



St Teresa of Calcutta MAC **Virtual Attendance at Meetings Policy 2021-2022**

Purpose

As per item 126 of the Articles of Association any Director/Member shall be able to participate in meetings of the Directors/Members by telephone or video conference provided that:

- a. He/she has given notice of his/her intention to do so detailing the telephone number on which he/she can be reached and/or appropriate details of the video conference suite from which he/she shall be taking part at the time of the meeting at least 48 hours before the meeting; and,
- b. The Director/Member 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.

For the purpose of this policy “meeting” is defined as either a formally convened Board or Local Governing Board meeting.

The rationale is to ensure each Director/Member can make an informed decision through consideration of all papers submitted and governor discussion prior to voting.

Equality impact

This policy sets out how the Board will enable Directors/Members to attend meetings remotely on the occasions this is required allowing them to have the ability to take part in meeting discussions and decisions.

This policy will ensure no Directors/Members suffers from unfavourable treatment because of their work or caring duties.

Responsibilities of the MAC/School

The MAC/School will ensure there will be available, provision of a secure method of virtual presence as required at all Board or Local Governing Meetings and meetings of the Board’s Committees.

Remote attendees will ensure:

1. 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. Directors/Members in virtual attendance at any meeting of the Board or Local Governing Board must, under no circumstances, make any form of electronic recording of any part of the meeting, without the express permission from those in attendance at the meeting.
3. Those in virtual attendance must ensure they give full attention to the matters being discussed and avoid undertaking other tasks that may cause distraction for example, watching television, listening to background music, answering emails etc.
4. Virtual attendees must agree to undertake full participation in the whole meeting.
5. Attendees should advise the Chair of the Board/Local Governing Board/Committee as soon as practicable and within at least 7 days of the meeting, of a request to attend by virtual method and the reason for non-attendance in person. In the event of an unforeseen emergency, then as much notice is to be given as possible. In this situation it is to be at the sole discretion of the Chair as to whether remote participation is possible.
6. They can identify themselves to the satisfaction of the other attendees.

All Directors/Members and Clerk should note:

1. Remote attendees may only vote on items where they have been presented with all the papers to be considered.
2. A request to attend a meeting remotely may be made by any governor to the Chair of the meeting. Priority will be given to requests of an emergency or equality nature.
3. A maximum of 2 Directors/Members may attend virtually at each meeting unless there are exceptional circumstances identified by the Chair. *During March 2020 the Board has identified exceptional circumstances relating to the COVID 19 pandemic. This policy will allow for a variance of the number of Directors/Members in attendance at meetings virtually to allow for the full Board, Local Governing Board and Committees to attend virtually. This variation will remain in place until further notice.*
4. No Director/Member may attend more than 2 meetings in a row remotely without attending a meeting in person unless there are exceptional circumstances. *During March 2020 the Board has identified exceptional circumstances relating to the COVID 19 pandemic and this policy will allow for a variance of the number of meetings in a row that can be attended remotely. For the duration of the COVID 19 pandemic the limitation of 2 meetings is removed. This variation will remain in place until further notice.*

5. A meeting may not be chaired remotely unless there are exceptional circumstances identified by the Chair. *During March 2020 the Board had identified exceptional circumstances relating to the COVID 19 pandemic and this policy will allow for all Board, Local Governing Board and Committee Meetings to be chaired remotely. This variation will remain in place until further notice.*
6. If technical difficulties occur Directors/Members should vote as to whether the remote attendees are still considered to be present at the meeting to ensure the meeting remains quorate. Technical difficulties would not include loss of visual communication providing there is still sound communications.
7. Indicate on the agenda whether virtual attendance has been agreed. Indicate on minutes when declaration of interest requested, a declaration of confidentiality is made by any virtual attendees.
8. Secret Ballots. The remote attendees may decide to either vote openly or to cast their vote with only the clerk and one Director/Member (already having cast their vote) present.

Date approved:	7 th October 2021
Next review date	September 2022
Author	Gerardine Lawson-Lotarew Governance Professional St Teresa of Calcutta MAC
Date Presented to the Board	7 th October 2021

Chair's Signature: *Frances McGarry*

Date: 7.10.2021