



**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 DECEMBER 2020**

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 R Hammond	Assistant Principal
	Mr J Staddon	Vice Principal
	Ms N Troman	Designated Safeguarding Lead
	Mrs R Walker	Clerk

NO APOLOGIES:

Ref	Action	Owner	Review Date
0156	Vice Principal to confirm when both policies are updated	J Staddon	Next meeting
0156	Chair to raise the requirement for a Trust-wide Recruitment and Selection Policy at Trust Board on 14 December 2020.	Chair	Next meeting
0157	Student Governors to provide feedback to Principal on remote learning	JM & ML	Next meeting

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the new Y12 Student Governor. Introductions were made across the meeting.

0150 **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.

0151 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no other matters arising.

**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

0152 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2020, and the confidential minutes, be approved as an accurate record.

0153 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising.

0154 **MEMBERSHIP OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY**

Governors were informed that there were three vacancies on the Local Governing Body in the following areas: -

- Trust Appointed Governor x 1
- Parent Governors x 2

It had been confirmed that the elections for Parent Governors would be held at the beginning of the next term.

There were no terms of office due to expire before the date of the next meeting and there were no attendance issues to note. The Chair advised he had spoken to both Ms Edwards and Mr Ahmed who had left the Governing Body and he advised they had resigned due to struggling with the time commitments for differing reasons.

0155 **URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR**

There was nothing to report under this item.

0156 **SAFEGUARDING TRAINING AND UPDATE**

The Chair referred to the Safeguarding Presentation (Appendix 1) and took the opportunity to remind Governors of their Safeguarding responsibilities and advised that Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) was updated in September 2020 and there were a number parts to it, but Governors should have read Part 1 and Part 2. There were other relevant procedures in place as well and these were included within Slide 2. Slide 3 contained a summary of Governors' obligations and these related closely to the submission that the College had to make to the Local Authority. Slide 4 covered Section 175 subsections 1 & 3, which indicated that the Governing Body had to make arrangements to ensure the functions were exercised appropriately with regards to safeguarding and the welfare of children. The Vice Principal, Mr Staddon, had completed an audit as to where the College was, and because of the timing requirements, he had reviewed this with the Chair, The Principal and the Vice Chair. Slides 5 & 6 gave more detail around this audit.

The Vice Principal advised there were different audits carried out for different audiences, and in this case, the audit had been carried out for the purpose of the Governing Body review. Part 2 of KCSIE had been reviewed to indicate what Governors should have overview of and awareness of and where they should be focussing on holding the College to account. The Vice Principal had gone through the KCSIE measures as stated in the document, and had RAG rated each measure to indicate whether or not those measures were being met. He had also included a justification for this and a link to any appropriate evidence. This was dated to show when the check was carried out. The Vice Principal noted that the Single Central Record (SCR) was reviewed on a half-termly basis, as well as any additional audits required, such as this one. Overall, the report indicated that the standards were being met and that Safeguarding at the College was effective. Two areas were highlighted Amber, both in relation to written policies which the College should have. The policies were in place, but the staff code of conduct needed to be reviewed and updated in October 2020 and the Recruitment and Selection policy had not been reviewed since March 2016. The Vice Principal advised that he had been unable to locate one in the Trust and Trust HR had confirmed that this should be a Trust-wide document, which was a statutory requirement and they had now instigated work in ensuring the policy was in place.

**ACTION:** Vice Principal to confirm when both policies are updated

**ACTION:** Chair to raise the requirement for a Trust-wide Recruitment and Selection Policy at Trust Board on 14 December 2020.

The Staff Code of Conduct was currently being reviewed, specifically the context for the College and this would be updated. Every other area was either met or exceeded and the Vice Principal advised he was happy to discuss further with any interested Governor. **A Governor asked what Smoothwall and Visigo were and asked if there was an online safety policy that had been created or updated due to the increase in online activity.** The Vice Principal advised that these were educational products which applied filtered blocking and monitoring systems for any user utilising a College device or logged into a college user account. Smoothwall blocked any inappropriate sites and access was differentiated between staff and students. It also gave the ability to whitelist sites. Visigo was a separate service provided by the same company which monitored all keystrokes that students made, whilst on college devices or systems to pick up use of any appropriate site in an inappropriate way, for example, using offensive language to each other. This was monitored by a person at Visigo and the concerns were highlighted to the College with varying levels of notification for action to be taken. The Vice Principal advised this had been in place for about a year and was a significant enhancement.

The Safeguarding policy had been updated in light of the increase in online working and incorporated sections about using and interacting on Microsoft Teams, how staff conducted themselves and so on. This was a Trust-wide policy, which had been adapted for the College context.

The Vice Principal advised that included in the papers was a Safeguarding update (Appendix 2) which highlighted 156 safeguarding referrals had been made this year, compared to 97 at the same point last year. He advised that there were increased levels due to the issues arising from lockdown and students spending extended periods of time at home. The Vice Principal advised this gave an indication of numbers but Safeguarding was about people and so he had invited Ms Troman, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), to attend the meeting to talk Governors through a week in the life of a DSL.

Ms Troman advised that Covid had had a big impact in terms of the nature and number of instances of Safeguarding issues raised. This information matched up with the data given.

There was a confidential discussion at this point. See Confidential Appendix A

The Chair thanked Ms Troman for the work she did and advised he was pleased she was there to support students in these situations. **The Chair asked that given the growth in workload, and each case being so individual and taking various amounts of time, how was capacity managed to treat each case appropriately** and the Principal advised that this was reviewed regularly and had been discussed today at the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting. All Assistant Principals were trained DSLs and had been informed that they would need to help over the next 8 days, as this was the busiest time of year for Safeguarding.

The Principal noted there had been a significant increase in mental health issues over the last three or four years, which had perhaps been further exacerbated by Covid and it would be interesting to understand if that was repeating in other Higher Education (HE) institutions. A Governor noted that this was true at the HE institution where she worked and there had been a continued increase. More students felt confident in declaring they had mental health issues, so this was seen as a positive step. The Principal noted that other Safeguarding referrals had spiked due to Covid and not all were related to mental health. **The Chair asked the DSL to comment about the capacity in dealing with Safeguarding issues** and Ms Troman advised there was a group of academic coaches who were not specialist trained, but were good at

discovering and identifying students who needed support and signposting them to the right place, which was invaluable. Ms Troman advised she triaged in the first instance and then looked for the best option moving forwards as some staff had more experience in one area than another. Ms Troman agreed that mental health issues were increasing, and more expert support was being sought in that area. **A Governor asked how the College would support students over the holiday when there was no contact available here** and Ms Troman advised that there were already contact details shared on social media around support over Christmas and this was shared in weekly group coaching sessions as well. The Vice Principal advised there was a section in KCSIE about responsibility remaining with the College over the holidays and there was the facility to make referrals during that time, which he monitored so that nothing would be missed. There was a significant reduction in issues when the College was closed and students would either share their problems elsewhere or hold them until College returned, meaning spikes in referrals prior to and just after College holidays. Ms Troman advised that students were regularly signposted where to go in relation to this.

**A Student Governor advised that students in Y12 were pushing for more support for mental health and asked at what point would it be suggested that a student approach the College for help and what signs should be looked out for.** Ms Troman confirmed there was a fine line between being overwhelmed and a safeguarding issue and coaches did look out for this, but she advised that anytime was the right time to ask for help, so that support could be given sooner. The sooner the College was aware there was an issue, the quicker support could be put in place. The Vice Principal advised that feedback from the Student Council was very useful in finding ways to support the mental health of students. **A Governor asked what the rate of referrals was and was it continuing to increase,** and Ms Troman confirmed it was still increasing and anecdotally she advised she received at least 2 or 3 new safeguarding alerts daily. The Chair noted there was always a balance to strike between trends and volumes and the priority had to be treating each case as an individual. The Vice Principal advised that he and Ms Troman saw very serious cases, and comparatively others could seem relatively minor but students still needed support and every student should still receive the required level of support. A Governor advised that the wider number of CPOMs cases were increasing. Some students had flagged their mental health issues on their application forms and there was a wider safety net for those who had Mental Health issues, which were not safeguarding concerns. The Chair noted it was very positive that the whole team at the College were pulling in the same direction, making it more likely that everyone could be supported in the right way.

#### 0157 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

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

The Principal advised that his report was in three parts and advised that the Assistant Principal, Mr Hammond, would cover the Progress Update (Appendix 3).

#### [MS TROMAN LEFT THE MEETING]

The Assistant Principal provided the November report and as this was the first set of data, he would give the context to this. The last reform to the inspection framework gave the College a wider licence to use data as they chose. There was no prescribed method for using data and if Governors were happy with it, that was an indicator of its usefulness. The data sat on top of the key assessment structure and this had evolved in recent years. This year the system

had been built to ensure that key assessments were more easily comparable. Previously the key assessments differed from year to year, so did not show progress in a comparable way. .

Y12 assessments this year were the same or more difficult than those taken last year, and that gave Governors a clearer indication of where the College was tracking compared to previous results. In Y13, 28 of 32 A-Levels sat the same assessment as the previous year and in Y12 it was 30. The Assistant Principal noted that there may be some nervousness about the results this year, as students had been out of education for six months and even though in Year 13 they had high quality teaching during lockdown, nothing beats face to face tuition. So, by sitting the same assessments as the previous year, there was a clear picture. The Assistant Principal advised that the results had given some reassurance. Y13 had produced slightly better results than the previous year and Y12 were slightly down, but only by a small amount. In Y13, this validated a lot of the work done by teachers to provide high quality learning in lockdown and it was also a credit to the students and their resilience. The Y12 results were a credit to the students themselves and the induction processes that had been put in place. Key assessments had not been adapted or made easier and no allowance had been made for circumstances.

There were 3 more assessments to be taken in Y12 and the Principal advised the latest results from Y13 echoed this and students were making the progress expected overall. Some students had done well in this period, although some students had struggled. The Chair advised that the colour coding on the report was that RED was good and BLUE was requiring improvement. The Chair noted the results were encouraging but it was important to guard against complacency and the improvement in Biology, given that there had been a focus on that area, was not quite where they wanted but did show positive indications.

**A Governor noted that some Y12 would have been less prepared for exams and asked if there had been any noticeable grade inflation from GCSE results.** The Assistant Principal advised he was talking purely about headline figures and the individual subjects would be scrutinised more closely with this exact question being asked. He noted that what was coming through was that teachers were reassured that the Centre Assessed grades had been used with integrity and were not overinflated. The Principal advised that overall, the GCSE average had increased but he did not feel there had been a negative impact. All students within Y12 had the capability of going on and to reassure Universities, he advised there were no concerns about the accuracy of the gradings. The Principal noted some schools may have inflated grades, but the vast majority had been through rigorous processes and not had grade inflation.

The Assistant Principal advised that the whole college overview was contained within the report and **a Governor asked for clarification around the SEND figures.** The Vice Principal, Mrs Hamilton, advised they had not yet been added to this data. The gender and ethnicity analyses were present, as well as that for the disadvantaged students, and the SEND data would be there by the next Governors meeting.

**A Governor asked about more coursework-based subjects and how they were being monitored in the current circumstances and whether they had been more heavily impacted.** The Principal advised that in terms of visual arts, that was the area that had the most adjustments to the assessments, with a reduced number of major projects. The subject hit the hardest was Drama and Theatre Studies, as this was very difficult to do in lockdown, although it had the least taken out of it.

A Student Governor advised that in terms of the content of the key assessments, students had not just been tested on topics taught prior to lockdown, the assessments had included learning during lockdown, so he felt it was an accurate reflection of performance. He also advised that this was more down to the efforts of students. There had been some adaptations for some courses. In Philosophy there would usually be an essay at this time of year but there were a set of questions instead. The Assistant Principal advised that looking at that specific subject, there had been no year on year comparison drawn for that reason.

A Student Governor advised that she felt there had been a lack of exam practice in her subjects and this made the key assessment harder for students. In her recent Chemistry test, a third of students had a U grade in the Key assessment and the Vice Principal advised that this specific issue would be raised with the Leadership Team for that subject. Specific curriculum issues could be highlighted at any time through the Curriculum Leaders and Assistant Principals. The Assistant Principal advised that the first key assessment was to get students settled back in and as the year went on, they would ratchet up. Y13 would be completing substantial mock exams in January and Y12 would complete more exam preparation and mock papers as the year went on. The Chair advised that the College did see progression in a planned way through the key assessments and identifying gaps was an important part of the process. The Chair suggested that it was important to have these specific conversations on behalf of fellow students.

[MR HAMMOND LEFT THE MEETING]

#### Principal's Report Part 1 (Appendix 4)

The Principal advised he was happy to take any questions on this update. **A Governor asked about the online development of Student and Staff on Teams and he advised that the Principal had said the study week would be a measure of improvement using Teams, but the feedback was that this was the same as the lockdown during March, when work was set at the beginning of the week and he asked why that was the case.** The Principal advised the comparison was best made with the beginning of lockdown when there had been no systems in place. There was continuous learning in place, and the current priority was to keep the college open, which limited the amount of time for teachers to spend on remote learning. There had been a week of online work which brought down the Covid rates in the College and learning had been taken from that. Students who were self-isolating and attending lessons remotely was successful and pastoral teams were also using remote systems.

The Vice Principal, Mr Staddon, advised that this had also not taken place during a typical week for staff as they had only Monday and Tuesday to prepare work and liaise with students as Wednesday to Friday had not been planned teaching days. This was not what was expected should there be an enforced lockdown. The Principal also advised that there was an attempt not to communicate the work and plan in advance as would be the case should the College need to close at short notice. **The Chair asked if there was a way to gather structured feedback from students who may have good ideas based on their experiences.** The Principal advised he would welcome this and was in the process of scheduling a meeting with the Student Governors after Christmas and it would be great if they could bring feedback to this.

**ACTION:** Student Governors to provide feedback to Principal on remote learning

A Student Governor noted that on the Monday/Tuesday there was limited teacher availability and the Principal advised he would take this feedback on board as it was very valuable and

would look to see how this could be improved. The Vice Principal, Mrs Hamilton, advised that teachers had not been asked to do live lessons, but asked to make sure that they could contact students and that the students could contact teachers as required, and to make sure that they had meaningful work to complete that week. The Chair suggested the feedback be given in a structured format and the Principal would report back to the Chair once it had been received.

#### Covid summary

The Principal advised that the College was averaging one positive case per day amongst students and the rates had been kept within tolerance. There had been only one potential issue, when there was a significant number of staff off on one day, due to self-isolations. There was currently no staff member off with symptoms although four were off with general illness or stress, which was similar to last year. The Principal advised that it had sometimes been difficult, but on the whole the College had been reasonably well staffed. This showed resilience from the staff and indicated they were taking the rules very seriously as well as the students, as transmission rates were low. There was only one confirmed case of transmission at the College, between two students who knew each other, and the Principal noted that the transmission may have occurred outside the College. The Chair reiterated the good work done by students and staff in keeping the College open and progress on track. The students were making a huge contribution to keeping things running and he was very grateful for that.

#### Principal's Report Part 2- Principal Performance Review and Standards (Appendix 5)

There was a confidential discussion at this point. See Confidential Appendix A

#### Principal's Report Part 3: Strategic Planning (Appendix 8)

##### SAR Context (Appendix 9)

The context covered the current student cohort and how it had changed. The Principal noted there had been an increase in student numbers and all groups had increased, but especially the number of White British students, which was a big change, as this had previously been a decreasing number.

##### SAR (Appendix 10)

The Principal advised the SAR was based on the Ofsted Report and an update on what work had been undertaken in the College since their visit. **The Chair asked, as part of the plans for the future, good to great by 2024, whether the SAR needed to be used to identify when each category was anticipated to move from 2 to 1.** The Principal agreed with this and noted the difficulty of writing any timeline at the moment with the day to day issues of dealing with Covid, and once the vaccine had come through there would be more focus on this area again. There had for example been time devoted to developing remote learning systems, which was not how the year had been envisaged at the beginning. Teaching and Learning development and training had continued as planned.

**A Governor noted that there had been improvement around meeting careers provision and Gatsby benchmarks, and asked why the significant improvements, which benefited from the mixture of online and face to face learning, was not contained within this report.** The



Principal advised that a lot of this had been embedded into this current academic year and this report ended on 26 August, which should have been results day. Oxbridge interviews were currently taking place via Teams, which seemed to be going well. The Governor noted that even in the first period of lockdown, there were a number of positive changes that were made to the raising of student understanding of alternative futures, which would continue this year. The Principal agreed that work did start last year after OfSTED where it was recommended that the College broaden the focus from HE. The Chair advised that these insights were invaluable, and the assumption could be made that online careers' focused learning would continue to be included in future careers' provision, no matter what the final destination of each student, and inputs sought from universities and other sources. The Principal advised that this would be covered in College Strategy Development and included in the 2021-24 milestones.

#### Strategic Priorities and 100-day Plans (Appendices 11 and 12)

These documents explained what had happened so far this year and the Chair noted it was useful to see these plans and understand the focus was in place.

#### Principal's Report Part 4: Reports (Appendix 13)

##### Student Progress

This item was covered earlier in the meeting by the Assistant Principal.

##### Student Retention (Appendix 14)

The Principal advised that retention had increased from Year 12 to Year 13 and there were no questions from Governors.

##### Student Attendance (Appendix 15)

The Principal advised that attendance was harder to measure this year, as normally there would be no self-isolation to report on. However, the focus was still there as attendance was vital to achievement, although year on year comparisons were not meaningful at this point.

The Chair noted that attendance had been discussed at the Trust Scrutiny Board, earlier in the day, and the College did not feature in that discussion. However, the Chair wanted assurance to be provided at Trust level that this was focussed on and the Chair would discuss this with the Principal at a future meeting. The Principal advised a caveat to the College reporting was that they had the daily physical attendance, regardless of reasons, whereas schools reported any pupil who was self-isolating, as present. The Chair advised he was looking for assurance that the focus was there, and the reporting did not need to be in the same format. The Vice Principal, Mrs Hamilton, advised that the Attendance and Punctuality Policy had also been circulated with these papers, which highlighted the ways it was focused on and prioritised at the College. The Chair advised he was keen to ensure the College was included within these reports at Trust level.

Safeguarding/PREVENT

This item was covered by the Vice Principal, Mr Staddon and the DSL, Ms Troman, earlier in the meeting.

Student and Staff Discipline Report Autumn Term 2020/21 (Appendix 16)

**A Governor asked about the increased police patrols through the park** and the Principal advised that there had been an increased PCSO presence. There had also been reports of students misbehaving in Solihull and the Principal was looking at working with Solihull College and police to have a presence in the town centre. **A Student Governor asked with regards to general safety, whether random bag searches would be in place** and the Principal advised they were not allowed to do this, there had to be due cause and suspicion, and any searches carried out were usually looking for drugs.

Last year, there had been a knife arch at the College, in conjunction with the police, and that may happen again. The Chair suggested that perhaps the question was around the safety of students and good conversations with members of the College community was important to ensure students felt safe; it was vital to pick up early signals and take actions, which the report indicated did happen.

Y12 were on one-to-one in their coaching sessions at the moment but after Christmas, there were sessions on drugs and knife crime. The Chair noted there was information sharing between the community and college leaders in the event of any concerns and the Principal agreed, advising this included the local constabulary and the local council.

ALS(SEND) (Appendix 17)

The Chair advised he found these reports useful and important as part of the regular pack. A Governor advised that these numbers were projected to be higher this year and he praised staff for their work in this area, especially given the current circumstances. The Principal thanked the Link Governor for Looked After Children (LAC) and Young Carers for his attendance at College to meet staff. The Principal advised that the College had received accreditation for the Young Carers Award and the Chair formally thanked all those who led the activities to get this award in place.

POLICIES

The following policies had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Principal advised if anyone had any questions, he would be happy to take them at this point.

- Student Admissions Policy (Appendix 18 & 19)
- Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy (Appendix 20 & 21)
- Student Commitment and Disciplinary Processes (Appendix 22)
- Student Commitment and Disciplinary Processes: Guide for Students and Parents (Appendix 23)
- Information for Parents and Students after Exclusions (Appendix 24)

- SEND Policy (Appendix 25)

0158 **RESOLVED:** That the above policies (Appendices 18 to 25) be approved.

#### **LINK STRATEGIC GOVERNOR INVOLVEMENT**

The Link Governor for LAC, Young Carers and SEND had visited to meet with the SEND staff and he advised he would be meeting with Sonia Wood, Assistant Principal, in the New Year. The Careers Link Governor had also been working with Sonia Wood around Careers and she advised that the last formal report was published in July and one was due, which she suggested be reviewed in more detail at the next Governing Body Meeting. The plans being written were fully endorsed and the Governor's only concern was that placements were not available in the same way as they had previously due to Covid, which Governors needed to be aware of.

The Vice Principal, Mrs Hamilton, advised that Mrs Shingler was happy to take on the role of Safeguarding Link Governor and the Principal advised that in the interim period the Chair and Vice Chair had supported with Safeguarding.

0159 **RESOLVED:** That Mrs Shingler be appointed Safeguarding Link Governor

#### 0160 **FEEDBACK TO/FROM THE TRUST**

The Chair advised the Scrutiny Committee had been held earlier today and actions had come out of that which would be relevant to the College.

The Trust Executive Newsletter (Appendix 26) had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Chair asked if there was any feedback that Governors would like him to take back to the Trust as the next meeting was 14 December, or if there was any additional information they wanted to receive.

#### 0161 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chair reported that no correspondence had been received since the previous meeting which they considered necessary to draw to the attention of Governors.

#### 0162 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 5.00 pm on Wednesday 3 March 2020 and two items were identified for the next agenda: -

- Careers
- Forward view and Strategy

The Chair thanked all Governors for their continued support and noted that the role of Governors was very important, and their support was greatly appreciated.

The Chair wished all Governors a happy holiday period and he also asked for any feedback on ways to improve the LGB.

**The meeting closed at 7.02 pm.**

Signed: .....  
(Chair of Local Governing Body)

Dated:.....