Dorset Studio School

Meeting of the Full Board of Governors
THURSDAY 2nd JULY 2026 at 4.00pm,
at Poundbury

MINUTES

The Code of Conduct for Governors requires governors to be honest and open with regard to conflicts of interest (either real or perceived). Governors must not use their position for personal gain in business, political or social relationships. Therefore, a governor who has, or may be perceived to have, such a personal interest in a particular matter under consideration should declare that interest, withdraw from all discussions relating to it and take no part in any vote on such matter.

Items marked * are those in which a majority of Governors may have an interest because of some shared attribute. When considering these items, Governors should aim to achieve a balanced view, paying particular attention to the sources of information and advice, and remind themselves of their duties as governors and to act in the public interest.

Governors:	Andy Daw (Chairman); Mark Gibbens (Vice Chairman); Chris Biggs (Co-opted Governor); Nicholas Spearing (Co-opted Governor); Michael Chitty (Co-opted Governor); Wayne Clarke (Co-opted Governor); David Humphreys (Staff Governor); Christine Thresher (Parent Governor); Jason Giladjian (Parent Governor); Jason Malone (Principal) & Annetta Minard (Associate Governor).
In attendance:	Emma Evans (Clerk)

Item		Detail	
1.	Verbal	**APOLOGIES** • To **Note** any apologies for absence • Michael Chitty and Chris Biggs	Chair
2.	Verbal	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** • To **Note** any Declarations of Interest • Mark Gibbens - sponsorship of the school. • Nicholas Spearing - Councillor - Piddle Valley Parish Council.	Chair
3..	Minutes	**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7th MAY 2026** • To **Approve** minutes as a correct record It was noted that p.6 recorded that the Terms of Reference had been agreed but that was only for the Building and Communications Sub-Committee. The Chairman stated that any changes to ToR will be done at the start of the next Academic year. It was noted that the Lead Governor for the Sub-Committees were as follows: Nicholas Spearing – Audit and Finance Committee Jason Giladjian – Curriculum and Specialism Sub-committee Mark Gibbens - Building and Communications Sub-Committee • To **Approve** non confidential minutes for website publication The Minutes were **AGREED.**	Chair
4.	Minutes	**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES** • To **Consider** any matters arising from the minutes There were no matters raised.	Chair

5.	Verbal	**AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** • To **Receive** an update following meeting held on 16th June 2026 • To **Approve** the Budget 2026-27 • To **Note** the contents of the Transport briefing paper It was noted that prior to approval governors would need to be confident that the school would be looking at full student roll moving forward. It was noted that there were no specific land based personnel on the SLT and that it was felt that promoting land based studies would assist with ensuring a full student roll. **ACTION** – More detail is required on the back-up budget that has been prepared, together with further information to support the assumptions within the budget. It was **AGREED** that a meeting should be arranged to approve the budget before 1st September 2026. Transport – The college had come up with a figure that DSS could accommodate. The main concern raised was that the draft budget was making assumptions about pupil numbers coming in the next academic year. Governors wanted to be clear that there was a reasonable degree of confidence in these numbers. There was optimism regarding the impact of marketing, but governors felt that there needed to be more challenge to the plan and a clear strategy in place and support from the college. The marketing activity currently included a newsletter being sent to approximately 300 parents. Addresses were needed from the college in order to develop this further. It was also suggested that the school should continue to build its mailing list, including Dorset farmers and local employers. **ACTION** – David Humphreys will obtain the relevant addresses. It was noted that the Vice-Chair was happy to work with Jason on a marketing plan but that it needed following through. **Finance Committee / DfE Action Plan** At the A&F Committee the reliability of the financial figures reported to the Finance Committee were being reviewed. It was noted that two key actions were required to provide assurance to the Committee: to clearly set out the plan and to identify measurable outcomes against each action. The revised budget position, including the projected deficit, was discussed. It was noted that the revised budget was still to be confirmed. It was confirmed that monitoring of the DfE Action Plan sits with the A&F Committee and will be monitored through RAG-rated reporting. Governors were updated on correspondence received from the DfE, which had been shared with Members. A response had been provided by the Principal of Coastland College. It was also noted that a Finance Manager had been appointed to provide additional support and capacity in meeting the requirements arising from the audit and the DfE correspondence/action plan. Reserves account application and lack of action in opening the account was noted. The Committee considered the budget forecast, Risk Register, Transport briefing paper, SRMA Report and draft Terms of Reference, which would be reviewed at the start of the academic year. It was noted that the management accounts were now in a stronger position. Discussion	Chair of A&F Committee

		focused particularly on the budget forecast, transport and the findings contained within the SRMA Report. The amended budget forecast was considered. The Risk Register was reviewed and the contents of the Transport briefing paper and SRMA Report were noted. The draft Terms of reference would be presented to the first meeting of the academic year.	
6.	Paper	**BUILDING AND COMMUNICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE** • To **Receive** an update on recent meetings The Sub-Committee received an update on recent meetings regarding the project. It was reported that five meetings had been held. An update was provided on the pre-application process. Some initial concerns had been raised by the planners; however, clarification had since been received regarding the aspects of the proposals that were acceptable. A further meeting with the planners is planned within the next two to three weeks, with the programme agreed accordingly. The plans were reviewed, with minor amendments proposed to the positioning of the sports hall and dining area. **Consultation:** In response to a question regarding the timing of consultation with the community and Parish Council, it was confirmed that the plans would be shared with the Parish Council within the next few weeks. Wider consultation is anticipated to take place in August or, if required, September. A question was raised regarding whether the delay could be recovered within the project programme. It was confirmed that the current expectation is that the delay can be accommodated within the construction period.	Chair
7.	Paper	**CURRICULUM AND SPECIALISM SUB-COMMITTEE** • To **Consider** the appointment of a Working Party to contribute to the Action Plan • To **Review** draft Terms of Reference The Sub-Committee considered the proposal to establish a Working Party to contribute to the Action Plan and reviewed the draft Terms of Reference. A discussion took place regarding the current position in Maths, noting that this was now considered to be in a positive position and that appropriate support was in place. No decisions were made by the Sub-Committee. The matters discussed will be considered further at the next Full Governing Body meeting, as appropriate.	Chair
8.	Paper	**NGA EXTERNAL REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE REPORT** • To **Receive** an update on recent meetings • To **Review** the contents of the Report • To **Consider** the draft Action Plan Governors had received an update from Judith following the NGA External Review of Governance and reviewed the recommendations contained within the report. It was noted that the recommendations would form the basis of an Action Plan, which would be used to inform the work of the Sub-Committees. Areas identified for action included ensuring appropriate governance information and approvals were recorded and reflected on the school website and Companies House, where applicable. The role and support required by the Clerk were also discussed, including additional training, hours and access to appropriate advice to support the governance process.	Principal

		The Principal provided an update following a meeting with an NGA colleague to discuss the review and proposed Action Plan. It was noted that the NGA Action Plan template would be used as the basis for progressing the recommendations. The potential use of AI to support the recording and preparation of meeting minutes was discussed, including considerations around data security and the ability to accurately capture the context of discussions. **ACTION:** Clerk to investigate appropriate AI tools for supporting the recording and preparation of meeting minutes, taking account of data security and governance requirements.	
9.	Verbal	**DfE UPDATE** • To **Receive** an update following meeting with Coastland College The Committee received an update following the meeting involving the DfE, Coastland College (CC) and DSS. The Chairman confirmed that the meeting had been arranged between the DfE, CC and DSS. Engagement had been made with CC regarding communication around the new build, with no further actions identified at this stage. An update was provided on the work with the Marketing Team at CC. It was noted that CC would continue to support the main fairs. A shared point of contact between KMC (CC) and DSS was also discussed. **ACTION:** At the start of the new academic year, the outcomes and actions arising from the meeting will be revisited, with a focus on joint working and staff resources.	Chair
10.	Verbal	**OFSTED INSPECTION FRAMEWORK** • To **Receive** an update regarding the new Ofsted Framework Deferred to a future meeting.	Chair
11.	Verbal	**GOVERNOR TRAINING** • To **Confirm** training requirements and completion The training requirements and completion of governor training were reviewed. "Key" provider Keeping Children Safe in Education and Prevent were noted. The availability of specialist training through the NGA was also discussed. **ACTION:** The Clerk will prepare a training matrix setting out essential and preferred training for governors and bring this to the next meeting for review.	Chair
12.	Verbal	**POLICIES** • To **Note** policies recently uploaded to GVO for comment/amendments. The policies recently uploaded to GVO for review, comment and any proposed amendments were noted. The Attendance Policy, including the procedures relating to children absent from education, and the Whistleblowing Policy were discussed. It was noted that the procedures relating to children absent from education are distinct from those relating to children who are missing from education. The Grievance Policy had been rewritten based on the DC policy. CT confirmed that the DC policy had been used as a basis. **ACTION:** Policies to be reviewed and progressed for the October meeting. The GVO policy	Chair/ Principal

		area will also be reviewed and tidied to ensure that the current policies are clearly organised and accessible.	
13.	Paper	**PRINCIPALS REPORT** • To **Receive** the Principal's Report The Principal's Report was received and discussed. It was noted that the Risk Register is updated for each A&F Committee meeting and would be formally approved at the first academic meeting of the year and that key documents, including the Risk Register and School Improvement Plan (SIP), are live documents. **Safeguarding and Governance** An update was provided regarding safeguarding arrangements, including the forthcoming departure of the DSL. The possibility of establishing an Inclusion Committee and recruiting an additional governor with relevant experience was discussed. **Governor Question:** Why was an Inclusion Committee being considered? **Response:** The proposal was linked to the split-site arrangements and changes in safeguarding responsibilities. It was noted that safeguarding is the responsibility of all governors and that it would be preferable for safeguarding not to become isolated within one committee. It was noted that operational safeguarding remains the responsibility of staff, with the operational DSL role being undertaken by Amanda Spear. The Single Central Record (SCR) was also discussed, with a need to ensure that governors receive appropriate assurance that it is kept up to date. The possibility of recruiting a governor with additional safeguarding experience was discussed. It was agreed that the Chairman would continue to undertake the DSL-related governor role and would meet with the Principal on a termly basis. **ACTION:** CT and AD to work together on safeguarding matters. **ACTION:** To include Safeguarding as a standing agenda item. In light of the forthcoming changes to Ofsted arrangements and the breadth of areas requiring governor oversight, the committee structure will be reviewed at the start of the next academic year. It was noted that three members of staff have Level 3 safeguarding training. **Committee Documentation and Terms of Reference** The format and use of hyperlinks within committee documentation were discussed. It was agreed that the format previously presented by AD would be considered further at the next meeting, alongside the Terms of Reference. **School Improvement Plan** The SIP was discussed as a live document, with key actions and targets highlighted. A question was raised regarding the proposed re-launch of the National History GCSE. **Governor Question:** What is the position regarding the National History GCSE? **Response:** The qualification has been re-launched, with a strong focus on land and conservation. This will be considered through the Curriculum and Specialism Sub-	Principal

		Committee, with a view to commencing from September 2027/28. **Attendance** Attendance was identified as a key priority. It was noted that attendance had reduced each half term, with the percentage impact being greater due to the smaller overall pupil population. The impact of the meningitis vaccination programme and periods of extreme heat, including two days when DSS was closed, was also noted. The school is considering a range of approaches to improve attendance, particularly for pupils who are difficult to engage. This includes reviewing patterns of persistent absence and increasing direct contact with families. **Governor Question:** Do we have sufficient capacity to manage attendance? **Response:** Staff are undertaking home visits where appropriate, particularly for Year 11 pupils who are not sitting examinations. The proposed approach is for first-day contact to be made by telephone rather than email, with a visit to vulnerable pupils by Day 5 where appropriate. The possibility of an additional attendance-focused role or an Attendance Governor was discussed. It was noted that further work is required to improve attendance and to ensure that persistent absence is identified and addressed appropriately. **EHCP and Inclusion** Examples of an EHCP, class plan and toolkit were noted as supporting documentation. **Climate Action and Estates** The Climate Action Plan was discussed. It was noted that further work was required before the plan was shared. Climate Action will form part of staff training days in September. The Estate Strategy was also discussed, including planning for the new build and the period through to handover. **Governor Question:** Has air conditioning been considered for the new build? **Response:** Air flow within the building has been raised as part of the discussions regarding the new build. **TEP Engagement Platform** The Principal outlined plans to provide governors with access to the TEP engagement platform during the next academic year. Governors will be able to complete surveys and monitor changes over time. **Behaviour** It was noted that behaviour remains an area where further work is required and that staff concerns will continue to be monitored. **School Day** The changes to the school day were discussed. The longer school day, including transport arrangements operating approximately from 9.00am to 4.00pm, is being managed through changes to the timetable. The school now operates seven periods rather than six, with shorter lessons and changes to break and lunchtime arrangements. The additional time at the end of the day will provide opportunities for KS3 activities, including School Council, detentions, interventions and clubs across year groups. **Outcomes and Careers** It was noted that results are expected to be broadly similar to the previous year. The potential use of conferences and external opportunities to support pupils was discussed, including opportunities involving KEIR and the Air Ambulance. Governors	

		were invited to support the school in identifying and accessing relevant opportunities. The Principal was thanked for his hard work and governors were invited to identify areas where they could provide further assistance. **ACTION:** The Principal to share the conference calendar with governors. Governors to identify conferences or events they would like to attend or support. **ACTION:** Mark Gibbens to take on the role of Careers Governor and liaise with the school regarding this area. **ACTION:** Lanyards for governors to be organised.	
14.	Verbal	**COMPLAINTS AND EXCLUSIONS** • To **Receive** a report regarding actions taken following complaints and exclusions It was noted that two complaints had progressed to Stage 3 to resolve.	Principal
15.	Verbal	**MARKETING STRATEGY** • To **Consider** the development of a Marketing Strategy to include planned activities, success measures and review arrangements The Committee considered the development of a Marketing Strategy, including planned activities, measures of success and arrangements for reviewing its impact. The Principal reported that a plan had been developed, with a focus on increasing pupil numbers and strengthening the reputation and profile of DSS. The importance of maintaining links with former pupils was discussed. It was proposed that contact details for pupils leaving at the end of the academic year should be collected, alongside information about their next steps, to enable the school to maintain contact and develop an alumni network. The use of newsletters and other communications to former pupils was discussed, together with the need to clarify responsibility for maintaining these communications and to expand the distribution list. A leavers' questionnaire was also proposed to collect email addresses and information about pupils' future destinations. **Governor Question:** What are the main barriers preventing pupils from choosing DSS? **Response:** A number of factors may influence families' decisions, including distance, transport and reputation. It was noted that parents are an important source of information regarding the reasons for choosing, or not choosing, DSS. Further work is therefore needed to understand these factors. The importance of strengthening relationships and communication with feeder schools was discussed. Governors also discussed opportunities to raise the profile of the school and CC, including events and activities such as the Horse Trials. It was noted that CC should be promoted as a positive destination and not simply as an alternative for pupils who do not take A Levels. A review of the school uniform was discussed, including the potential introduction of gilets. Further consideration will take place during the next academic year. **ACTION:** The Marketing Strategy will be developed further, including planned activities, measures of success and arrangements for reviewing impact. **ACTION:** Consider arrangements for maintaining contact with leavers and former pupils,	

		including the collection of contact details and development of an appropriate communications list.	
16.	Verbal	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS FOR REPORT** • To **Consider** Any Other Business for report only There was no other business to consider.	Chair
17.	Verbal	**2026/27 DATES** • To **Note** proposed dates for **2026/27** meetings: **Full Governing Body** • Thursday 15th October 2026 at 4.00 p.m. • Thursday 17th December 2026 at 4.00 p.m. • Thursday 25th February 2027 at 4.00 p.m. • Thursday 22nd April 2027 at 4.00 p.m. • Thursday 1st July 2027 at 4.00 p.m. **Audit & Finance Committee** • Thursday 1st October 2026 at 3.00 p.m. • Thursday 26th November 2026 at 3.00 p.m. • Thursday 4th February 2027 at 3.00 p.m. • Thursday 25th March 2027 at 3.00 p.m. • Thursday 3rd June 2027 at 3.00 p.m. Meeting closed at 6.35 p.m.	Chair