

Aquila Virtual Meeting Protocol

Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust, recognises the significant impact that sharing skills and experiences can have on personal and professional development. With our values of Collaborate, Enrich and Innovate we strive to remove barriers where possible and ensure all staff that are part of the trust can learn from and with each other for the benefit of every child.

With academies spanning a large geographical area, the use of virtual meeting technology ensures that all staff members can benefit from the cross-section of experience available without significant loss of time or cost to the school or staff member.

This document is written to make explicit the basic principles for all staff to follow during virtual meetings and attending online training sessions.

The points below should be read and considered by all before any virtual meeting.

1. Attend with the webcam/video switched on.

Please keep your video switched on at all times. There may be occasions where it is beneficial to all parties for these to be switched off which should be agreed upon by all parties at the beginning of the meeting. If you are unable to use your video due to technical or bandwidth issues, discuss your presence with the meeting chair or training facilitator.

2. Focus on the business of the meeting in the same way as if they were attending in person

While the benefits of virtual meetings and training mean that we can be contributing from anywhere, the purpose of the session should be treated with the same importance as if we were in the same room. Treat speakers with dignity and maintain focus and engagement during the discussion

It is understood that there may be distractions or interruptions at times. Should this happen and you need to leave the meeting for any reason, offer your apologies either verbally or via the chat function, mute your microphone and turn your camera off.

Return to the meeting or training as soon as possible and let the meeting chair or training facilitator know you are back so they can make a decision about how much information you have missed and how to best ensure you catch up.

3. Remain on mute when not speaking

You should ensure that your mute function is enabled whenever you are not speaking. When you wish to speak or ask a question and haven't been asked to do so, please use a hand raise or similar function in the meeting software and wait to be allowed to speak. Once invited please unmute and then re-mute when you have finished your contribution.

4. Add the correct name to your profile or say your name before speaking

When raising a hand, the meeting leader will say the name presented by your profile. If this is not your name, please update it so you can be invited to contribute.

5. Prevent unauthorised individuals from overhearing conversations

Whenever possible, ensure you are in a private space where you are unlikely to be interrupted. If you are in an open space at home or school with others likely to hear you, please ensure you use headphones.

6. Be mindful of your surroundings

If you are calling from home or a place that isn't a meeting or classroom space, consider whether there could be anything in view that you would not like others to see or hear. This is particularly important when in spaces which could have confidential information as this could constitute a breach of GDPR. You may wish to use a virtual background if you are unable to find a suitable space.