Dorset Studio School

Meeting of the Full Board of Governors
THURSDAY 26th FEBRUARY 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)
In attendance:	Emma Evans (Clerk)

Item		Detail	
1.	Verbal	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** • To **Note** any Declarations of Interest • None.	Chair
2.	Verbal	**APOLOGIES** • To **Note** any apologies for absence • Apologies were received from Wayne Clarke	Chair
3.	Minutes	**MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 18th DECEMBER 2025** • To **Approve** minutes as a correct record • To **Approve** non confidential minutes for website publication • Question – **Check 62%** grade 4, page 8. **CHECK** • **SAR Policy** (required revised wording and training plan) – to be uploaded to GVO • Change name 'Tracey' under Governor Q to Kirsty.	Chair
4.	Minutes	**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES** • To **Consider** any matters arising from the minutes • None	Chair

5.	Verbal	**AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** The Chair of the Committee provided an update following the meeting held on 12th February 2026 (the draft Minutes had been uploaded to GVO) which included: • Tribunal case – under future agenda item. Covered by insurance - provisionally good news. • 40K surplus predicted. • Experienced finance assistant would be in post soon to assist with financial matters. • Auditors had signed off the starting position. **Governor Question** Would funding be received throughout the year e.g. EHCP? **Response** Yes, although he receipt of funding can be unpredictable and can be 3 or 4 months in arrears. **Governor Question** Will the part time finance assistant position provide enough support? **Response** It should provide adequate support. It was noted that regular reviews of the Risk Register was undertaken. At the time of the last review the school/college relationship had escalated to a higher risk. It was anticipated that would now reduce. Transport was noted as a high risk on the register. The opinion of parents is that it appears that the DSS transport costs are higher than Coastland College (CC). CC is subsidising transport for students, whereas the cost from DSS appears as a £300 higher cost. **Governor Question** How is this difference being communicated to parents? **Response** It will not be an issue in the next school year as parents will pay directly to the transport provider and the payments will not be made via the school. Governors noted this had been discussed at the A&F Committee, including travel patterns, efficiencies, and the option of a single route. The school continues to work closely with the college to ensure robust safeguarding arrangements. Concerns were raised that direct payment could lead to non-payment by some families, potentially impacting attendance and whether the school should avoid becoming overly involved in transport arrangements, suggesting that the college should take responsibility, allowing the school to focus on curriculum and land-based activities.It was agreed that a review of transport arrangements, would be considered at a future meeting. Governors discussed the impact of mixed-age transport, noting this can cause anxiety for some pupils and affect readiness to learn. It was agreed the wider transport issue will be considered at a future meeting. **Governor Question** Is there only one bus driver? **Response** Yes, there is one driver and no second member of staff on the bus.	

6.	Verbal	**ASSISTANT GOVERNOR APPOINTMENT** • To **Consider** appointment of Assistant Governor Governors considered the Associate governor appointment. It was **AGREED:** That Annetta Minard be appointed as an Associate Governor **ACTION –** The appointment to be uploaded to the website (Business Manager). **ACTION –** All governors need to provide a photo for ID purposes. (To be sent to the Clerk).	Chair
7.	Paper	**SUB-GROUP ESTABLISHMENT** • To **Consider** the establishment of sub-groups The following sub-groups Chairs were confirmed: • Audit and Finance Committee – Nicholas Spearing • Building and Communication – Mark Gibbens • Curriculum and Specialism – Jason Giladjian • Inclusion lead - Christine Thresher (Reports to Curriculum and Specialism) **ACTION –** Governors to contact the Clerk to express interest in membership to the sub-groups. Land based specialism under Curriculum. Dr Annetta Minyard – previous headteacher – offered skills and experience as an Associate Governor. It was noted that the Associate Governor would not have voting rights and would be excluded from discussion of confidential matters. It was noted that the DfE would appoint contractors for the new build and that 6-8 meetings would need to be held that the New Build sub-committee would oversee.	Chair
8.	Verbal	**RATIFICATION OF POLICIES** • To **Ratify** the following policies: uploaded to GVO: • **Abusive Visitors Policy** – **ACTION** - Governors to email Principal with suggested amendments. It was suggested that the **Code of Conduct** for Parents/Visitors should retain the same contents. On Page 1 specify that this policy relates to…parents/carers. **ACTION** Christine Thresher will share a similar policy with the Principal. • **Attendance Policy** – deferred to future meeting. • **Children Absent from Education and Attendance Policy** – deferred to next meeting. It was noted that this policy relates to children on role that are not attending school. Location of pupils can be an issue in regard to visiting and consideration needed to the Duty of Care. **ACTION –** Principal to talk through policy at next meeting. Governors to review policy for next meeting. **Governor Question** It was queried how long a student can retained on the school record if they do not attend?	Chair

		Response It was noted that the school had a duty of care and it was difficult if remove a student without alternative provision in place. • SAR Policy (required revised wording and training plan) – **ACTION** - To be uploaded to GVO	
9.	Paper	**PRINCIPALS REPORT** • To **Receive** the Principal's Report to include the following: • Deep Dives completed and planned • SEND **Principal's Report – Headlines** • Multiple external reviews have provided challenge and supported accurate self-evaluation through triangulation. • Culture and Climate deep dive completed, including visit from Michael Hoffman; feedback included in report. • College identified as priority focus (RR1). • Ofsted complaint from a parent (also raised with other agencies) – no further action; recorded on Ofsted dashboard. **Governor Question** A query was raised regarding 1st Teir SEND. **Response** It was noted that parents can make a complaint e.g. not getting an EHCP. **Governor Question** What is the timeframe for an EHCP? **Response** Approximately 14-20 weeks. A discussion was held around children on role and the Complaints policy and procedure. An update was provided on the tribunal. Training would be provided on the Whistleblowing policy and Complaints Policy. Use of minibuses was noted – pre vehicle checks. Staffing update – maternity leave, (see report) Marketing – audiences increasing in Dorchester, Bridport and Bournemouth. Increase in new intake with interest in land based studies. Ex-pupils follow up – data base on Mailchimp to follow leavers. 93% still in education. Starting to track pupils. **Governor Question** It was noted that when speaking with people in Wimborne area they seemed unaware of the school. The benefit of getting the right social media in place was noted.	Principal

		Response The school are using Facebook with the stats showing that the biggest audience was aged 28-44 (female). Looking at extending social media presence via Linked In and Instagram and articles in Dorset Gazette entitled "Day in life of…" **ACTION –** Christine Thresher to send information regarding a potential marketing specialist to the Principal for consideration. **ACTION** - Marketing focused meeting to be organised in a relaxed environment. Here is a clear, structured bullet-point version with governor questions and responses retained: **Additional Key Points** • StepLab – work ongoing to improve consistency in teaching practice. • Suspension rates are broadly in line with the national average. • Permanent Exclusions (PEX): 3 in total – 2 related to vaping, 1 for bullying. • Attendance remains a concern; baseline improvement expectations are being set for next year. Persistent absence and small cohort sizes continue to impact overall figures. • Progress 8 (P8) data referenced. • Continued focus on consistency across the school. • Staff absence: 2 cases referred to Occupational Health; currently being managed within existing policy parameters, with policy review under consideration. • Positive trend in pupils remaining in education and building skills for the future. • Dashboard data is included within the report. • Staff structure reviewed, with increased clarity around responsibilities, particularly for managing pupil absence. • Deep Dives completed in Maths and Land-Based provision; most recent focus on Culture and Climate with external input. • School newsletter issued every half term. • Attitude to learning monitored through regular check-ins. • Parent Evenings now offered as hybrid appointments: o Year 10 parent appointment attendance: 60% o Year 9 parent appointment attendance: 50% **Governor Question** Attendance in Year 11 was noted as unexpectedly low—why is this? **Response** This is due to 4 pupils with particularly low attendance significantly affecting the overall figure. **Governor Question** What is the gender balance within the school? **Response** The cohort is approximately 50:50 male to female.	
10.	Verbal	**SLT UPDATE** • To **Receive** a report to include • A structure plan with titles and roles • Special projects being undertaken It was noted these had been covered under the Principals report.	Principal

11.	Verbal	**COMPLAINTS AND EXCLUSIONS** • To **Receive** a report regarding actions taken following complaints and exclusions It was noted these had been covered under the Principals report.	Principal
12.	Verbal	**BUILDING UPDATE** • To **Receive** an update An update had been received and noted.	Chair
13.	Paper	**BUSINESS MANAGER** • To **Receive** an update It was noted this item was not required as a report had been provided to the A&F Committee.	Business Manager
14.	Verbal	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS FOR REPORT** • To **Consider** Any Other Business for report only • None A governor noted that the report regarding middle leaders had been well written and well received. Safeguarding training – **ACTION:** Clerk to check records and contact Governors. Curriculum – Meetings to organise before the next FGB. New Ofsted framework training – to be considered in due course.	Chair
15.	Verbal	**2025/26 DATES** • To **Note** dates for 2025/26 meetings: **Full Governing Body** • Thursday 26th February 2026 at 4.00pm • Thursday 7th May 2026 at 4.00 pm • Thursday 2nd July 2026 at 4.00pm **Audit & Finance Committee** • Thursday 16th April 2026 at 3.00 pm • Tuesday 9th June 2026 at 3.00 pm Meeting closed at 6.00 p.m.	Chair