

ST HELENS COUNCIL

COWLEY INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

Minutes of the meeting of the Full Governing Body
Cowley International College
held on Thursday 30th March 2023 at 5pm

Members:

Co-opted Governors

*Mr G Anders
*Mr I Arnold
Mrs M Bellis
*Mr R Cormack
Mrs J Kellett
Mr N Rouch
*Mr P Worthington
*Mrs Stacey Hill
Vacancy 1
Vacancy 2
Vacancy 2

Parent Governors

*Mr Ross Foster
Vacancy

Staff Governors

*Mr C Sheeran (Headteacher)
*Mr J Hunt

Local Authority Governor

Cllr M Uddin

*Denotes Members Present

Also Present:

Ms S Fry, Governor Support Services
Acting as Clerk to the Governing Body

Mr Hunt was introduced to the board as the newly elected staff governor.

Mrs Hill was introduced to the governing board with the intention of her being appointed to one of the co-opted vacancies. Mrs Hill stated that she was a former head of geography and is now employed by the AQA and leads the geography team supporting teachers and also does provides lots of support in schools.

She has never been a governor before but her father previously was. She lives locally and wants to serve the community, she also has a son who would like to bring here in potentially be attending the school in the future.

1. Apologies and Consideration of Consent to Absence

Apologies had been received from Justine Kellett, Mancyia Uddin, Nigel Rouch and Margaret Bellis.

All apologies were accepted with the exception of Mancyia Uddin. Cllr Uddin's apologies were not accepted and the Governors did not consent to the absence.

ACTION - Governor Services to be contacted to formally address the absence of Cllr Uddin.

2. Declarations of Interest

The chair advised all governors to please update any declarations on GovernorHub if not already up to date.

3. Governor Membership

Co-opted Governor Appointment

Mrs Hill left the room while the governing body discussed appointing her to the board.

Governors unanimously agreed to Mrs Hill's appointment and stated that she would be an asset to the board.

Mrs Hill was invited back into the meeting and informed of her appointment with immediate effect.

An attendance report at FGB Meetings was distributed with the agenda pack. Mr Arnold requested a correction from a previous meeting whereby he was reported as being absent when he was in fact in attendance.

ACTIONS

Mrs Hills details to be provided to Governor Services regarding her appointment.

Clerk to inform Governor Services to update the attendance record to reflect the request of Mr Arnold.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on the 9th February 2023

It was reported that a number of policies had been included in the agenda pack for this meeting and that the minutes did not appropriately reflect that the governing board had approved them.

The policies that had been brought for ratification were :

- Relationships, sex and health education policy (RSHE)
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions policy
- Behaviour Policy

- Complaints Procedure
- Exclusion Policy

Governors approved and formally ratified the policies that had been circulated with the agenda at the meeting held on 9th February.

5. Matters arising from the above minutes

There were no matters arising.

6. Minutes from the Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing Committee meeting held on the 28th February 2023

These were held to be a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

7. Matters Arising from the above Minutes

There were no matters arising from this meeting. It was noted that this was a short meeting as it fell on a strike day.

8. Recommendations from the Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing Committee meeting

There were no recommendations to agree.

9. Minutes from the Quality of Education Committee Meeting held on the 28th February 2023

As acting chair of the Quality of Education Committee Mr Arnold covered this item. He stated that there was nothing in particular that required drawing governors attention to right now with the exception of a policy review.

10. Matters Arising Quality of Education Committee Meeting

There were no matters arising. Governors have now been emailed to invite them to participate in the School Book if they would like to.

11. Recommendations from Quality of Education Meeting

There were no recommendations to agree.

12. Minutes from Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee Meeting held on 16th March 2023

The minutes of the meeting were shared with the Governing Body along with the ICT Refresh Plans and financial documentation that had been shared at the meeting.

13. Matters arising from Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee Meeting

There were no matters arising.

14. Recommendations from Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee Meeting

The Committee Chair provided a summary of the recommendations which were on pg. 26 of the agenda document.

1. Approval of the highest level of recommendations in the ICT development plan.
2. Budget for 2023-24 and three year projection as per tabled document.
3. Revised Sixth Form bus route at a cost of £38k and two year guarantee of bus provision for incoming Year 12.
4. Council Service Level Agreements and Buy Backs as per tabled document

Governors were informed that from a financial point of viewpoint the recommendations are most prudent, it was further noted that the budget projection was much better than what had been shared at previous meetings.

Mr Cormack stated that the school had recently had the budget setting meeting with the LA Finance Officer and the School Business Manager had been required to make some further adjustments based on offers to teachers, the most up to date budget information was included in the agenda pack under item 17.

All recommendations from the Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee were agreed and approved unanimously.

15. Local Authority Standard Items

There were no further LA items for consideration this term.

16. Policy Review

The below policies were included as part of the agenda pack.

- Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Governors were advised that the policies had been reviewed and updated and were informed what changes and updates had been made.

Governors approved the Designated Teacher for LAC and PLAC policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy that had been circulated with the agenda pack.

17. Financial Management

- Approval of proposed budget for 2023/24

Comprehensive documents were included and circulated in the agenda pack for governors including the updated budget projection following the budget setting meeting.

The school business manager reported the Recovery Premium would be continuing for the 2023-24 academic year but the rates had not yet been published by the DfE so there were no figures in relation to this included in the draft budget.

It was also noted that utility costs may also be subject to change.

It was reported that the teachers pay recommendation have not yet been published so the pay award for September is also unknown. Figures have been built into the budget but final settlements may differ as it is highly likely that the unions will reject the current offer.

Governor Question: What are the implications in relation to the timeframe, would the governing body have to reconvene to approve?

A. The forecast built into the budget is based on what is available now, if it was significantly different then there possibly would be a need to reconvene.

Governor Question: A 4.5% increase wouldn't be too concerning if it was funded but isn't the increase not funded by central government, so it feels that this is being taken away from pupils.

A. It is not fully funded but may be part funded.

It is possible that there may be more strike actions from unions before a settlement figure is reached.

It was further noted that the budget may be revised when definite student numbers are known. Any updates to the budget projection would be shared with governors.

Governor Question: What is the deadline for governors to approve the budget?

A. This needs to be approved at this meeting as the deadline is 31st March.

A further document was included in the agenda pack with an itemised breakdown of the SLA and Buy Back costs.

The school business managers covering report included the following recommendations.

- Governors approve the two year guarantee for the Sixth Form bus.
- Governors approve the 2023-24 budget.
- Governors approve the Council Service Level Agreements and Buybacks.

Three-Year School Budget projection had been provided alongside detailed expenditure.

	Total Resources £	Projected Expenditure £	Surplus / Deficit £
2023/24	12,640,968	11,837,630	805,081
2024/25	11,854,659	11,898,251	-43,022
2025/26	11,129,736	11,884,017	-754,879

It was reported that the school were in a good position considering what the national picture is.

Governors endorsed the 2023-24 budget noting the three-year projections.

- Approval of proposed SLA's for 2023/24

A list of current and proposed SLA's was provided in the agenda pack for governors which showed the current figures and the cost from the previous year.

Governors endorsed the 2023-24 SLA's and buyback of services.

It was reported that the Finance, Personnel and Premises Committee had agreed to guarantee the bus for the next two years but to reassess beyond that period.

Governors endorsed and approved the 2 year guarantee for the Sixth Form bus.

18. Principal's Report

The principals written report included information on:

- Key Performance Indicators, Spring Assessment
- College Improvement Plan 2022/2023
- Events

It was reported that there were concerns around Yr 10 and Yr 11 outcomes and a number of strategies and interventions had been initiated to address this.

Attendance overall is currently at 89% with a target of 97% , and persistent absence is at 16%. A new attendance strategy has recently begun and has been running for around 2 weeks, this is having a good impact already on some hard to reach students.

Suspensions are still high and there has been one permanent exclusion. Cowley are not lowering standards and students learn from behaviours, staff know it is taken seriously.

Mr Cormack stated that there is an issue with Friday absences and parents working from home which is a national issue.

Students are aware that they need to be through the building with their uniform checked by 8.25am. If they are late then they get a lunchtime detention. If there is persistent lateness then they could get a parental panel, no fines have been issued to parents yet although this is possible.

Governor Question: Has the school had to have any closures due to the recent strike action?

No, the school has been able to remain open.

There were concerns that if pupils were absent on the Wednesday then this could also be affected the following day but there wasn't a huge impact on absences, but the next proposed strike day if it goes ahead is scheduled to take place on the Thursday prior to the bank holiday weekend so this could adversely affect attendance on the Friday.

It was noted that the exams had been moved around for the Yr 11s and on exam days attendance for the cohort was at 92%.

19. School Newsletter

An update regarding the newsletter was delivered.

The Chair stated that it was looking really good.

The offer on sports and performing arts is excellent. There has recently been a trip for Mandarin students to Birmingham and there is plenty of fieldwork happening in Geography.

It was also commented how well the school had managed during the strike days.

Governor Question: Can you clarify how all the positive aspects available at Cowley are communicated to students

Mr Cormack confirmed that the newsletter was distributed to parents on a weekly basis. He also informed governors that assemblies were used to focus on achievements.

Governor Question: Governors would like to seek assurance around bridge building especially in relation to peer pressure on pupils

Mr Cormack stated that the school is mapping out what students are involved in try to get them engaged.

Cowley's Got Talent is a great event and a great example of this, we currently have 13 performing art's students who are working with some SEND students.

Mr Sheeran read out a quote to governors from a pupil highlighting the positive feedback.

Governors were informed that there was a staff briefing on a Monday morning and governors were welcome to attend if they were available where they would see and hear about lots of examples of positivity across the school.

It was suggested if it would be possible to think of a corporate community means of sharing information. It was confirmed that snippets of that do happen on a Friday afternoon when Mike Bennett shares the successes and positive news on the tannoy announcements.

Each year group then highlights relevant aspects of these to share in the corresponding assemblies. We are always striving to do more.

20. Well-being

Mr Cormack stated that it has been a really tough term particularly with the big drivers in relation to exams.

It was reported that the vast majority of students are doing really well and taking advantage of the interventions on offer, and also the extra-curricular experience, but it was also noted that there are some who are dealing with issues at home.

21. Governor Development

The Chair recommended governors attend training and stated that there were lots of courses on offer covering a wide variety of subjects and encouraged them to take advantage of them and to feed back to the board.

22. Date and time of the next meeting

Governors were advised to make a note of the remaining meetings for this academic year:

Thursday 25th May 2023 at 5pm

Thursday 13th July 2023 at 5pm

23. Urgent Matters

Stage 2 Complaints Panel

Prior to the start of the meeting governors were informed that there had been a complaint made to the school and the complainant had been dissatisfied with the response so had requested an escalation for the complaint to be heard by the complaints committee of the governing board.

Mrs Kellett had previously stated that she was available on April 24th at 9.30am to sit on the panel and governors were asked if there was anyone else with availability to also make up the panel. Mrs Hill and Mr Foster stated that they could possibly do this but would need to confirm tomorrow.

Permanent Exclusion

The Governing Board were informed that it had been necessary to permanently exclude student, this meant that a panel hearing of the pupil discipline committee would be required, in accordance with the guidance this panel will need to meet before 3rd May.

Mr Anders and Mr Arnold confirmed their availability for 27th April.

The PA to the Principal will be in touch with all parties with confirmation.

There were no further items for discussion under Part 1 and the meeting continued to consider the confidential items under Part 2.

Signed Dated
Chairperson