

**FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND OF VIRGINIA**  
**POLICY FOR THE REMOTE PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS**

**1. AUTHORITY AND SCOPE**

- a. This policy is adopted pursuant to the authorization of Virginia Code § 2.2-3708.3 and is to be strictly construed in conformance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA), Virginia Code §§ 2.2-3700 through 2.2-3715.
- b. This policy shall not govern an electronic meeting conducted to address a state of emergency declared by the Governor. Any meeting conducted by electronic communication means under such circumstances shall be governed by the provisions of Virginia Code § 2.2-3708.2. This policy also does not apply to an all-virtual public meeting.

**2. DEFINITIONS**

- a. "Board" means the Commonwealth of Virginia Family and Children's Trust Fund Board of Trustees or any committee, subcommittee, or other entity of the State Board of Social Services.
- b. "Member" means any member of the Commonwealth of Virginia Family and Children's Trust Fund Board of Trustees.
- c. "Remote Participation" means participation by an individual Member of the Board by electronic communication means in a public meeting where a quorum of the Board is physically assembled, as defined by Virginia Code § 2.2-3701.
- d. "Meeting" means a meeting as defined by Virginia Code § 2.2-3701.
- e. "Notify" or "notifies," for purposes of this policy, means written notice, such as email or letter. Notice does not include text messages or communications via social media.

**3. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS**

Regardless of the reasons why the Member is participating in a meeting from a remote location by electronic communication means, the following conditions must be met for the Member to participate remotely:

- a. A quorum of the Board must be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location; and
- b. Arrangements have been made for the voice of the remotely participating Member to be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location. If at any point during the meeting the voice of the remotely participating Member is no longer able to be heard by all persons at the meeting location, the remotely participating Member shall no longer be permitted to participate remotely.

**4. PROCESS TO REQUEST REMOTE PARTICIPATION**

- a. On or before the day of the meeting, and at any point before the meeting begins, the requesting Member must notify the Board Chair (or the Vice-Chair if the requesting member is the Chair) that he/she is unable to physically attend the meeting due to (i) a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition that prevents the Member's physical attendance, (ii) a family member's medical condition that requires the Member to provide care for such family member, thereby preventing the Member's physical attendance, (iii) the Member's principal residence location more than 60 miles from the meeting location, or (iv) a personal matter and identifies with specificity the nature of the personal matter.
- b. The requesting Member shall also notify the Board Executive Director of the request to participate remotely, but the failure to do so shall not affect or prohibit the Member's ability to remotely participate, if such participation is approved.
- c. If the requesting Member is unable to physically attend the meeting due to a personal matter, the requesting Member must state with specificity the nature of the personal matter. Remote participation due to a personal matter is limited each calendar year to two meetings or 25 percent of the meetings held per calendar year rounded up to the next whole number, whichever is greater. There is no limit to the number of times that a Member may participate remotely for the other authorized purposes listed in (i)-(iii) in subsection 4.a above.
- d. The requesting Member is not obligated to provide independent verification regarding the reason for his/her non-attendance, including the temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition or the family member's medical condition that prevents the Member's physical attendance at the meeting.
- e. The Chair (or the Vice-Chair if the requesting Member is the Chair) shall promptly notify the requesting Member whether the request is in conformance with this policy, and therefore approved or disapproved.

**5. PROCESS TO CONFIRM APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL OF PARTICIPATION FROM A REMOTE LOCATION**

When a quorum of the Board has assembled for the meeting, the Board shall vote to determine whether:

- a. The Chair's decision to approve or disapprove the requesting Member's request to participate from a remote location was in conformance with this policy; and
- b. The voice of the remotely participating Member can be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location.

**6. RECORDING IN MINUTES**

- a. If the Member is allowed to participate remotely due to a temporary or permanent disability or other medical condition, a family member's medical condition that requires the Member to provide care to the family member, or because the Member's principal residence is located more than 60 miles from the meeting

location, the Board shall record in its minutes (1) the Board's approval of the Member's remote participation; and (2) a general description of the remote location from which the Member participated.

- b. If the Member is allowed to participate remotely due to a personal matter, such matter shall be cited in the minutes with specificity, as well as how many times during the current calendar year the Member has attended remotely due to a personal matter, and a general description of the remote location from which the Member participated.
- c. If a Member's request to participate remotely is disapproved, the disapproval, including the grounds upon which the requested participation violates this Policy or VFOIA, shall be recorded in the minutes with specificity.

## **7. CLOSED SESSION**

If the Board goes into closed session, the Member participating remotely shall ensure that no third party is able to hear or otherwise observe the closed meeting.

## **8. STRICT AND UNIFORM APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY**

This Policy shall be applied strictly and uniformly, without exception, to the entire membership and without regard to the identity of the Member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.

The Chair (or Vice-Chair) shall maintain the Member's written request to participate remotely and the written response for a period of one year, or other such time required by records retention laws, regulations, and policies.