

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 9 JUNE 2021**

PRESENT: Mr L Banks Vice Chair
Mr J Bridges Chair
Mrs L Gearing
Mr M Lone
Miss J Miah
Mrs S Shingler
Mr M Sullivan Principal
Ms C Sweeney

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs J Hamilton Vice Principal
Mr T Irving
Mr J Staddon Vice Principal
Mrs R Walker Clerk

APOLOGIES: Mr P Chohan
Mr M Hoque
Ms A Richards

Ref	Action	Owner	Review Date
0183	The SLT would consider the suggestion around a pre-emptive approach to increasing parents and guardians' understanding of the mental health issues affecting young people and update Governors accordingly.	JS	Dec 21
0185	SLT to look further into encouragement and support for apprenticeships.	TI	Dec 21
0186	SLT to gather feedback from Governors on the Strategic Priorities and respond accordingly.	MS	Oct 21

0188	The Principal would arrange for stakeholder invitations to be sent out	MS	June 21
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0177 **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.

0178 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was Mr M Lone's last meeting, as he was leaving the College and the Chair thanked him for his support of the Governing Body. Mr Lone advised how much he had appreciated being part of the Governing Body.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

0179 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2021, and the confidential minutes, be approved as an accurate record.

0180 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising.

0181 **MEMBERSHIP OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY**

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

Mr M Lone's term of office was due to expire as he left College in July and a new Student Governor would be appointed in the new academic year.

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

0182

SAFEGUARDING (Appendix 1)

The Vice Principal, Mr J Staddon, had shared an update on this prior to the meeting, covering work that had been undertaken during and after lockdown. A Mental Health Lead had now been appointed for the next academic year. Visitors to college would receive a new safeguarding briefing leaflet and the safeguarding policy had been updated on the College website. The key changes were around detailing who to report Safeguarding concerns about the Principal to. They should be directed to the Chair of the LGB and these changes brought the policy in line with the Disciplinary Policy.

The 'Everyone's Invited' website had a big impact across the country and the College had dealt with this by writing to parents to reiterate the College's position and also by holding an academic coaching session for students on consent. The Chair noted in the report that there had been a survey by the Higher Education Policy Institute which found that 58% of students backed the idea of having to pass a test to show they 'fully understand' consent. **The Chair asked if efforts had been focussed on raising issues and awareness rather than testing for consent** and the Vice Principal confirmed that the actions were in response to the national concern raised. The Vice Principal advised that all academies within the Trust had taken some action to support students and raise awareness of the importance of consent and perceptions of misogyny. The Chair advised that he felt this was a very important issue to raise and encourage awareness on and the approach taken by the College was the right one. The Principal noted that all students needed to be aware of the need for consent and there was nothing controversial in needing consent. The Principal was clear that all students were aware what consent meant and how and when it could be given or withdrawn.

Single Central Record (SCR) Audit (Appendix 2)

The Vice Principal advised this would become more prominent for Governors as there would be an increased focus on Safeguarding across the Trust, ensuring that Governors were fully aware of the measures in place. The Safeguarding Link Governor had reviewed the SCR last term, and an additional half-termly audit would now be completed with the HR Business Partner and feedback would be shared with Governors. Anything identified as part of this audit was actioned urgently. The Vice Principal advised there should have been a follow up audit on 25 May, which unfortunately coincided with an OfSTED visit at Yarnfield that the HR Business Partner had to attend and so it had needed to be delayed. **A Governor asked if it was anticipated that issues picked up were historical ones, and there would be fewer actions in future** and the Vice Principal advised that the SCR audit was not a new process but there was a difference between required practice and best practice. Required practice had always been met, but the College was moving towards best practice as part of a Trust-wide initiative. This had led to some gaps initially, but these should reduce significantly as the process happened regularly. **The Safeguarding Link Governor advised that as part of viewing the SCR, she had noticed that exam invigilators, who only work at certain times of the year, had to be included and asked if it had been resolved as to the best way to do this.** The Principal advised that the enhanced DBS check would resolve this, as an update check could be run at any time.

0183 **SAFEGUARDING REFERRALS, TRENDS AND ACTIONS BY LEADERS (Appendices 3 and 4)**

The Vice Principal advised that these reports covered any safeguarding referrals since the last Governing Body and also the Year-to-Date position in terms of referrals, compared to the previous year. There had been an increase in referrals and overwhelmingly this was around mental health and wellbeing. There had been 106 referrals up to the May half-term in 2020 and that had increased to 201 at the same point this year, which was nearly double. Covid and lockdown had been a factor in this, but there had been an upwards trend over the last five years. This was the reason behind appointing a Mental Health Lead, in order to be more proactive in supporting students' mental health and the Vice Principal hoped to see a reduction in this number. The number of home issues and parenting issues had also increased, which was again a result of lockdown, resulting in tensions where homelife could be difficult and this was at a higher level than a normal year.

The Chair noted the additional resource was an important step and he asked if systems processes and resources had responded resiliently to the growth. The Vice Principal advised that the systems and processes to support students continued throughout lockdown, including Teams meetings with students, but there was a growing waiting list for counselling services and there was often a significant delay for external support. Academic coaches did a lot of work supporting students. The Vice Principal noted that there was a desire to offer an improved provision to support students. **The Chair asked if the list was growing, could the Vice Principal assure Governors that it remained a high priority and that further action would be considered if the waiting lists continued to grow** and the Vice Principal confirmed this was the case.

A Governor asked whether the College had considered a pre-emptive approach. Students generally had a greater openness and understanding of mental health issues than their parents/guardians and a Governor asked whether there would be work to improve awareness of these issues within the parental/guardian group. The Vice Principal agreed this was a good idea.

ACTION: The SLT would consider the suggestion around a pre-emptive approach to increasing parents and guardians' understanding of the mental health issues affecting young people and update Governors accordingly.

The Principal noted that the College were like a triage service whilst waiting for external support and that there was excessive pressure on the Mental Health aspect of the NHS.

0184 **URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR**

There was nothing to report under this item.

0185 **STUDENT DESTINATIONS REPORT 2020 (Appendix 5)**

The Chair advised that this report had been shared at the previous meeting, although it had been a packed agenda and so Trevor Irving had been invited to summarise the key points for Governors. Mr Irving advised the document was something that all could take pride in as it showcased the achievements of students across the college. The version shared showed how

various institutions had responded to the issues of Covid and Lockdown and how the College had supported students and worked with local and less-local institutions to ensure students were successful in gaining places. Local universities had been outstanding with teams of people available to support.

The figures around gender and ethnicity were all good, as were the numbers of students going on to university as well as the sustained quality of what they did when they got to university. Mr Irving advised that the College was in the top 25% in the country for this. Success of getting into local universities had broken records for the past three years.

The style of the document was the same as that presented to OfSTED the previous year and the destinations secured by students were a credit to all involved.

The Principal advised there was a growing importance of apprenticeships and the College was equally as proud of students gaining places on these. The apprenticeships were an alternative route into the highest echelons of British Business, including accountancy and companies such as Jaguar Landrover had apprenticeship schemes. **A Governor noted that there had been a theme of seeing apprenticeships as less successful than university places and he asked if there was anything done to help students with the application process for apprenticeships.** The Principal advised there had been some work done. This sat with the careers team, and needed to be looked at more, to ensure the same level of focus was given to students pursuing non-university routes. A Governor advised that in the past the Careers Officer and the Employability Officer had liaised with those students who did not intend to go to university. This had not happened in quite the same way due to Covid and prospective employers had not been able to attend in person as they had in previous years.

[MR IRVING LEFT THE MEETING DUE TO INTERNET ISSUES]

ACTION: SLT to look further into encouragement and support for apprenticeships.

The Chair advised that reading the report made him feel very proud to be associated with the College and it showed the improvement that was happening at the College and that was very encouraging.

0186 **DISCUSSION REGARDING STRATEGIC PRIORITIES GOING FORWARD (Appendix 6)**

The Principal advised that the report looked at the next 3-5 years. Value added had been the most important priority previously, but destinations would be a key focus in future. This included ensuring students came to the College, stayed and achieved the best they could, as well as moving on to the best HE options and jobs at the end of the process.

Teaching, learning and assessment culture was still a focus and there was a reinvigoration of the approach to the holistic development of students. When students came to College they may have missed aspects of holistic development, especially because of Covid, and so it was vitally important to ensure they had the opportunity to continue to grow personally as well as academically. This included building on the VESPA Culture (Vision, Effort, Systems, Practice, Attitude) and building on the wrap-around support. What happened outside lessons was as important as what happened in them, and this had been impacted during Covid as students had been required to stay at home.

The Principal advised he would welcome any comments or queries on this paper and the Chair advised that he found the paper short and to the point and he had responded via email to the Principal with some questions for reflection and feedback, which were - **Are we being aspirational and ambitious enough? Could we include a desire to be more engaged with and benefit more from being part of Summit Learning Trust? Beyond that could we build other links/partnership with other institutions?** The focus on destinations was good but the move from Good to Outstanding under OfSTED was also important. The Chair also noted it was important to track students further down the line in their career.

ACTION: SLT to gather feedback from Governors on the Strategic Priorities and respond accordingly.

A Governor highlighted her reflections and advised she was used to seeing more quantifiable measures. A sense of belonging as part of this culture was a phrase that was important. Because of the importance of the post-16 review, **a Governor asked if the priorities could have a localised element within them around contributing to and being part of the local community.** The Principal agreed there were a lot of things on the horizon and within 3 years it would be clearer what the impact of those would be. The numbers were not yet included and the milestones would be built on the back of the strategy. The Principal accepted that the concept of embedding the professional learning culture in College was broad and the plan was to echo the Trust focus on the Professional Learning Institute, but he knew the wording was not quite there yet. He reiterated this was not the finalised document.

[MR IRVING REJOINED THE MEETING]

The Chair advised that strategic priorities were best articulated in narrative form and this helped with objective setting and more detailed planning, which was what this document was intended to be. The Principal agreed that the temptation was to go straight into KPIs, and he had tried to avoid this. The Chair advised that any other feedback was welcome, but it was important that Governors were aware of the key strategic priorities.

The Chair reiterated his comments around feeling proud about the information in the destinations report and thanked Mr Irving for his report.

0187

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Governors had received the reports in advance of the meeting. Governors' attention was drawn to the following matters in the Principal's Report Part 2 (Appendix 7):

1. Update on A Levels and GCSEs, BTECS, CACHE and Diplomas

The Principal advised the College policy on assessment was on the website and that was what was being followed. It mirrored the JCQ guidelines closely and was fully compliant and there had been no contact from the exam boards to raise questions.

Teachers and Curriculum Leaders were looking at the depth and breadth of knowledge and the level of control of assessments to ensure a grade could be awarded. There had been several A Level course grades reviewed earlier in the day. Disagreement did not necessarily mean a grade change, but often a request for additional evidence.

The Chair asked what the mood was amongst students and staff as it had been a convoluted process. A Student Governor asked what the final situation was at the moment as things had changed slightly as to how grades were determined as he thought key assessments 1-7 would indicate the grade but now he had heard that mock exams would take precedence. The Principal advised that both were used to calculate the grade as key assessments 9 & 10 covered the whole syllabus. Students had been rank ordered based on all assessments, looking at the grade that would give, and then teachers had reviewed grade boundaries and students who were near those boundaries. The Principal advised doing well in key assessments 9 & 10 could override the results of key assessments 1-7 because they covered the whole syllabus and had an element of high control.

The Vice Principal, Mrs Hamilton, responded to the Chair's question advising that staff were anxious as they were keen to be fair, honest and work with integrity. The Chair advised the end process had been better this year than the previous year although it had been a demanding process. The Chair hoped that there would be the opportunity for staff to have time off before appeals were received. The Principal agreed and advised that the details of the appeals process would need to be shared soon, as guidance had just been released regarding that. The Vice Principal advised that they were confident in the rigorous process that had been followed.

2. Anti-Discrimination and Diversity Update

This was a major Trust-wide development. There had been an Equality and Diversity Committee in College for many years and the re-accreditation of Investors in Diversity was being continued. There was also a new Anti-Racism group established to look at legislative compliance as well as supporting allyship for all those suffering from racism. These would be the vehicles for consideration of all aspects of equality, diversity and Anti-Racism at the College.

The SLT had received training on anti-racism and sexism and the NEU's old paperwork had been very informative alongside more recent publications.

There was also a Trust organised Anti-Discrimination and Diversity Coaching programme which some members of senior and middle leadership had taken part in. **A Governor asked what the strength of the student voice was on the two groups** and the Principal advised that Equality and Diversity had 2 student members and a student Governor advised that students were very much taken into consideration and that having attended Trust level meetings, the College was far ahead of the secondary schools in their policy and actions with regards to this.

The Vice Principal, Mr Staddon, advised that one area which had been identified as needing more student voice was from those students on behaviour contracts or who were at risk of exclusion, as they were not necessarily vocal and it would help to understand whether they had a sense of belonging and why/why not. The Chair advised that being able to hold a diversity of opinions and expressing them in a respectful way was a related aspect of this. The Principal noted that Mr Lone's campaign to write letters to the local MP and others had been very effective. The Chair agreed it was effort and time well spent to work at these issues and tackle them in the right way. The Principal noted the College was an apolitical institution and could not take any kind of political stance, but this did not mean individuals should not be active citizens. The College as an institution had to be non-partisan. A Governor suggested

that engaging with the students who were not usually involved with student voice, gave them a platform to express themselves and could provide useful feedback.

3. Covid Home Testing

The Principal advised there was one case of the Delta variant at the College, which had occurred during half-term. The latest advice was that isolation needed to be for longer than for other variants. **The Chair asked if the student would be fully supported** and the Principal confirmed they would be.

4. Arbor (Appendix 8)

The Vice Principal, Mr Staddon, advised that a new appointment had started on 10 May, joining the MIS Team, and bringing enthusiasm to the project. He was working with the web developer and substantial progress had been made in terms of moving data into Arbor. They were currently moving student data across which was a breakthrough and had met one of the milestones in the plan. The timetable now existed within Arbor and students could be assigned to courses and programmes of study. There were still some areas requiring solutions and one of the biggest challenges was around students reporting absence, which could not be done directly onto Arbor. However, a workaround would be found which may require staffing to support this, but there would be systems in place to resolve this eventually. **The Chair asked if there was any contingency funding in the project to cover any incurred costs** and the Vice Principal advised they had been aware of this need during the budgeting process.

[MR BANKS LEFT THE MEETING]

Milestones to be met were clear and a decision had to be made whether to move to Arbor at the start of the new academic year. The Chair advised he had been into College to review this project and he felt more confident following this visit. **The Chair asked when launch was planned**, and the Vice Principal advised a training day was scheduled for staff on 9 July and there would be addition training, along with changes to policies at the beginning of the next academic year.

There was not a student portal to Arbor but students would be able to login and see timetables and some records. **The Chair asked if superusers would be trained to provide support at 'Go Live'** and the Vice Principal advised there were members of staff recognised as IT experts for other staff to refer to. There would also be pocket guides for staff to help them familiarise with the new processes.

A Governor asked if there was any way of gathering user feedback or suggestions once it was up and running and the Vice Principal advised the system was an off-the-shelf product and so there was no opportunity for changes. There would be some challenges around the changes to process and the functionality in Arbor was different to Tyber - some things were an improvement, and some were more of a challenge. The Chair noted that people were very adaptable and would change. A Governor suggested a beta testing group before go live and the Vice Principal advised that it had been considered but it was not possible due to the delay that would be required to do this. The key point was around taking registers, and this would be moved from Tyber to Arbor and had to be completely moved over at the same time. The other academies in the Trust were already using Arbor and so learning was being gathered from other users. The Chair advised that he had picked up that sharing lessons learned from

other deployments was an opportunity for improvement and some had been received from other academies. The Principal noted the Year 13 students would see the biggest change in usability, and it may look like a step backwards, but the change was necessary because Tyber was vulnerable. A Governor noted that the College did google form surveys regularly and perhaps this could be raised for feedback on the change to Arbor in the next academic year. The Principal agreed, advising that changes may not always be possible, but feedback could be responded to.

The Chair had also provided a review on the Arbor project (Appendix 9)

5. Student Retention Update (Appendix 10)

This had been shared prior to the meeting for information.

6. Student and Staff Discipline Report (Appendices 11 and 12)

This had been shared prior to the meeting for information.

7. ALS (SEND) Update (Appendix 13)

The Staff Governor advised that she was happy to answer any questions that Governors may have on this. The Chair recognised the contribution of both the Staff Governor and the ALS Governor in this area. The Principal advised there had been a few changes to the existing staffing and this would be confirmed to Governors when the staffing structure had been finalised.

0188 **STAFF WELLBEING**

The Chair noted this had been mentioned earlier and the Principal advised that assuming the roadmap out of lockdown continued on 21 June, there was a plan for an event on Monday 12 July at 1pm in the afternoon for staff and Governors. There would be a back-up plan if this was not allowed to go ahead.

ACTION: The Principal would arrange for stakeholder invitations to be sent out.

The Chair advised that if the Governing Body could offer support in any way, they were more than happy to and the Principal noted that it was natural for staff to feel anxious about making decisions around grading and students' futures, as they took their roles seriously. It was also important to maintain integrity with the local universities as well, so it was a stressful time.

0189 **CURRICULUM REVIEW MARCH 2021 (Appendix 14)**

The Chair advised that it seemed a consistent approach was being maintained and the Vice Principal, Mrs Hamilton, advised there were some big decisions to be made in the coming year or so, particularly in relation to applied courses, as the Government decisions would impact

on those. The two A-Level equivalent BTECs were a good positive addition. The curriculum offered was very broad and that was a draw for students.

0190 **LINK STRATEGIC GOVERNOR INVOLVEMENT**

The Link Governor reports on Chair and Vice Chair Meetings (Appendices 15 and 16), and on Safeguarding (Appendix 17) had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Chair had also shared another document (Appendix 18) to cover this item.

The Safeguarding Governor advised it had been nice to attend College in person and review the CPOMs system. The increase in Mental Health cases was significant and it was good that there was a Mental Health professional starting shortly. The CPOMs system was very impressive. The Chair thanked the Safeguarding Governor for taking this responsibility on.

0190 **FEEDBACK TO/FROM THE TRUST**

The Chair advised that he had missed the last Trust Board meeting, but he had attended a useful scrutiny committee meeting around deep dives at primary and secondary and this would also include the College.

0191 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chair advised that there was nothing to report to Governors.

0192 **GENERAL GOVERNANCE REQUESTS (Appendix 19)**

Solihull 6th Form College Website

The Chair asked Governors to update biographies for the website as well as provide pictures, and to complete the consent form (Appendix 20) to have this published.

Governor Trustee Visit Report 2020-21

The blank form was shared for Governors' information (Appendix 21).

SFCA Summer Conference Programme 16-17 June 2021

The details of the conference had been shared (Appendix 22) and the Principal advised the conference was virtual this year and access had already been paid so Governors could attend any session they wished. Some sessions were very useful and there were also some interesting sessions. The Chair advised he had attended previously and found them very useful.

The Vice Principal, Mrs Hamilton, advised that links would be sent to all Governors so they could login as they wished.

A Governor asked if the library would be fully opened now that Y13 had left and the Vice Principal, Mr Staddon, advised it would be from Monday 14 June.

0193

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair thanked all Governors for their contributions during the year.

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 5.00 pm on Wednesday 13 October 2021.

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm.

Signed:
(Chair of Local Governing Body)

Dated: