

**ST HELENS COUNCIL
COWLEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE**

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY
OF COWLEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
HELD ON THURSDAY 1ST APRIL 2021 VIA TEAMS**

Present: Co-opted Governors
* Mrs Margaret Bellis
* Mr Paul Worthington
* Mr Geoffrey Appleton
* Mrs Kathryn Campbell
Colonel Stephen P Boardman MBE DL
* Mr Russell Cormack
* Mr Innes Arnold
* Mr Garry Anders
* Mr Carlo Amadio
Justine Kellett

Parent Governors
Miss Shana Begum

Staff Governors
* Mr Cameron Sheeran (Headteacher)
* Ms Lynne Sayle

Local Authority Governor
Cllr Mancyia Uddin

* Denotes members present

Also present: Mrs M Foster, Governor Support Services, Acting as Clerk to the
Governing Body

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES AND CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT TO ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Justine Kellett.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Governors were invited to declare whether they had any interests in any items on the agenda for the meeting. No declarations were made.

3. GOVERNOR MEMBERSHIP

Co-opted vacancy

Governors were informed that Elaine Hardie had resigned from the Governing Body. A letter had been sent thanking her for her contribution to the school and the work of the Governing Body.

Parent Governor

It was noted that Lileena Denny's term of office as Parent Governor had expired on 22nd March 2021. Mr Sheeran agreed to arrange an election process for a new Parent Governor after the Easter holiday.

Monitor Governor Attendance

Governors were advised that meeting attendance was monitored as a matter of course.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH FEBRUARY 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2021 were approved as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES

It was agreed that an item regarding staff reward would be put on the agenda for next meeting of the Finance Committee.

6. MINUTES FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Minutes of the Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing Committee Part 1 held on 2nd March 2021

The minutes were received and noted.

Matters arising from the Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing Committee Part 1 held on 2nd March 2021

The Committee Chair confirmed that all but one action had been completed; information was awaited about the name of the Health Care Professional to include in the Supporting Students at School with a Medical Condition Policy.

The First Aid Policy was approved.

Minutes of the Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing Committee Part 2 held on 2nd March 2021

The minutes were received and noted.

Matters arising from the minutes of the Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing Committee Part 2 held on 2nd March 2021

There were no matters arising from the meeting.

Recommendations from the Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing Committee Part 2 held on 2nd March 2021

There were no recommendations from the Committee meeting for discussion.

Minutes of the Quality of Education Committee meeting held on 4th March 2021

The Committee Chair provided a summary of the discussions from the meeting.

It was noted that there was an error in Section 7 of the minutes: ISDR should read IDSR. It was agreed that the Headteacher would arrange for the minutes to be corrected.

Matters arising from the Quality of Education Committee held on 4th March 2021

There were no matters arising from the meeting.

Recommendations from the Quality of Education Committee meeting held on 4th March 2021

There were no recommendations from the Committee meeting for discussion.

Minutes of the Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee meeting held on 16th March 2021

The minutes were received and noted.

Matters arising from the Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee held on 16th March 2021

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Recommendations from the Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee held on 16th March 2021

Governors approved the following:

- First Aid and Defibrillator procedures
- Capability of Staff (School Employee Performance Improvement) procedure
- Staff Discipline procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Grievance procedure
- Proposals and recommended spend in the ICT Strategy and Refresh reports
- Continuation of services of the Council for existing SLAs and buy back 2021-22
- Continuation of the Risk Protection Arrangements 2021-22
- To re-issue the Sixth Form bus tender
- Draft budget 2021-22 (see Item 10 below)
- School Fund accounts 2019-20
- Payment of £47,346.10 to AQA Education Limited for exam fees
- The five year option for Accelerated Reader at a cost of £33,705.45.

7. POLICY REVIEW

This item was discussed at Item 6 above.

8. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SIP) AND SELF-EVALUATION

The Headteacher advised that there would be a return to the 2019/20 College Improvement Plan in the Summer term. The SIP, the comments from the Pilot Inspection (to be discussed at Part 2 of the meeting) and the Resumption Plan would be combined and presented to Governors next term.

In the meantime, all pupils had returned to school on 8th March with attendance at been 92-95%, which was approximately 3-4% above National. Governors were informed that there were still some students who were school refusers, or who had issues with returning to school, but on the whole the percentage of students in school was positive. It was noted that the Committees had received full reports about the work going on in school and students were now working to Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) as opposed to Centre Assessed Grades as it was the previous year.

Q: How many school refusers do we have and what are the main barriers to attendance?

A: There is a mixture of reasons, and all are individual, but the main theme is Covid. Some will use Covid not to return because they were non-attenders before, and we have had some more of these as well as some who may have been isolating for family reasons. We are looking at a maximum of 20 students and will be working with those families.

Governors were informed that there were also some parents who had chosen to home educate their children (five students), although this was being discouraged.

Q: Of those who don't attend, would it be fair to categorise them as not attaining where they should be, or are they doing well home schooling?

A: Unfortunately they are the students who had a gap before, and that gap is widening, which is worrying. We also have a situation where there is a new gap emerging where parents have had to work from home and our students have had to look after siblings to allow their parents to work. If they were in school, they would be able to learn, but they haven't been able to engage at home. There is a huge amount of work going on trying to get them back in.

It was noted that positive Covid cases were still occurring in school, but these were being managed.

Q: Regarding parents who have elected to home educate, is that official and does that mean the students are off the school role?

A: We have three students whose parents have elected to home educate. In theory they go off role, but one student is returning; the others are continuing to be educated at home.

Q: Are they able to access any lessons from school?

A: No. It is a dilemma for school; if we carry on providing blended learning, we won't get them back into school. We want them to carry on learning, and there is material on the website for any student who is isolating. We won't stop them from logging in to lessons, but ideally, we want them back into school and back into learning for a variety of reasons. There is more work to be done and we are hopeful that once Easter is over, we may see improvements.

This is an anomaly: any parent at any point in time can write to say they are going to home educate their child with no real accountability or quality assurance of the education they are getting at home. If any parent mentions this to us, they are challenged and supported before making their final decision, but once they are off role, they are off role. What we have found in St Helens is that some Year 10s and 11s were taken off role and parents found that they would have to pay to take their qualifications, so they have tried to get them back on role. The Local Authority have been very supportive.

Q: Who is ultimately responsible for the two students who are receiving elective home education?

A: The parents. It is for the Local Authority to check up and monitor the situation, but in theory they have very little power. It is a challenge, and it is worrying.

The Headteacher advised that Years 11 and 13 were currently going through Teacher Assessed Grades, which was a challenge to ensure accuracy. Robust processes were in place which had been peer reviewed by the Teaching School to make sure that the strategy was secure. Staff had received training and all assessments were due to be submitted by 18th June, with the results available on 11th August. At that point appeals could be submitted.

Consideration is being given to the primary timetable and it was proposed that instead of bubbles for Years 7, 8 and 9, all children would move back into their normal timetable. However, changes were not going to be made until the Local Authority had passed the risk assessment. Until that time, the current bubble structure would continue.

It was noted that the children would be tested on their return from the Easter holidays. This was because school could not be sure that 100% of families would test twice weekly over the Easter holidays.

Q: What do the parents do if they are 100% compliant with testing? What do they do with the results, how are they stored and what are the consequences for not doing them?

A: There are no consequences; testing is done on a voluntary basis. We provide kits for the children and explain how to use them.

Discussion took place about the ease of the process and the willingness to do the testing. It was noted that the majority of students were following the testing regime.

Q: When the students do the testing at home and input information to the NHS website, do we then get data at school of the uptake, and is school automatically notified if there is a positive case or are we reliant on individuals notifying us?

A: If there is a positive case we are told and then the student is directed to take a PCR test. While that is happening, we identify close contacts who are sent home. If the PCR test is positive, all involved stay at home; if it is negative, they can return to school. If a parent did not bother phoning the school, and took a PCR test, that would go to St Helens track and trace which is working well. The issue is whether everybody is isolating as they should do.

9. PRINCIPAL’S REPORT ON COVID IN COLLEGE

This item was discussed at Item 8 above.

10. FINANCE MANAGEMENT

Approve the Schools Finance Value Standard

This item was not discussed.

Agree to proposed budget and staffing structure for the new financial year

The budget was approved at Item 6 above.

Monitor the coronavirus catch up premium

Governors were informed that £57,000 had been received and £37,000 had been utilised for staffing, with the remainder ringfenced to purchase additional IT devices. It was expected that further catch up funding would be received in the future.

Receive and discuss finance update including 3 year projection

This item was discussed at Item 6 above.

Approval of the budget

The budget, as agreed at Committee, was ratified as follows:

	Total Resources Available	Projected Expenditure	Surplus / (Deficit)
	£	£	£
2021/2022	11,332,044	10,547,114	786,438
2022/2023	10,862,687	10,425,116	438,489
2023/2024	10,497,152	10,515,353	-17,886

11. WEBSITE COMPLIANCE

Governors were informed that Vicky Atherton from the Local Authority had recently reviewed the school website which was found to be Ofsted compliant. A number of minor points had been raised, which had now been addressed. Feedback about the website from parents had been very positive in respect of support for remote learning.

12. NEWSLETTER

Governors noted the content of the newsletter and congratulated school for the No Smoking Award, for the Maths Challenge and for the featured student’s achievements in dancing.

13. WELLBEING OF STUDENTS

The Staff Governor provided a verbal report on student wellbeing for the previous term. It was noted that the majority of students had returned to school and slipped back well into the routines and high expectations of the College. Students had

managed testing with great resilience and maturity. Face coverings were being worn and students were coping very well. There had been some positive cases but as always these had been responded to quickly to identify close contacts and stop the spread. Students had risen to the challenge of TAGs.

Staff were supporting some students who were struggling with mental health. Students were looking forward to being able to take part in the wider aspects of Cowley life in the Summer term.

Governors asked whether it would be possible to have outdoor activities, such as sports day in the Summer term. It was hoped that this would be possible, but school would continue to be flexible and responsive.

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 20th May 2021 at 5.00pm.

15. URGENT MATTERS

Discussion took place about the current news reports about claims of sexual abuse and harassment in schools and suggested that this could be an issue for consideration in the future.

Signed Chairperson Dated