



BIRCHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL
 Parsonage Lane Bishop's Stortford CM23 5BD
 Company No: 07791971

**Minutes of the Full Governing Board Meeting of the Academy Trust held via Teams on
 Wednesday 26th January 2022 at 19.00**

	Name	Category	End of Term
*	Ruth Crowland	Member Appointed	06.03.25
	Vacancy	Member Appointed	
*	Leigh Lloyd-Warren	Member Appointed	22.01.24
	Jane Mansfield – Vice Chair	Member Appointed	22.01.24
	Vacancy	Member Appointed	
	Jim Winter	Member Appointed	06.07.24
	Ruth Bamlett	Member Appointed	14.03.23
	Catherine Gater – Chair	Member Appointed	13.07.24
	Charlotte Sear	Member Appointed	22.01.24
	Richard Townsend	Member Appointed	03.03.24
	John Oglesby	Parent Appointed	07.09.25
*	Jane Wach	Parent Appointed	09.09.24
	Gill Turner – Vice Chair	Parent Appointed	04.12.22
	Chris Emery	Parent Appointed	07.09.25
*	Lisa Watkins	Parent Appointed	30.06.22
	Matthew Free	Parent Appointed	07.09.25
	Chris Ingate – Principal	Principal	Ex-Officio
	Ross Noblett	Member Appointed	01.04.23
	Claire Pressland	Member Appointed	02.11.24
	Kate Byers	Member Appointed	07.12.25
	Vacancy	Co-opted	
	Deryk Bull – Finance Director	Advisory	

* Denotes absence

Also Present

Ivan Shepherd – Clerk

Charlie Gilbank – Deputy Principal

Jolene Jacobson – Vice Principal

Item		Action
1.	Welcome and receive apologies for absence Apologies were received from RC, LLW & LW. JWc did not attend the meeting.	
2.	Declarations / pecuniary interests There were no declarations of any new pecuniary interests, gifts or hospitality.	

	RT told the meeting that as the local ward councillor and member of the planning committee, he will not be able to join in discussions relating to the detached playing field or vote on its use.	
3.	<p>AOB</p> <p>A trustee asked that all trustees are given access to the FGB, curriculum, personnel and finance & estates committee teams channels.</p> <p>It was also noted that all trustees require access to all policies</p>	
4.	<p>MLM and action points</p> <p>Trustees AGREED that the minutes of the last FGB meeting held on 08.12.21 are a fair reflection of that meeting.</p> <p>Action points from previous meetings</p> <p>AP2 – Trustees who have not already done so, to complete and return the business interests form to the Finance Director and the HR Manager.</p> <p>Partially completed – two forms remain outstanding. Trustees were reminded to consider the position of family members when declaring potential interests.</p> <p>AP1 – clerk to add the Grievance policy to the agenda of the next FGB meeting due to be held on 26.01.21</p> <p>Completed</p>	
5.	<p>Principal's report + financial Update</p> <p>The Principal's report and the financial update were circulated prior to the FGB meeting for trustees to read and attend with questions / challenge.</p> <p>The key points of discussion were as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of Covid, the school is operating close to normally. There are mitigations in place to help minimise any cross infections. • The Principal told trustees that parents reacted positively to the school's request for evidence of a negative test to be sent by email. This was rather than completing in school testing. • There is another vaccine day booked for February. • Staff absence is low, this is fortunate given access to supply teachers is very difficult. • Exams are scheduled to run as normal. • The school is working very hard to support those children who have become disengaged with learning, this is being done via outside agencies, tutoring and school staff. <p>A trustee asked about outliers and if they are more likely to be DA or SEND pupils.</p> <p>The Principal told the meeting that the impact of the pandemic seems to have affected DA students more.</p> <p>A trustee asked if students in Yrs. 11 and 13 can repeat those years if exam success is unlikely in the current year.</p> <p>The Principal told trustees that students repeating Yr. 13 is fairly common and can be accommodated fairly easily. Repeating Yr.11 is more difficult for a number of reasons, however support in retaking maths and English GCSE's in the 6th form is offered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Principal added that research shows that up to 80% of outcomes for students is affected by their homelife. • The Principal told the meeting that the school is adjusting to a shift in culture regarding behaviour. In trying to deal with poor behaviour there will be more positive re-enforcement. The Principal added that this is not about allowing 	

	<p>students to behave as they like, but more about working with them to find solutions. Student discipline remains important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance is at 93%, above the national average but below where the school would normally be at. • Staff, pupils and parents have all taken part in a survey conducted by Survey Monkey. <p>It was AGREED that the results of the staff survey should be analysed by the personnel committee.</p> <p>AP1 – The results of the staff survey to be reviewed by the personnel committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A trustee asked if the questions posed to parents were the generic questions listed within the TES. • The Principal told the meeting that that the questions to parents were from the OFSTED framework and the questions the staff were asked were the same as those asked 6 months ago. The Principal added that some of the pressures referred to by staff were influenced by matters outside of the school. • Literacy continues to be pushed hard. The plan includes subject specific literacy, guided reading for Yr.7, form time reading, book clubs, paired reading and competitions. The impact of the literacy strategy is monitored and evaluated. • The 16 week Arbour migration process is under way and staff have started their training. A trustee asked if Arbour has been assessed for data protection. JJ told the meeting that a procedure is in place to check data protection is compliant. A full systems evaluation was undertaken prior to purchase. • The focus remains on QA teaching, checks and observations are being carried out in line with the calendar. • The Principal told the meeting that the SLT have evaluated the GCSE options selection process for Y9 and propose moving to a hybrid model for that year, with some required subjects and some option choices. • There will be a big push on extra-curricular clubs post the February half term. • Interventions and SEND remain a cornerstone of the school. The new structure and support process is in place. A trustees asked how the school will demonstrate if the new structure is working. • The Principal told the meeting that the metrics around the triage system are measurable and reportable three times a year. • A trustee asked if exam technique workshops can be extended to Yr.10 The Principal told the meeting that this does have merit and plans are in place. CGk added that the school are looking at a residential trip for Yr.10. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DB gave the finance update. • Version 7 of the finance management systems has just gone live, the core function in version 2 were very difficult to manage for a while. • The financials for September to October are good and a surplus is expected. • Energy costs are a concern. • The internal and external audits needs to go out to tender. • A three year budget plan linked to school projects is being worked on. <p>RT left the meeting at 20.17</p>	<p>JM</p>
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<p>6.</p>	<p>Committee updates</p> <p>Curriculum - RC RC sent her apologies for this meeting. Curriculum was covered in the Principal's report.</p> <p>Finance and Estates – GT / LLW Finance was covered in the finance report.</p> <p>GT told the meeting that there is one spending item to be approved. The school needs to buy a piece of timetabling software to work alongside Arbour. There are only two options available and the school have chosen Edval, which is more expensive, however does have much better functionality. The school PROPOSE buying the software on a three year licence. Trustees AGREED to the purchase of the Edval software (the more expensive option) due to its superior functionality and future proofing.</p> <p>A trustee asked what savings the software will give versus what is already in place. GT told the meeting that her view was that, although it was her understanding that time savings should be made, quantifying the savings would be difficult at this stage. However her understanding was that the key reason for the preference was a matter of risk due to the interaction of the timetabling package and the MIS. This was confirmed by the school.</p> <p>A trustee asked if the software comes with an implementation and support package. It was confirmed that it did and this was included in the price.</p> <p>Estates A meeting of the Detached Playing Field (DPF) sub-committee needs to be convened. CGk updated trustees on a meeting that he LLW and KB had with the Town Council. This was following an application for funding made to the Town Council the for the DPF. CGk told the trustees that the initial meeting had been positive and that they subsequently met with the council CEO. The school are waiting for a response post that meeting. The DPF sub-committee have met with two different project managers with a third to be arranged. The school needs to be able to demonstrate what options have been considered when a final decision is made.</p> <p>Personnel - JM The next personnel committee will be held late in February to allow the new HR manager to attend. Set out the success criteria for the Lead Practitioner. Review the staff survey. Focus on equality and flexible working.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Link governor update</p> <p>Safeguarding (RB) Nothing to add since the last meeting.</p> <p>SEND & DA (RC) RC sent her apologies for this meeting, there was nothing to add.</p> <p>Health & Safety (RT)</p>	

	<p>RT has left this meeting. RT told the meeting, prior to his leaving, that there was nothing to add since the last meeting.</p> <p>Other link updates GT told the meeting that she had conducted an exclusion monitoring visit.</p>	
8.	<p>Membership of the governing body The chair told the meeting that three prospective governors have made contact. The chair and the Principal have spoken with two of the three and sent across information on the roles and responsibilities of being a trustee. The chair and the Principal are waiting for a response to move forward any appointment.</p> <p>LW term ends on 30.06.22.</p>	
9.	<p>GDPR CGk told the meeting that since the last meeting he has received one subject access request which has been dealt with within the time specified. Trustees were told that GDPR is part of the of the school's risk register.</p> <p>CGk asked if any trustees have an interest in GDPR, whether professional or personal. CGk added that having a governor link for GDPR would be very useful.</p> <p>AP2 – trustees who would like to become the GDPR link to contact the chair and CGk</p>	Trustees
10.	<p>Policy management Trustees APPROVED the following policy UK GDPR policy A Trustee noted that an external review of the schools approach to GDPR and related issues has been discussed, and could be a worthwhile exercise. There was a discussion in particular about the importance of the DPO being independent.</p> <p>AP3 – Clerk to add Grievance Policy to the next FGB agenda</p>	Clerk
11.	<p>Chair's Report The chair told the meeting that she has received and responded to correspondence regarding the DPF.</p> <p>The governor projects document has been placed on teams. AP4 – All trustees to review the trustees project document. AP5 – Trustees to send a short bio to the chair for the school website.</p>	All Trustees
12.	<p>Dates of future FGB meetings. All start at 19.00 09.03.22 11.05.22 13.07.22 The aim is to hold the March FGB face to face. Committee chair's to decide what works best for their meetings, either face to face or virtually is fine.</p>	

Meeting closed at 20.50

Signed:

Date:

Catherine Gater – Chair of Trustees Birchwood High School

Summary of action points

- AP1 – The results of the staff survey to be reviewed by the personnel committee
- AP2 – trustees who would like to become the GDPR link to contact the chair and CGk
- AP3 – Clerk to add Grievance Policy to the next FGB agenda
- AP4 – All trustees to review the trustees project document.
- AP5 – Trustees to send a short bio to the chair for the school website.