e.g. by taking a telephone call off speaker phone and the governor sharing their vote verbally with the clerk). Where this is not possible the governor will be required either to vote publicly or abstain

2.5 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

2.6 The meeting will be chaired by the Chair virtually if all Governors are meeting virtually or by a governor who is present in person if only some Governors are attending virtually.

2.7 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**

**3. Virtual Meetings**

3.1 The three statutory full governing board meetings and termly scheduled committee meetings will be face to face meetings unless virtual meetings are advised by the Local Authority or central Government organisation. 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

3.2 Where a meeting is taking place virtually every effort will be made to enable all governors to access the meeting

3.3 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 their right to waive the usual notice in an emergency.

3.4 Virtual meetings **must** 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 headteacher) taking the Minutes. These will be presented to the next meeting of the full governing board. **Decisions made electronically must be well documented by the clerk and electronic agreements and decisions will be retained with the Minutes**.

3.5 Virtual meetings should not be recorded by any governor or the clerk without the approval of the governing board and for a specified purpose. Confidentiality and GDPR must be considered by all members of the governing board. Meetings should not be conducted in the presence of non-governors and governors should take steps to preserve their own confidentiality.

3.6. Virtual participation must be for the entire meeting and not just for specific agenda items or solely for voting purposes. It is the responsibility of those participating virtually to ensure they have a reliable connection. If the communication connection fails and reasonable attempts to reconnect are unsuccessful virtual participation will no longer be possible and the agenda will not be delayed. The clerk will note the time that the connection was lost. Ensuring quorate meetings is the responsibility of the clerk who will monitor this throughout any meeting involving virtual participation and advise the board if a meeting becomes inquorate. Where there is no visual connection all meeting participants will always start their comments by stating their name.

3.7. If there is to be a vote, governors must have relevant documents seven days prior to the meeting.

**The Governing Board at Thameside agrees the following conduct measures for attendance at virtual meetings:**

* Governors will attend meetings in a quiet room without other people present
* Governors will make every effort to ensure that discussions are not overheard by other household members
* Governors will conduct themselves in the same manner expected in face to face meetings
* Governors will be responsible for ensuring that any video conferencing does not reveal confidential or intimate details about their personal information or expose other governors to materials or experiences they may find offensive.

**4. Review of this Policy**

4.1 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.

Adopted by the Governing Board,

by means of email/teleconference (delete as appropriate):

Signed by:

Review date: