

**Meeting of Full Governing Board
7th March 2022
4.15pm for 4.30pm start
Via Zoom**

MINUTES

Governors Present:	Mick Baker, Philip Brown, Lara Coleman, Jane Dickson, Les Gunbie, Vanessa Hickey, Matt Hillier, Reg Hook, Dick Knight, Millie McDevitt, Catherine Packham, Bronagh Shevlin, Haydn Stride, Derek Swindells (Chair), Bridget Taylor
Officers Present:	Teresa Dee (Clerk)
In Attendance:	Roshan Dias-Jayasinghe, Paul Watson

	<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) Welcome The Chair opened the meeting with a welcome. Reference was made to meeting up in person in future.</p> <p>ACTION - Clerk to seek individual governors' preferences on format for future meetings.</p> <p>b) Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence received from Alison Frost.</p> <p>c) Declarations of Interest The declarations register was included within the meeting pack , there were no additional declarations made relating to items on the agenda. The Chair proposed that "nil return" on the declarations register should be changed as it was misleading.</p> <p>ACTION - The Full Governing Board instructed the clerk to change references to "nil return" on the declarations register to "none".</p>	<p>TD</p> <p>TD</p>
2	<p>Chair's Update The Chair of Governors provided an update on activities and business conducted on behalf of the Board since the last meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal catch up meetings held with four individual governors. • Several visits to school taking the opportunity to talk to staff and be a visible presence. • Contact made with Local Authority education officers and the National Governors Association to seek advice on governance matters. • Planning meetings and discussions held with the Vice Chair and Clerk to Governors. • Regular contact with the Headteacher by way of support and to cover off any matters arising and business planning. 	
3	<p>Last Meeting Dated 17th January 2022</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes The Full Governing Body reviewed and approved eight pages of minutes from the meeting held on 17th January 2022.</p>	

Signature.....Date.....

	<p>b) Matters Arising Not Included Elsewhere on Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniform Working Party - work ongoing with an initial survey sent out to staff members. Student and parents surveys to go out separately, along with consultation with senior leaders. Careers Guidance - The Link Governors had approved the final version of the careers guidance , information advice policy under delegated authority. 	
4	<p>Headteacher’s Report/Update</p> <p>The Headteacher presented his report to governors on an assumed read basis , highlighting the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data had come out from the second round of year 11 mock exams; progress was overall positive but not quite where the school would like to be at the current stage as progress being impacted by non-attending students. It had been announced that GCSE grade boundaries would be more generous for the summer 2022 round of examinations. Teaching staff were preparing for the full package of examination content. Visitors now routinely back in school as long as covid risk assessments met. Cases had not diminished with seven staff currently absent from school. There had been a need to use external supply staff. Inset training session coming up covering many of the aspects that the school had been working on including a session on the green curriculum and another on emotional coaching. Building work progressing with a tender out for the science lab and work on 21 additional toilets to start in July. Science was proving difficult to recruit to across the country. The advert had been edited to attract more suitable applicants for the one remaining science vacancy. Several staff appointment had been made including a head of history , an art teacher, English teacher on temporary contract and three science staff. Student attendance continued to be an issue across the country. Year 9 at the school was the biggest area of concern with overall attendance at 87.72%. Within the year were a core group of students that were the focus of targeted work in conjunction with local authority officers. Some of the catch up funding had been used to support efforts to get students re engaged through the “nudge” initiative. Following a board discussion earlier in the year about student safeguarding reporting some work with the junior leadership team (JLT) had been around reviewing and revising the system. This resulted in a roll out by the JLT to students of the system for reporting via the stringer learning gateway. Screen shots from their presentation had been included with the meeting document pack. Whilst there had been a drop in reports of harmful sexual behaviours, each year group had reports of concerns within this area. A full report of safeguarding concerns by category would come to the board in May. <p><u>Comment and questions from governors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was the messaging to staff and young people about what they should do if they test positive or have symptoms of covid? What response was the school getting to recruitment drives in terms of diversity and gender? Was there a particular group of children within year 9 that had low attendance? <p>4.54pm - Dick Knight arrived at the meeting</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following time in several other schools a governor noted that Dorothy Stringer came out well compared to other schools regards environment, behaviour, attitude to learning and also in regards uniform compliance and standards. <p><u>Response to governor comment and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any staff member that tests positive would be contacted by the senior deputy head who would advise on the length of required isolation and the testing required before return to school. It was more of a challenge with students as they were now not required to test. From the current appointments the vast majority of applicants had been female and in terms of race and ethnicity there was little diversity particularly with the core subjects. All applicants with a declared disability would be interviewed. In year 9 there was a group of girls with difficult personal situations that were impacting on their attendance. Interventions were being put in place with the support of the local authority. 	
5	<p>School Development Plan /Deep Dive</p> <p>a) Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND Policy The SEND policy in draft had been circulated following a review by staff and governor leads, the final version would be available for the next meeting for governors approval. <p>b) Climate Education A video and PowerPoint had been circulated to governors by way of introduction to the discussion topic of climate education, an item that governors had specifically requested to be on the agenda. The headteacher provided some headlines around activities and initiatives at the school relating to embedding climate change across the whole curriculum.</p> <p>The lead governor for climate education added that it had been hoped to add a young person’s perspective to discussion, the circulated video of the secondary schools climate change Q & A session was an attempt to do that. There was a Headteacher’s steering group from which the importance of a whole school, whole city approach was needed to address the environment sustainability, moving away from a dedicated eco group approach. As a city the ambition was to become carbon neutral by 2030 and schools had a big part to play in achieving this, whether its reducing carbon footprint or educating young people about the future and the world around them.</p> <p>Governors were further advised of a funded programme amongst Sussex based sixth form colleges dealing with green economy, carbon literacy and climate education.</p> <p><u>Governor comment and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the past governors had talked about the sense of responsibility and eco anxiety amongst young people, looking at this had been part of what the steering group work. The Department of Education would be making an announcement around climate education in April. The youth council had children from a number of schools, was the steering group working with them? At Sussex University there was huge interest and concern with anything around climate crisis. What did the mention of a university project in the slides refer to? How would the project open out beyond the classroom, there might be an appetite amongst parents to get involved? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students mental health concern around climate anxiety was important. • The people being most affected by climate change right now were those in the global south, there was a lot of debate within the climate movement about the effects of a particular economic model that reduces inequality globally and also drives climate change. Had any thoughts been given to connecting the climate agenda with decolonizing the curriculum? <p><u>Response to governor comment and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A follow up was planned for 29th April that would go out to all secondary schools in the city and the Youth Council. More generally there was across the city and council an acknowledgement and attempt to grow youth participation in the decision making in the sector. • In the slides was a link to an additional course on climate literacy via the university that the school lead would be attending. Every single student at Dorothy Stringer goes through an environmental science course delivered in the main by the school lead. • Getting parents had been involved had been a challenge due to restrictions on the number of visitors on site. A recent woodland working day had just one family in attendance. Families had got used to not coming into school and doing everything remotely. There would be opportunities for people to engage in events and ongoing communication around the issues. • One of the key areas for the school to make progress on was in establishing a school climate action stakeholder group involving young people and parents. • The steering group had not covered climate justice , this was something that would be raised at the next meeting. <p>ACTION - Climate change to be a regular agenda item for the Governing Board.</p> <p>5.44pm - Jane Dickson left the meeting</p>	DS/LG
6	<p>Business Group</p> <p>a) Budget Monitoring</p> <p>The Business Manager presented his finance and budget monitoring to Governors highlighting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school was struggling to recruit cleaners leading to a requirement to use agency staff. • The Capita SIMS issue had been resolved with the school going back into the LA’s licence for its finance management systems. • Swimming pool works went well over half term and staff swimming trial session had commenced. Pool availability in the city was high on the agenda as the prince regent pool would be closed in the summer. Discussions were underway about whether the school would retain operational responsibility for the pool on site. • The carry forward budget included expenditure agreed by Governors that had not been spent and other allocated monies for the artificial turf pitch sink fund. This left a useable surplus of £375k • In addition to the spending agreed by governors at the last meeting there was a request to increase the budget for interactive TVs to £100k to purchase 40 screens to support teaching and learning. It was noted that the interactive TVs did not require a projector and had an expected life span of ten years. Quotes from suppliers were being gathered, with some indicating potential price increases in the next month. 	

	<p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board agreed in principle to the expenditure of £100,000 to purchase and install 40 interactive TVs subject to a competitive tender process. The Headteacher, Business Manager and Business Group Chair were delegated with making the final decision following a tender process.</p> <p>At this point on the meeting there was a confidential discussion. Supplementary confidential minutes record the discussion.</p> <p>b) Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) The Business Group proposed the SFVS return for approval.</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board approved the schools financial value standard return as presented.</p> <p>A further confidential discussion took place and has been recorded on supplementary confidential minutes.</p> <p>6.16pm - Haydn Stride left the meeting,</p>	
7	<p>Other Reports & Recommendations</p> <p>a) Student Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing Review - Governor Report The board received a report from the link governor for student wellbeing following attendance of a panel meeting at which individual student cases and needs were discussed. The report provided assurances that the panel discharged its functions in an outstanding manner by evaluation and assessment of student progress using a variety of professional judgement from panel attendees. <p><u>Governor comment and question</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students will have lost some curriculum time , was there a sense of panic about areas of the curriculum not having been covered. • There was a lot of support on offer, were parents and carers aware of what was available? • As a new Governor the report was interesting and accessible providing a background to the type of problems in the school community. • The increased needs of students raised an issue of increased pressure on school workload. What type of stress and strain was there around the increased demands on teachers? <p><u>Governor comments and questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were always points that caused some level of anxiety, not specifically due to lost learning from covid. The school responds to anxiety with primary health workers available for student drop in sessions. What had increased was the parent carer awareness of their children’s needs resulting in a noticeable increase in requests for assessments over the past 18 months. • Currently there were two routes for information and support, one through the website information and one with the work being undertaken with students that was referred to earlier in the meeting. This involved year 8 students sharing information and making the student body aware of the ways of reporting emotional , health and wellbeing concerns. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government had funded a senior mental health leader course which a member of the school team was undertaking. Pressure was increasing but the school was still able through the pastoral structure to build in reflective space and support for staff. For example, supervision opportunities through the safeguarding team were offered to staff in a safeguarding lead role on a monthly basis. Safe & Wellbeing at School Survey (SAWSS)- Outcome The first bit of information had been received from the Local Authority following the most recent SAWSS survey. Full analysis would be brought to Governors once available. The lead governor for wellbeing would be involved in the data analysis process. <p>6.35pm - Paul Watson, Lara Coleman Roshan Dias and Millie McDevitt left the meeting.</p> <p>b) Staff Survey Governors were provided with an update on the process for the staff survey, it had gone out after half term and outcomes were to be analysed in the coming week. A report would be presented at the next board meeting.</p>	
8	<p>Policies and Other Documents for Approval The Chair</p> <p>a) Charging & Remissions Policy</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board reviewed and approved the charging and remissions policy as presented.</p> <p>b) Whistleblowing Policy</p> <p>AGREEMENT - The Full Governing Board reviewed and approved the whistleblowing policy as presented.</p>	
9	<p>Governance</p> <p>a) Statutory Polices Schedule - Agree review frequency and approving body for each. The Chair advised that there were 24 statutory policies which the school was required to have in place and a number of others that had been generated by the school. He understood that that the Local authority and DfE were currently reviewing policies in place and requested that one or two governors carry out a review to ensure that that Dorothy Stringer’s were still up to date, relevant and user friendly, particularly with regard to those relating to communication between parents and the school.</p> <p>A schedule of statutory policies had been produced by the Headteacher and Clerk to Governors with recommendations for approval levels and frequency of review. An additional column would be added to the schedule with link governors who would do a review of individual polices prior to coming to the board.</p> <p>The Clerk referring to the schedule of policies reassured governors that the statutory policies excepting the SEND policy discussed earlier in the meeting had all been written or updated with the past three years, therefore no immediate action was required. What was requested was agreement to the proposed review cycles and approval levels marked in red on the schedule. Regards link governors for each policy this would not be an onerous task as there were already in place link governors for areas or responsibility into which most of the policies would fall.</p>	

	<p>ACTION - Chair and Vice Chair to review the schedule of policies with a view to adding responsibilities for review to individual governors, to agreeing the approving body and the frequency of review as marked in red.</p>	<p>DS/MB</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>a) Succession</p> <p>The Chair reminded governors that a number of terms of office were due to expire in the calendar year and whilst there were no proposals to change the governance structure at that point though it was proposed that the nominations panel have a session looking at the structure and roles, reviewing whether they meet the need of the board in discharging its duties and responsibilities in addition to recruitment to vacant positions. The Chair further reminded governors that he would not be continuing as a Chair of Governors beyond the summer term and that should anyone be interested in finding out more about becoming Chair the Governor Support team were available to provide guidance.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 7pm Date of next meeting - 9th May 2022</p>	