

SUMMIT LEARNING TRUST

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY OF
SOLIHULL SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
AT 5.00 PM ON WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH 2021**

PRESENT:

Mr L Banks	Vice Chair
Mr J Bridges	Chair
Mr P Chohan	
Mrs L Gearing	
Mr M Hoque	
Mr M Lone	
Miss J Miah	
Ms A Richards	
Mrs S Shingler	
Mr M Sullivan	Principal
Ms C Sweeney	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms Z Bereza	Assistant Principal
Mr V Green	Education Director
Mrs J Hamilton	Vice Principal
Mr J Staddon	Vice Principal
Ms O Stone	Assistant Principal
Mrs R Walker	Clerk
Ms S Wood	Assistant Principal

NO APOLOGIES:

Ref	Action	Owner	Review Date
0176	Student Destination report and Strategic Plans to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.	Clerk	Next meeting.

The Chair welcomed the three new Governors to the meeting and introductions were made across the Governing Body. The Chair noted the role of Governors to provide support and challenge to the College.

0163 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST/CONFIDENTIALITY/CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

Attention was drawn to the Articles of Association relating to conflicts of interest, including but not limited to any Personal Financial Interest.

Governors were advised that if a person had any interest in a contract, proposed contract or matter under consideration, s/he should disclose the fact and take no part in the consideration, discussion or vote in respect of the contract or matter and withdraw from the meeting.

There were no declarations of interest.

Governors were reminded that care should be taken to ensure that they were aware of agenda items of a confidential nature. In addition, they were advised to ensure that minutes of their meetings did not include information of a confidential nature as the draft minutes were considered public documents as soon as approved by the Chair of the meeting.

The Clerk requested that Governors consider if any items were of a confidential nature. Governors were advised that these items should be considered in private.

0164 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no other matters arising.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

0165 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2020, and the confidential minutes, be approved as an accurate record.

0166 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising.

0167 **MEMBERSHIP OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY**

Governors were informed that there were no vacancies on the Local Governing Body.

There were no terms of office due to expire before the date of the next meeting and there were no attendance issues to note.

0168 **CURRICULUM UPDATE**

Remote Learning

The Principal advised this item was being covered first and he handed over to Ms Zoe Bereza and Ms Oona Stone to cover remote learning. The documents Best Practice for Remote

Learning (Appendix 1), Information for Students and Parents (Appendix 2) and TLA Round Up (Appendix 3) had been shared prior to the meeting, covering how Teaching and Learning had taken place remotely and the quality assurance of that.

Ms Bereza introduced herself as the Assistant Principal for Curriculum with responsibility for Social Sciences, English, Maths and the Creative Arts. Ms Bereza advised the headline points from the report were guidance sent out to parents, guardians and students which covered how remote learning had been approached during this lockdown. Prior to this, the lessons learned during the previous lockdown had been reviewed for future reference and there had also been the benefit of face-to-face learning for a term since that had taken place. Broadly across the curriculum, it was felt that the College was well prepared for this, with resources ready to go. The practice of remote learning had been based on evidence-based research. There had been live lessons through Teams, pre-recorded lessons and different resources available to bolster the students' learning. Ms Bereza advised that the College was keen to support students' progress across the remote experience and they had consequently received lots of variety. **The Chair advised there had been concerns raised by the student governors previously and he asked if this had been received and acted upon.** Ms Bereza advised that this would be covered by Ms Stone later in the presentation.

Some work was being undertaken to ensure quality, including twice weekly teaching and learning briefing spots, to ensure the sharing of good practice between teachers. The idea was that as teachers were working in this new way, they were finding different and interesting ways of working with students, and this was detailed in the reports shared. These strategies had been shown to be impactful.

Teams had been worked within a twilight session to ensure that remote learning linked in with the Teaching and Learning strategy. Feedback was taken from students and across the curriculum, best practice and high expectations were prioritised. The examples contained within the paperwork showed the quality of explanation and support materials. There had also been a more in-depth quality assurance exercise that Ms Stone would share.

Ms Oona Stone introduced herself as Assistant Principal for Curriculum, covering Sciences, Languages and Sport and Health. Ms Stone advised that staff had been given time to establish their online teaching and then lessons were observed, and curriculum leaders advised how the curriculum had been adapted for remote learning. Teachers had upskilled themselves incredibly quickly into this world of remote learning and had risen to the challenge. Live lessons were purposeful and full of variety in teaching methods. Ms Stone advised that there was excitement around what they had observed, and although some areas did need improvement, students were getting a good positive experience. Lessons took place in the timetabled slot on Teams and ranged from 30 mins of in-depth teaching with a takeaway task and summary at the end to full allotted time lessons interspersed with tasks and checking of learning.

There was a range of resources given to students. Live lessons were always on Teams, but additional resources included Moodle, or Tyber/College email for messages. Any texts that were unavailable, such as Russian, were sent home to students. There were some issues at the beginning of lockdown due to delays with Royal Mail, but teachers were resourceful in managing that. One thing that became clear throughout the lockdown period was that more educational online resources and applications were found and available for use during the lessons, such as Microsoft Forms and Desmos. Paper resources were still used in some lessons and there were varied methods of breaking up the lessons so that students were not just sat

at the screen for large chunks of time. At the beginning of lock down the Curriculum Assistant Principals sat down with Curriculum Leads to review what they were going to deliver, and this resulted in some lesson plans being changed so that some topics were postponed until they could be taught face to face. The sequencing was considered and what was appropriate to be taught online. Ms Stone advised that the vast majority of lessons had a great variety, with breakout rooms and chat facilities and that retrieval practice had still taken place. Teams used Visiview software and cameras and there was fantastic modelling of exam questions. In Art there were live demos of techniques and there were live and pre-recorded science experiments for students to watch.

Checking the learning of students was also important without adding too much pressure, so key assessments had not taken place and instead the teams had set a meaningful piece of work that they could grade and that could be recorded internally. This included work set on Microsoft Forms, quizzes, timed essays and other forms of assessment. There was lots of "repair" work ongoing, with students being encouraged to purple pen their own work. In addition, students received individual feedback on their work.

Ms Bereza advised that NEA assessments had also been undertaken, in the form of coursework, to try and operate a "Business as usual" situation, keeping up standards and practice. This was also the case for creative, visual and performance arts subjects. **A Governor asked about the timed assessments and whether there was a difference with having to type those as opposed to writing them by hand as students had previously.** Ms Bereza advised there was a level of flexibility, as it had been accepted for students to hand-write and then take photographs and upload their assessments that way. The quality did vary, and the students were given flexibility and choice. On the whole, they had been able to complete assessments in a way they felt comfortable. Consistency and quality were important, but all students did not have access to all those resources and that had to be considered.

A Governor thanked both Assistant Principals for their presentations and asked if the perception from the student body equated to the staff feedback. Ms Bereza advised that the feedback from students across the period, which had been mostly informal, was that students were generally happy with what they had received and on the whole, it had been a positive experience. Any issues raised had been dealt with as much as possible, in terms of resources, or support in terms of confidence.

The Chair asked the student Governors to comment on this and a student Governor advised that this period of lockdown compared to the previous one had shown a great improvement as there had been few live lessons during the first period of remote learning. This had now been resolved. There was a variety of teaching methods, which were generally appropriate, and some lessons had been delayed until the return to face-to-face in order to cover difficult content. Ms Alison Sawyer was named as a teacher who had been especially brilliant, and it was felt she had done a great job in connecting people and getting students to use new methods. The only criticism of remote learning was the inability for students to give anonymous feedback which would have been preferred in some instances. The student Governor was grateful for what the College had achieved in this period. The other student Governor agreed with this adding that there was plenty of work available, although some resources were limited for remote lessons. Ms Faye Woods was also recognised as an excellent support for students, doing online assessments, live examples and sending out papers for students.

One concern raised was around student mental health and the general feeling was that some students were tired and overwhelmed, and that lockdown complicated most issues. The Chair felt this final point was very important and the reconnection plan for the Trust, and the College, paid particular attention to this aspect.

There was a confidential minute taken here. See Confidential Appendix A.

Mr Staddon, the Vice Principal, advised that the common circumstances within College, nationally recognised, was the significant spike with students needing support around mental health issues and demand for support had outstripped the supply. There was recruitment ongoing for a Mental Health Leader to support and improve the response and provision to students.

A Governor asked with regards to students who had 2-3 hours classes whether they had breaks as that was not clear and they needed to take a break from online working. The Principal noted that the longest lesson would be 1.5 hours so there should be regular breaks. The Chair suggested that downtime from screens be communicated as it was important for students and staff and the Principal noted that there would be no more live lessons after Friday this week, although this would be taken on board if online learning occurred in future. The Chair advised that this could still be communicated that breaktimes from study was important and the Principal noted that Y13 had missed the revision practice which usually emphasised this and that breaks were required regularly whether study was remote or online.

Ms Stone advised that student engagement had remained strong throughout and that was a credit to both teachers and Academic Coaches working with students. The pastoral role had been very important. Staff burning themselves out and being on screen for too long had also been picked up in the lesson looks and was being addressed.

VG advised that the team at the College had invited him to observe remote learning lessons and he had moderated against the documentation produced for each subject. VG advised the lessons he saw were all of a high quality and the provision at the College was as close to face-to-face provision as could be found, particularly the Maths lesson and he was keen that Governors were assured of the quality of the teaching that was in place.

The Chair thanked Ms Bereza and Ms Stone for their presentations to Governors.

[MS BEREZA AND MS STONE LEFT THE MEETING]

Careers Guidance Strategy

Ms Sonia Wood introduced herself as the Assistant Principal and Strategic Lead for Careers. Ms Wood advised she had taught at the College for 30 years and would be retiring at the end of this academic year. The Careers Guidance Strategy paper (Appendix 4) had been shared prior to the meeting and the Gatsby standards were shared for Governors' information. Ms Wood advised that these drove the quality of the work that was done. The College also held the career mark, which was national recognised.

The Careers Guidance Programme was delivered by the coaching programme publishing opportunities for students through Tyber and embedding careers within the curriculum. Ms Wood worked with a range of external agencies although the main source of support was the

local Chamber of Commerce and the Solihull Careers Hub. The Principal advised that the Careers Link Governor, Ms Gearing, was heavily involved in supporting the College in this area and asked Ms Wood and Ms Gearing to share more about this. Ms Wood advised that Ms Gearing had received training through Solihull Life Ready, and there was also a Careers and Enterprise Portal which Ms Gearing could access to view activities ongoing in the College. Ms Gearing attended College at least once a term, and she had asked some very searching questions such as what had brought about the improvement in the Gatsby benchmarks, which helped focus on the positive work that had taken place, as well as questioning the barriers to improvements. Ms Wood noted the personal guidance benchmark had not moved and the reason for this was students had to opt in, as and when they needed it, and many students came to the College already thinking of university and so were already set on a path. The challenge from Ms Gearing had caused Ms Wood to look again at that benchmark and she had now met with Solihull College who had the same challenges and had done some good work to intervene with an early careers interview for students.

Ms Gearing advised that what had been important with her remit in this area, was that it gave a semi-externality, as well as a chance to reflect on the good things. The adaptation that the careers team had made in adjusting to virtual learning, with increased attendance at information days, and also the transparency to utilise the external support which was currently available had really been taken on board. The challenge and probing of Governors helped to support with this. Ms Gearing noted that everything was moving in the right direction and she had been very pleased with the work done in this area. A student Governor agreed with what Ms Wood had said, with regards to students joining the College with a plan for further study, generally at university. It was noted that the College had students who had gone on to Oxbridge and consequently attracted students who were serious academics.

The Chair advised he had found the report very informative and felt very proud of his association with the College. It was evident in the report that the College had responded to the OfSTED recommendations and also that irrespective of background or heritage, the performance was impressive, based on the data in the report. The Chair thanked Ms Wood for her commitment and service over the 30 years she had been with the College. Ms Wood advised she would like to acknowledge the work of Ms Emma Podmore, the Careers Co-ordinator.

Additional Learning Support (ALS)

The ALS review from November (Appendix 5) and the ALS Update for February (Appendix 6) had been shared prior to the meeting. Ms Wood advised that she had worked with the Staff Governor in this area for a number of years. The number of high needs students had increased, and the College was in a time of change, moving onto a new MIS system with Arbor. Mental Health was a growing concern currently and it had been increasing even before Covid. The review for ALS was to take stock in terms of the service offered.

The funding for ALS had reduced significantly over the last few years and the team had shrunk in size. The report covered the rationale for the review and the non-negotiables which could not be compromised on, as well as the areas for review. There was a lot of work done to encourage students to disclose learning needs before they enrolled, but there were always more that became known after the students joined. The support the ALS team gave was embedded within other systems and processes and it was important that students and teachers were confident about what ALS did and who the provision was for. Feedback had

been gathered from a range of stakeholders, including students, and the Director of Inclusion for the Trust, and that support had been really valuable.

The ALS/SEND Link Governor, Mr Banks advised that on his recent visit he had found the ALS/SEND and pastoral support effective at delivering what it was supposed to deliver, and applauded the aspiration to continuously improve this support, especially in the face of rising numbers.

A Parent Governor asked about students with learning needs, as she found it difficult to navigate that path within the College and it was important that these students could access that support. The staff Governor advised that parents were welcome to contact her directly, but normally teachers referred students to Additional Learning Support and that would be picked up and followed up on. Parents and students could also contact ALS directly, and the support given would obviously depend on the need of the student. It was noted that it was important that parents and students knew how to access this support. Another element of the work ongoing was looking at the quality of the information around the graduated support available.

[MS WOOD LEFT THE MEETING]

0169 **URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR**

There was nothing to report under this item.

0170 **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Governors had received the reports in advance of the meeting. Governors' attention was drawn to the following matters:

1. Verbal Update on Covid related Items

The Principal noted he did not normally do verbal updates but the decision to reopen the College was very recent. The impact on Mental Health had already been mentioned and the Principal advised that the College would be reopened in a safe way with Covid-19 Testing starting from Friday 5 March.

Students and staff should be wearing masks in the classrooms and if they were exempt, they would need to wear an appropriate lanyard. **The Chair asked the student Governors if there was anything the student council could do to support mask wearing.** The student Governors advised they would do what they could to encourage mask wearing and generally teachers were very effective at ensuring mask wearing. The Principal advised that the Student Development Officer speak to the student Governors outside the meeting to see if anything additional could be done. A Governor suggested ideas for making mask-wearing fun, such as a mask rap and awards for the best mask.

The reopening of the College would be relatively swift with all students back in by Monday 15th March.

2. Update of Progress against SAR

The 100 Day Plan for Half Term 3 (Appendix 7) had been shared prior to the meeting and the Strategic Documents had been distributed at the previous meeting. Anything highlighted in Red was outstanding and had been postponed due to lockdown.

3. Analysis of Student Progress and Attainment

Verbal update on awarding A-Level and Vocational grades in Summer 2021

The Principal advised the details were coming out slowly and the staff had been briefed today on some of the changes. Y13 students would be advised that there would be no assessments undertaken this side of Easter which would count towards A-Level grades, as this time would be spent reconnecting and assessing what had or had not be learned during remote learning.

The student Governor noted that Y13 mocks were postponed on the 100-day plan and the Principal advised they were cancelled. The second week back after Easter, there would be a window for Y13 Key Assessments. and these would be considered alongside previous work at A-Level standard. Teachers had been asked to look and advise what they would be using as part of the assessment at that time. The Principal advised that this had to happen in this time period, to give time for marking and moderation, so that the College could be confident in the grades that were assigned. The assessment would be based on the criteria that the exam boards had produced for each subject. The Chair noted that the situation was very dynamic, and it was important that the LGB focussed on the right areas. The Vice Principal, Mrs Hamilton, advised that the College were confident that they could support students through these assessments and Y12 would have a progression exam in order to check their understanding. The Vice Principal noted that the priority was to bring Y13 back positively and work with them to support them and focus on preparing them for the assessments after Easter. Some subjects would include coursework, and this would be completely transparent once it had all been worked through by staff. The Vice Principal advised she would be messaging Y13 students to advise what the timeline would be, and they would be kept up to date as this was worked through.

Progression exams for Year 12 were moving from immediately after Easter to after the May half-term. It was important to give Y12 students the experience of sitting an exam, as they had missed this at GCSE because of last year's lockdown. A student Governor advised that students were clear they did not want a mock exam, and it was important that students had sufficient time to prepare for assessments as they had not been revising as much during lockdown as they may normally have. The Principal advised that students would know what topics and subjects were being assessed. It would not be an exam in the sense of a traditional A-Level exam and students would receive transparent information about how the grades for A-Level were calculated and the weighting of those assessments. Key assessments would take place in a controlled manner, and the logistics had yet to be worked out. VG advised that there were similar issues faced by secondary schools with GCSEs. The guidance was still coming through from exam boards and VG was keen to reassure students that this guidance would be reflected upon. There was a meeting on Friday with a group of national Trusts around the approach to this to ensure the fairness. The College would ensure that the

approach taken was as fair as possible and clear guidance would be available once it was finalised. VG advised that no grade given would be based on one piece of evidence, and when the guidance was published, all the different factors that fed into the grade would be clear for students.

Retention and Attendance Reports: February 2021 (Appendices 8 and 9)

The Principal advised retention was slightly up this year on previous years and this was partly due to the experience that students had being in College during the first term and partly to do with the improvements in Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

The Chair noted that the data in the reports backed up the reports from the Assistant Principals earlier in the meeting.

4. Bursary Allocations from September 2021 (Appendix 10)

The Principal advised that there would be a move away from a blanket/flat rate and allocations would become more nuanced. Laptops would be provided to bursary students as well as calculators, art materials, etc as appropriate. There would be no cash given, rather items required such as those mentioned or bus passes. The Chair advised this put the College in line with ESFA guidance and the Principal advised this was in the direction that had been indicated.

5. Student Destinations Report 2020 (Appendix 11)

This had been shared prior to the meeting for information. The Chair advised there was an in-depth report with comparative data from UCAS. The Destinations report was deemed to be very important as a measure of impact of what the College did, and this would be discussed in more depth at the next meeting. The Chair suggested any questions on this be directed to the College in the meantime.

6. Student Discipline Report: February 2021 (Appendices 12 and 13)

This had been shared prior to the meeting for information.

7. Staff Discipline Report 2020/21 to February half-term (Appendix 14)

This had been shared prior to the meeting for information.

8. Arbor Project (MIS) Update (Appendix 15)

The MIS system was being updated to become uniform across the Trust.

The Safeguarding report (Appendix 16) was shared with Governors prior to the meeting.

0172 **POLICIES**

There were no policies to be reviewed at this time.

0173 **LINK STRATEGIC GOVERNOR INVOLVEMENT**

The Link Governor reports on ALS (Appendix 17), Safeguarding (Appendix 18) and Careers Guidance (Appendix 19) had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Chair thanked the Link Governors for the work they had completed, and the reports submitted. The Chair advised that he, the Vice Chair and the Principal were in regular contact.

0174 **FEEDBACK TO/FROM THE TRUST**

The update from Summit Trust (Appendix 20) and the Meeting Updates from the Trust Board meetings (Appendix 21 and 22) had been shared prior to the meeting.

The Chair advised there had been a round of Board meetings this week and many issues discussed today were covered at the Trust Board. The Chair had also added an extract from VG's report to Trust Board (Appendix 23) which was evidence for Governors of the work that the Principal and his team did to progress and keep moving forwards at the College.

VG advised that his initial findings were included and had been extremely positive. There was clear movement forward since the most recent OfSTED inspection, with an opportunity for increased collaboration opportunities across the Trust. The Chair advised that the Education Directors' reports were useful as an alternative source of information and data from the College Leadership team. VG advised he was looking forward to experiencing the College with students back.

0175 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chair advised that he was dealing with a matter specific to a student and parent but there was nothing to report to Governors.

0176 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair thanked all for their attendance and advised that he was open to any feedback around improving the meeting process.

Two items were noted for the next agenda, the Strategic Plans and the Student Destinations report.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 5.00 pm on Wednesday 9 June 2021.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm.

Signed:
(Chair of Local Governing Body)

Dated: