



Virtual and Face to Face Meeting

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Good Practice

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1. Definitions

In this **TRCA Virtual and Face to Face Meeting Policy**, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- i **'The Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company named at the beginning of this **TRCA Virtual and Face to Face Meeting Policy** and includes all sites upon which the Company is undertaking, from time to time, being carried out. The Romero Catholic Academy includes; **Corpus Christi, Good Shepherd, Sacred Heart, Blue Sky, SS Peter and Paul, St Gregory, St John Fisher, St Patrick, Cardinal Wiseman, Shared Services Team.**
- ii **'Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Company.
- iii **'Board'** means the board of Directors of the Romero Catholic Academy.
- iv **'Governance Professional'** means the Governance Professional to the Board or the Governance Professional to the Local Academy Committee of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.
- v **'Chair'** means the Chair of the Board of the Directors or the Local Academy Committee appointed from time to time.
- vi **'Catholic Senior Executive Leader'** means the person responsible for performance of all Academies and Staff within the Multi Academy Company and is accountable to the Board of Directors.
- vii **'Diocesan Schools Commission'** means the education service provided by the diocese, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service.
- viii **'Local Academy Committee'** means the governing body of the School.
- ix **'Academy Committee Representatives'** means the governors appointed and elected to the Local Academy Committee of the School, from time to time.
- x **'Principal'** means the substantive Principal, who is the person with overall responsibility for the day to day management of the school.
- xi **'School'** means the school or college within The Romero Catholic Academy and includes all sites upon which the school undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- xii **'Shared Services Team'** means the staff who work in the central team across the Company (e.g. HR/ Finance)
- xiii **'Vice-Chair'** means the Vice-Chair of the Academy Committee elected from time to time.
- xiv **'Face to Face Meeting'** is a meeting where the majority of attendees are physically present at the location listed on the meeting agenda.
- xv **'Virtual Attendance'** is where an attendee is not physically present at the location listed on the meeting agenda but participates or votes as a Virtual Attendee at a meeting through virtual means including but not limited to telephone or video conference.
- xvi **'Virtual Meeting'** is a meeting where the majority of attendees are not present at the same physical location and participate or vote at a meeting through Virtual Attendance

2. Scope

This policy is born out of the exponential rise in the use of virtual devices in educational settings. The Pandemic led schools and settings to look for alternative ways for meeting and the ability to meet virtually has become more familiar to all.

This policy is for schools and Shared Services to use in order to arrange meetings either Face to Face, Virtual or a hybrid of both. This policy compliments the TRCA Remote Learning and Faith Policy which details how pupils will engage in remote/ virtual meetings on line. The link can be found later in this policy.

3. Introduction

This policy sets out the requirements for Virtual Attendance or Virtual Meetings where Face to Face attendance may not be possible. These arrangements apply to meetings of the Multi Academy Trust Board and its committees, including Local Governing Bodies.

Scheduling of Face to Face and Virtual Meetings

- Statutory meetings such as Board meetings and Full Governing body meetings location, whether face to face or virtual, will be decided at time of scheduling.
- Additional or extraordinary meetings and committee meetings can take place as Virtual Meetings (as long as quorate).
- There could be reason to carry out stakeholder meetings with pupils, staff, wider community and this sets out the process.
- Where possible, HR processes/ sensitive or confidential meetings should be completed in a Face to Face meetings but where it is appropriate and agreed by all parties, a virtual element could be included.

4. Face to Face meeting

4.1 All attendees are physically at the meeting location.

4.2 Chair will progress the meeting and it will be minuted by Governance Professional or appropriate person as required.

5. Virtual Attendance at Face to Face meetings

5.1 Where an attendee wishes to attend a Face to Face Meeting through Virtual Attendance, the Chair and Governance Professional must be notified when possible at least 2 working days in advance of the meeting to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be made where possible.

5.2 At the start of a Face to Face meeting, an attendee who is participating by Virtual Attendance may be asked their reasons for not physically attending the meeting.

5.3 A Face to Face meeting must be chaired by an attendee who is physically present at the physical location listed in the meeting agenda (unless there is good reason for this not to happen).

5.4 An attendees Virtual Attendance may be subject to the approval of the meeting at the beginning of the meeting, however approval must not be withheld without good reason. Where approval is withheld, the reason for this must be minuted and the Virtual Attendee informed immediately.



5.5 A Virtual Attendee will be entitled to a 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 Virtual Attendee sharing their vote verbally with the Governance Professional). Where facilitation is not possible, the Virtual Attendee will be asked to vote publicly or abstain.

5.6 Virtual Attendees 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.

5.7 If, after all reasonable effort, it does not prove possible for a Virtual Attendee to participate the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.

6. Virtual Meetings

6.1 When a Virtual Meeting is taking place, all reasonable efforts must be made to enable all attendees to access the meeting through Virtual Attendance.

6.2 A **calendar invite** with **Teams** link should be sent well out in advance so that all attendees have appropriate notice.

6.3 When a virtual meeting is taking place, the usual statutory notice arrangements will apply and all papers to be considered must be circulated in the advance of the meeting at the normal required timescales, except where the Chair has exercised their right to waive the usual notice in an emergency situation.

6.4 Virtual Meetings must be quorate. If the technological link to an attendee 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.

6.5 Virtual Attendees will be entitled to a 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 (see 5.5).

6.6 Virtual meetings will be minuted in the same way as Face to Face meetings with either the Governance Professional or another Virtual Attendee taking the minutes which will be provided for approval at the next meeting or by virtual means in exceptional circumstances.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by Core Committee 2 – Strategy People and Organisational Development.

8. Link to other policies

- TRCA Term of Reference for Local Academy Committees
- TRCA Remote Learning and Faith policy [here](#)
- TRCA Risk Assessments for schools available here www.romeromac.com/covidriskassessments

This policy is based on the Diocese of Coventry MAT Policy

Appendix 1 - Protocols

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Microsoft Teams for online meetings. • Invite attendees. Use the lobby feature for approved guests only. • Share your screen carefully by managing options in your meeting. • If recording a meeting, make sure everyone on the call is aware. • Please be mindful that when using MS Teams you are in your virtual workplace. • Do make sure all attendees have camera on (unless there is a reason not to) to ensure full engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not make meetings PUBLIC to avoid unwanted guests – email parents / stakeholders directly if possible • Do not share a link to online meetings on unrestricted social media posts or platforms • Do not share confidential information in online meetings unless as outlined by the Chair permission is given to do so. • Do not post confidential information in the chat

Setting Up Your Audio, Video And Environment

- If you have one Use a headset with mic if possible. This provides the optimal audio experience for both you and other meeting attendees.
- If a headset isn't available, use your device's built-in audio/mic. Call in via phone only as a last resort.
- If you do call in, make sure your computer/laptop's mic and speakers are muted.
- Avoid sitting with your back to a window or bright light source. This causes a silhouette appearance where others cannot see you or determine your identity.
- Think about the background. Whatever is in the room behind you might not be appropriate for a meeting or could be distracting to others. Cameras pointed up at ceiling fans are also a visual distraction for some attendees. Consider using the blur my background feature in MS Teams.
- Close doors to avoid unexpected visitors. Many of us are working in a home environment where others may pass by or inadvertently interrupt.

Joining a meeting

- Join a few minutes early if possible. This allows you to make sure everything is working and gives time to make any adjustments.
- Mute other devices and apps. Make sure to mute your cell phone and close any other apps on your computer/laptop that might send distracting notifications. Enter muted. Enter any meeting with your mic muted and camera off. Others might already be engaged in conversation.
- Have a moderator or convener for large meetings. Consider appointing someone as convener or moderator for large meetings. This person can help bring forward any chat questions and provide meeting guidelines and reminders.



- Keep your **mic muted** unless you need to speak or are leading the meeting. If your audio becomes distracting, anyone in the meeting can mute any attendee. You will need to unmute yourself to begin speaking when needed.
 - Those attending via call-in only will need to press *6 to unmute themselves if this occurs.
- **Avoid talking over others** unlike an in-person meeting, its sometimes difficult to distinguish between multiple conversations leading to confusion.
- **Be clear, concise** -speak in a concise and clear manner and tone so that everyone can hear what you are saying.
- **Pause** - Remember to pause occasionally to assure attendees have time to ask questions
- **Camera use** - using (or not using) your camera can vary. A limited number of windows will show for attendees of the meeting. These automatically show/hide based on participation.
- **Don't walk** around with your camera on (mobile device) – It is also distracting.
- **Use chat window** - consider, especially for large meetings, asking your questions in the chat window. Tag individuals in chat. Tag other attendees (using @userid format) in the chat window when your comment is directed towards a specific attendee to distinguish between a general comment.
- **Meeting recording** - all attendees can start a meeting recording. If recording a meeting is appropriate, announce that you will do so and confirm there is agreement. Meeting recordings become available shortly after the conclusion of the meeting and can be found in the chat
- **Inappropriate behaviour** - if someone does behave in appropriately in a virtual meeting, then they can be removed from the meeting.

Symbols



Shows participants	Chat function	Enables participants to send emoticons	Break out rooms – only the organiser can set these	The three dots opens up device settings:	Toggle to put Camera on or off	Toggle to put microphone on or mute	To share your files or desktop
Enables you to mute participants	Allows you to upload files	Enables participants to put up hand		Background can be changed			
Enables you to add or eject attendees				Record a meeting			