



Hallam Fields Junior **School**

Virtual Meeting Policy

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Statement of intent

Hallam Fields Junior School recognises the importance of ensuring the safety of the school community during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Although schools are open fully from September 2020, there are certain provisions we have in place to ensure social mixing is minimised. Where possible, we encourage the school community to hold meetings virtually in line with this policy to help ensure their overall safety.

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

1. [Updated] 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:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Parent Code of Conduct
- GDPR & Data Protection Policy
- ICT Policy
- Retention Policy
- Data Breach Procedure
- Governing Body Code of Conduct
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

2. [Updated] Roles and responsibilities

2.1. The **clerk to the governing board** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the protocol for conducting virtual meetings is agreed upon by all members of the board prior to the meeting taking place. The governing board do not need to convene ahead of the meeting to agree to a virtual meeting taking place.
- Recording, within the written minutes of the meeting, the details of the virtual meeting, in the same way as a face-to-face meeting.

2.2. The **chair of the governing board** is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all members of the governing board are aware of the procedures outlined in this document.
- Notifying members in advance that the meeting will be conducted virtually.
- Considering any objections to meetings taking place virtually.
- Deciding whether a recording is appropriate during the virtual meeting, and notifying 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 GDPR & Data Protection Policy.

2.3. Members of the governing board will:

- Be aware of, and act in accordance with, the procedures outlined in this document.
- Act in accordance with the **Governing Board Code of Conduct** whilst in virtual board meetings.
- 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 being made.
- Be respectful of the rights of individuals who do not wish to be recorded.

2.4. In the absence of either the **chair** or the **clerk**, their responsibilities, as outlined in this procedure, will be carried out by a designated member of the governing board with exception to any governor who is an employee of the school.

2.5. **[New]** School staff are responsible for:

- Adhering to the **Staff Code of Conduct** when participating in virtual meetings.
- Communicating well in advance when meetings will be and who is expected to attend.
- Sending apologies for meetings in advance.
- Participating fully in meetings they are in attendance for and not being a passive participant.
- Acting in the same regard as if the meeting were held in person.
- Adhering to the **Confidentiality Policy** at all times – ensuring and confidential meetings are taken in a room separate to members of the household or other bystanders.
- Informing the meeting host of any technical difficulties which may prevent participation in a timely manner.

2.6. **[New]** Parents are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with the **Parent Code of Conduct** when participating in meetings.
- Approving any pre-set agenda and participating fully in meetings, and not being a passive participant, e.g. completing other tasks when on the call.
- Being respectful of other meeting participants and being engaged with the process.

- Informing the meeting host of any technical difficulties which may prevent participation, in a timely manner.

2.7. **[New]** Pupils are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with the **Pupil Code of Conduct** when participating in meetings.
- Acting respectfully during meetings and engaging with them.
- Informing the meeting host of any technical difficulties which may prevent participation, in a timely manner.

3. [Updated] Conducting remote meetings

3.1. **[New]** When participating in virtual meetings, all members of the school community will ensure that:

- Meetings are carried out in a suitable location, e.g. an office or communal room with a neutral background.
- Their attire is suitable and clothing which could be perceived as offensive is not worn.
- Meetings are held within school hours where possible.
- Meetings involving pupils are carried out in line with the **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**.

[New] Staff

- 3.2. Staff will set 'office hours' where they can be contacted for a meeting – all meetings adhere to office hours as much as possible.
- 3.3. Staff will ensure their contact information is correct and up-to-date.
- 3.4. Line managers will ensure their staff are 'safe and well' when working remotely, by carrying out regular one-to-ones.
- 3.5. Staff will approve agendas where necessary and ensure their conduct is appropriate throughout the meeting – this includes ensuring they look engaged, e.g. not looking away from the screen.
- 3.6. Staff meetings will be considerate to their workloads and meetings will be, where possible, under **one hour**.

Governors

- 3.7. The governing board may approve alternative arrangements for governors to participate and vote at a meeting including, but not limited to, telephone and video conference so long as:
- The quorum for the meeting – excluding vacancies on the governing board – is met.
 - Every decision made during a virtual meeting is decided upon by a majority vote of the governors present and eligible to vote on the matters in question.
- 3.8. If a remote attendee is not available for the any reason, the meeting will go ahead without the participation of the remote attendee, so long as the meeting is otherwise quorate.
- 3.9. The attendance of remote attendees will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and on the published meeting attendance record.
- 3.10. 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.
- 3.11. In the event of a governor being unable to confirm their closed vote remotely, they will be required to vote publicly or abstain.
- 3.12. The vote of the remote attendee will not be recorded separately in the minutes of the meeting.
- 3.13. In the event of unexpected or unavoidable circumstances, where it is unsafe for governors to meet face-to-face and alternative arrangements cannot be made, the chair of the governing board is permitted to make the decision for a remote meeting to be held.

[New] Parents and pupils

- 3.14. Parents and pupils are respectful of staff office hours and do not contact staff outside of those hours unless it is an emergency.
- 3.15. Parents and pupils adhere to the provisions set out in 3.1 of this policy.
- 3.16. Parents and pupils conduct themselves in line with the relevant codes of conduct.

4. [Updated] Remote meeting processes

- 4.1. Meetings will be scheduled with plenty of notice, via email, along with any supporting documentation or agendas.

- 4.2. If there are matters which require urgent consideration, it will be sufficient if the written notice of the meeting and the copy of any supporting documentation are given within shorter notice periods.
- 4.3. Minutes of any meetings will be recorded in line with relevant school policies and will be stored in line with data protection legislation.
- 4.4. Minutes will be agreed by all attendees of a meeting.
- 4.5. **[New]** All meetings will be carried out using accessible technology, e.g. phone calls or online video conferences.
- 4.6. **[New]** Staff use school-owned devices for all meetings. If a school owned device is not available, personal devices may be used; however, they must be security protected in line with the school's Acceptable use of IT, the internet and electronic communication policy.
- 4.7. Governor meetings will be convened by the clerk, and governors will be given at least seven clear days' notice before the date of a meeting
- 4.8. Governance meetings will be clerked in the same way as any other meeting of the board. If the clerk is unavailable, normal procedures will be followed to ensure their duties are fulfilled in their absence.
- 4.9. All meetings pertaining to governance will ensure that 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 from the call/conference until the board has finished discussing/voting.

5. Confidentiality, security and data protection

- 5.1. Full consideration will be given to the privacy and security features of the chosen remote meeting platform and software will not be used if the security provision is insufficient.
- 5.2. The meeting shall not be recorded on any digital device or programme used unless:
 - The intention to record the meeting is made clear to all attendees prior to the recording being made, with the opportunity 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.
- 5.3. If attendees agree to the recording of the meeting, the following must apply:
 - At the meeting, before recording is commenced, the host of the meeting 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.
- 5.4. Within the minutes of a meeting, details of the following will be noted:
- Any objections to the meeting being recorded.
 - The host's consideration and final decision regarding the commencement of recording.
- 5.5. Any device used to record a meeting, whether it is school-owned or personally owned, will be used in line with the school's Acceptable use of IT, the internet and electronic communication policy.
- 5.6. All actions taken by the 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.
- 5.7. 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 recording.
- 5.8. 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.

6. Monitoring and review

- 6.1. The effectiveness of this procedure will be monitored **termly** by the **chair of the governing board** and **headteacher**.
- 6.2. Any amendments to this procedure will be communicated to all members of the school community.
- 6.3. The next review date for this policy is **September 2021**.