Dorset Studio School

Meeting of the Full Board of Governors
THURSDAY 9th OCTOBER 2025,
4.00 p.m., 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, Mark Gibbens; Chris Biggs (Parent Governor); Nicholas Spearing (Co-opted Governor); Michael Chitty (Co-opted Governor); Wayne Clarke (Co-opted Governor); David Humphreys (Staff Governor); Jason Malone (Principal)
In attendance:	Emma Evans (Clerk)

Item		Detail	
1.	Verbal	**Welcome** The Chair of Governors welcomed all to the first Full Governors meeting of the academic year. A welcome was extended to Mr Chris Biggs, who has been co-opted as a governor, having previously served as a Parent Governor. Governors noted that, following this change, there are now two Parent Governor vacancies. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** To **Note** any Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest noted. It was stated that the Chairman, Mr Andy Daw, was no longer working at Kingston Maurwood College and no longer at City and Guilds.	Chair
2.	Verbal	**APOLOGIES** To **Note** any apologies for absence Apologies were received from Mr Nicholas Spearing, Ms Tracey Richards	Chair

3.	Minutes	**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3rd JULY 2025** ▪ To **Approve** minutes as a correct record ▪ To Approve non confidential minutes for website publication All minutes were confirmed as correct and **AGREED** with the amendment of the following: 'Tanks' para 3 should read 'Thanks'. **ACTION:** To note and amend. No further matters arising.	Chair
4.	Minutes	**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES** There were no matters arising	Chair
5.	Paper	**ANNUAL APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR** To **Appoint** the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body for the Academic Year 2025/26 as per the Articles of Association. It was **AGREED:** That Mr Andy Daw be appointed as Chairman and that Mr Mark Gibbens be appointed as Vice Chairman. **To Appoint the Chair of the Audit Committee and members** Further to the meeting of the Audit and Finance Committee it was **AGREED**: That Mr Nicholas Spearing by appointed as Chairman of the Committee and Mr Mark Gibbens be appointed as Vice Chairman. **Link Governor Roles –** To appoint Link Governor for Safeguarding – It was noted that Mr Andy Daw would be the link Safeguarding Governor in the interim. SEN – It was suggested that a newly appointed Parent Governor be the SEN link governor. **ACTION:** Postpone appointment of link governor appointments to next meeting. **Skills Matrix** It was **AGREED**: That the Skills Matrix be resent to Governors for completion.	Clerk

		Code of Conduct To be agreed and signed by the Chair The Code of Conduct was **AGREED**. **ACTION**: Mr Andy Daw to sign Code of Conduct and be uploaded to GVO.	
6.	Paper	**RATIFICATION OF POLICIES** To **Ratify** the following policies: uploaded to GVO: • **Child Protection 2025/26** It was reported that the policy had been updated and included Cyber Crime and Child on Child abuse in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and cross referenced with DSS. **AGREED** It was noted that P8 sec 16. Should be section 15 **ACTION:** To amend It was noted that 16.3 Monitoring arrangements – The Safeguarding link should hold regular meetings – DSL and Safeguarding Link Governor – There would be an update in Principal's report regarding referrals. • **Behaviour & Rewards** It was noted that some boxes were not clear, which was possibly due to a formatting issue. The length of time of ladder was queried and noted that three pupils were currently on it. It was based on catching best behaviour first. Positive postcards/messaging were being utilised. **Q:** A governor asked whether parents were aware and whether positive information was being reported to parents. **A:** In response it was stated that messages were sent home. It was noted that Ofsted had mentioned consistency and DSS was working towards this. **Q:** A governor asked whether the pupils chose their adult coaches. **A:** In response it was stated that staff were matched with the pupil based on their need requirement.	Chair

		Q: A governor asked how the governing body monitored Behaviour and Rewards. **A:** In response it was stated that governor monitoring was through the meetings of the Full Governing Body. • **Complaints** **Q:** A governor asked whether the Complaints Policy and Grievance Policy was contradictory? **A:** In response it was stated that the Complaints Policy was aimed at external complaints and Grievance internal. • **Suspensions and Exclusions** **Q:** A governor asked whether there was a standing Disciplinary Panel. **A:** In response it was stated that it was an adhoc Panel but the Principal commented that it would be beneficial to be established as a standing panel. **ACTION:** Consider the establishment of a standing Disciplinary Panel. • **SAR Policy** It was noted that SAR had become more frequent. Currently requests go to the DPO, The Finance Manager collates the information, the Principal checks the information and then is redacted (by the Principal), if it is to be shared. **Q:** A governor asked how much time was spent by the Principal undertaking this work. **A:** In response it was stated that the Principal would speak to the Finance Manager regarding the capacity of staff to undertake/assist with this, adding that it is a Data Protection statutory requirement. **ACTION:** Finance Manager to consider capacity of staff to assist. It was stated that there needed to be a discussion around how staff/governors internally communicate e.g. the use of names/numbers. **Q:** A governor asked whether a technological solution might assist. **A:** It was reported that Arbor includes an internal communications function with a red-flag option that could support this. It was noted that staff are encouraged to regularly manage and clear emails, and that a deletion time frame should be in place. Upcoming staff training will reinforce this, alongside the routine training provided through the National College, which issues	

		certificates of completion. **ACTION:** Further work required on policy implementation. • **FOI** It was noted that a separate policy had been established to define between SAR, the Publication Scheme and ICO. There was a wealth of information online and was compliant with website. **Q:** A governor asked if there was an exemption in relation to the time/cost to look for data. **A:** In response, it was stated this would be looked into. **ACTION:** Check the exemption time/cost in responding to FOI requests. • **SEND** It was noted that this policy would not see a lot of change. It would need to reviewed at the end of autumn on an annual basis under SEND as part of FGB. **ACTION:** Review at December FGB meeting. • **RSE** It was noted this topic was up to date and was taught through Personal development, Science and in Ethics lessons. **Q:** A governor asked how challenging questions were tackled. **A:** In response it was stated that staff training was undertaken to respond to any challenging situations. • **SEND Information report 2025** It was noted that it was a statutory requirement to be placed on the website. **ACTION:** The Accessibility Policy to be presented to an upcoming meeting. **The policies were AGREED.**	
7.	Paper	**PRINCIPALS REPORT** To **Receive** the Principal's Report on the following: It was reported that overall results had risen significantly, particularly notable improvement in the English and Maths matrix. Governors were informed that previous areas of concern, boys' attainment and outcomes for students who had previously been low-attaining, had shown a different and more positive picture this year.	Principal

			This was the first year of delivering Animal Care as a technical award and the introduction of a Level 1 Land and Environment award. These changes had increased inclusivity, with nine additional students achieving a Level 1 qualification. The school's specialisms performed well, and the Head of Science was commended for strong performance within the department. Staff were described as empowered to lead their areas, and the standard of teaching was judged to be good. It was noted that 40% of students achieved a Level 2 qualification. Travel and Tourism had been replaced with History within the curriculum offer. The average point score had increased by approximately half a grade per subject. Governors were informed that students would receive a granular assessment in November following the mock examinations. **Q:** A governor asked whether this was the first or second year returning to pre covid marking. **A:** In response it was stated this was the second year. The change in marking parameters had made it hard to compare results. In 2019 only 11 pupils, making it difficult for comparison. All pupils had performed better, due to structure in place, meaning more sustainability and future proofing. It was noted Year 11 mocks were coming up. Governors praised the Principal and staff for their continued hard work and commitment. It was noted that Maths standards had improved, supported by changes within Key Stage 3. The Land and Environment department had implemented a true synoptic assessment, which had led to a general improvement in outcomes. Governors also observed that teaching standards had been raised across the board. A new MIS had been introduced, which is enabling the school to focus more effectively on specialist areas. An update was provided on recent visits and activities, including the Year 9 Conservation event, where the school's core values were clearly evident. The curriculum is being realigned, and governors noted the positive impact of the Training Day, which included a morning session on 'a day in the life of a Land and Environment teacher'. Year 7 Science work was highlighted as particularly impressive, as were the Kimmeridge trips. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been rearranged, ensuring that more pupils are now exposed to the Land and Environment pathway. New staff members were described as energetic and dynamic, contributing positively to the school culture. The appraisal process continues to support talent identification and targeted	

		training. Governors were informed that the Key Stage 3 Pastoral Lead is promoting a 'culture-free' approach within the pastoral system. **Q:** A governor asked whether the Matrix could be placed on GVO. **A: ACTION:** Matrix to be available on GVO. (Principal). It was noted that the deadline for admissions was 31st October. Governors were informed that additional marketing expertise had been brought in to support school promotion. The signwriting of the school bus was discussed, and an AI-generated concept image was shared with governors. It was noted, however, that any final design would be produced by a professional graphic designer. Governors discussed the proposed design. The next priority will be improvements to the school website. Initial website traffic monitoring shows positive engagement, with visitors spending an average of five minutes on the site. Google Analytics will be used to provide further data and insight. The proposal for the gazebo footer featuring a star design was **AGREED.** It was anticipated that the signwriting for the school bus would cost approximately £900. **ACTION:** The Principal to review the hire contract and investigate whether the signwriting could be included within it. **AGREED.** It was noted that the Open event had seen approximately 400 parents in attendance. Eventbrite had been used for booking to track attendance, with the site stating the event had sold out, which was incorrect. The Principal had been heavily involved in putting the programme together. It was suggested that a member of staff be given the additional responsibility of Events Co-ordinator for a trial period. It was **AGREED** as this would provide SLT with additional support with event organisation. A suggestion was made to approach suppliers in County for sponsorship to promote partnership working. **Q**: A governor asked whether the 70 new starters in Year 7 had settled. **A**: In response it was stated that they had all settled well. The attendance data was below national but was working hard to improve this. Persistent and severe non-attendance is high in Dorset. Attendance data had been shared.	

		Q: A governor asked about the number of suspension days**.** **A:** It was stated that there had been only one pupil who had had more than one day. Fair and proportionate response but it was strong measure. Pupil Premium pupils were above the average. The costs of getting to school were noted as a factor. **Q**: A governor asked how the school is preparing Year 8 students for choosing a specialism. **A**: It was stated that the school was working with three Middle schools providing events, taster days to support students in making their choices.	
8.	Verbal	**BUILDING UPDATE** To receive an update	Chair
9.	Verbal	**COMPLAINTS** Complaints Policy Update Governors received information on the updated Complaints Policy, which has been revised and now clearly outlines the four formal stages of the process. 1. Stage 1 – Informal (concern raised) 2. Stage 2 – Principal 3. Stage 3 – Complaints Committee (hearing to consider and either uphold or not uphold the complaint) 4. Stage 4 – Department for Education (DfE) It was noted that a previous complaint had highlighted areas where the procedure could be clarified. As a result, the policy has been redrafted and updated, and is now available on GVO. Governors were informed that a new complaint has been received and will follow the revised procedure, including referral to the Complaints Committee where appropriate. Governors were asked to confirm membership of the Complaints Committee, ensuring no conflicts of interest. It was noted that a dedicated complaints email address should be used for formal correspondence. The importance of maintaining clear timelines and ensuring compliance with GDPR was noted. The importance of maintaining a clear timeline of information and ensuring compliance with GDPR was noted.	Principal

		ACTION: Consider the use of a dedicated DSS email address for complaints.	
10.	Verbal	**SPECIALISM UPDATE/** • To receive an update	Principal
11.	Paper	**SAFEGUARDING** • Keeping children safe 2025 – circulated on GVO • Governors Training update	Chair
12.	Paper	**BUSINESS MANAGER** • Academy Trust Handbook 2025 – updates – circulated on GVO • Schedule of Musts	Business Manager
13.	Verbal	**GOVERNOR VACANCIES** • Parent Governor (x2) Noted one application to date deadline is 13th October.	Clerk
14.	Verbal	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS FOR REPORT** • To **Consider** Any Other Business for report only	Chair
15.	Verbal	**2025/26 DATES** To **Note** dates for 2025/26 meetings: **Full Governing Body** • 18th December 2025 at 400pm • 26th February 2025 at 4.00pm • 23rd April 2025 at 4.00pm • 25th June 2025 at 4.00pm	Chair

		Audit & Finance Committee • 9th October 2025 at 2.15pm • 18th December 2025 at 2.15pm • 26th February 2025 at 2.15pm • 23rd April 2025 at 2.15pm • 25th June 2024 at 2.15pm	