

# WQE & Regent College Group

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## Minutes of the Corporation Meeting

Held virtually via Zoom on  
14 October 2020 at 17:00

### Members of the Corporation present:

Stuart Dawkins, Chair  
Wayne Allsopp, Jasmine Andean, Joyce Black, Jo Cooke, Walija Fatima, Bernadette Green, Neil McGhee, Nisar Navsariwala, Ing'utu Palmer, Philip Parkinson, Paul Wilson, Aaron Winterton & Jimmy Zachariah

### In attendance:

Tim Cullinan, Carolyn Davies, Andrew Jackson,  
Sarah Oldfield, Donna Trusler & Rachel Middleton

### Apologies for absence:

Walija Fatima, Jim Phillips, Amrik Singh, Alistair Lockhart-Smith

## 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were received from Jim Phillips, Amrik Singh, Alistair Lockhart-Smith. The Chair confirmed that this meeting was the final one which Walija Fatima would attend as Student Governor, as her tenure was coming to an end.

## 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

## 3. Minutes and matters arising– Paper 001

The Corporation approved the minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 23 September 2020 as a correct record, subject to the correction of a typo on page 2 (changing 'boar' to 'board')

The Chair confirmed that the following action from the last meeting had been tabled at this meeting:

- Curriculum Policy - to come to the Corporation meeting on 14 October 2020

The following matters were completed in the intervening period between Corporation meetings:

- Change the minutes of the Corporation meeting to reflect it was an extraordinary meeting (27.08.20) – RM
- Issue the Governor webinar calendar from the SFCA to all Governors to seek interest – RM

- Liaise with Governors via a Doodle poll to ask for optimal dates for a Governor Conference – Governors were asked instead to hold the original date of 26 May 2021 in their diaries, with a view to revisiting the matter in the spring term.

The Chair confirmed there had been no further feedback in relation to the policies which were tabled at the last meeting. This now concludes the policy approval process and the following policies have been approved:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Recruitment Procedure
- Sub-contracting Policy

Corporation members provided updates on the following matters:

- **To review the issues and response times for PPMs/ teachers when students make contact** – AJ investigated this matter. Part of the reported difficulty was due to the resignation of a PPM and temporary cover being provided. The other issue was that some students had switched PPM due to timetabling and this had caused a temporary difficulty. AJ confirmed the issue had now been resolved.
- **Give a verbal update on student access to the afternoon timetable due to travel** – PW confirmed there had been a technical difficulty in terms of how students booked workspace on campus instead of needing to go home in between sessions. Some of the issue related to aligning booking slots to lesson timings. There is not a capacity issue in terms of space to study on site. PW confirmed he had walked the Chair around the College site and observed this. The Principal has been regularly monitoring the use of space on campus. Staff and students have been reminded about study areas on campus.
- **Revisit the terms of reference for the Student Outcomes task & finish Group** – these will not be revisited in the first instance, but all Governors are encouraged to participate in the group
- **Determine optimal dates for the task & finish groups to convene this term** – RM confirmed the agreement of dates was in train and would be confirmed to Governors shortly.
- **Work Experience - A training & development session on benchmarks and the College's approach to work experience is currently postponed and will take place at the next face to face meeting of the Corporation (AJ & Kate Farrell)** - Governors discussed this matter. AJ and PW will report on employability in the second half term of the autumn term. **Action AJ/PW**  
An update on work experience will be provided at the next Corporation meeting.  
**Action AJ**

## OVERSIGHT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

4. **Principal's Update**  
Paul Wilson – Presentation was circulated to attendees

- Risk Register – Governors were assured by the fact that the College’s approach to handling Covid-19 matters had been fully signed off by Public Health England (PHE). The Principal confirmed that other educational organisations were being directed by PHE to implement a similar model to that being deployed by the College.

Thanks were conveyed to staff for their work on the Covid-19 Risk Register.

- Governors queried whether the College had heard anything from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in relation to Covid-19 risk management. The Principal confirmed that the College had not had contact from the HSE or Ofsted but had significant contact with PHE.
- The Vice Chair of the Corporation highlighted the findings of a brief survey of sixth form colleges undertaken by the Sixth Form Colleges Association (SFCA) in relation to Colleges’ approach to handling bubbles and sending bubbles home, when Covid-19 outbreaks occur. The findings of the survey can be found in the recording and slides of the first governance webinar for Governors, focusing on a sectoral update.
- Having a single purpose for each visit to campus has proved popular with students.
- Students are typically visiting campus 3 times a week.
- Staff absence is being monitored ongoing and is lower than might be expected.
- Covid 19-related absences are very small. Other issues, including seasonal illnesses account for slightly higher absence levels.
- Student attendance had been between 80-90% and is now steady at 92%.
- Student numbers reported last time are now stable.
- Exam season 2021:  
Recent government announcements had indicated a slight extension of 3 weeks to the teaching year.  
A Level results will now be released the same week as GCSEs.  
There is no formal plan B in place as yet from government – the concern is that the later this is announced, the harder this will be to implement. PW will be keeping a watching brief. There is a second wave of opportunities to bid for Institute of Technology funding by 2 December 2020. The College has been invited to join a bid as a partner – potentially providing a pathway for students into Level 4,5,6 qualifications. The lead partner would be Leicester College and the bid includes both universities in Leicester. This bid would require high profile local employers to support. **Action PW to update the Corporation further.**
- Strategic Development Plan – focus this term to date has been on operations. The Plan will be tabled for discussion at the next Corporation meeting. **Action PW**
- When reflecting on the Strategic Plan, some matters were progressed - the estates strategy, and the safeguarding infrastructure and response. Teaching and learning: online learning development was already planned pre-lockdown. Substantial progress has been made with this. Staff wellbeing strategy - a steering group is being convened to develop this. There have been a range of staff surveys and the College is developing work on the staff voice.

## OVERSIGHT OF STUDENT OUTCOMES & EXPERIENCES

### 5. Student Outcomes initial headlines – Paper 002

Sarah Oldfield and Tim Cullinan

TC confirmed the presentation served to bridge the gap between student outcomes headlines and the more detailed work which the Student Outcomes Task & Finish group will drill down into, when it meets.

He reported that, in summary the College is broadly happy with the data and most of the indicators are heading in right direction. The analysis indicates there are certain pockets of work to still undertake.

Governors queried the employability achievement rates within the paper and whether these were below national benchmarks. It was noted that this data referred to a small, specific number of subjects, not 'employability' more generally.

Governors requested information on the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, particularly those who were in receipt of Pupil Premium previously. The Principal also suggested that the data for Looked After Children and other vulnerable groups be looked at. Governors agreed there was a lack of clarity around the term 'at risk' and asked for a clear definition to be presented to the Corporation **Action TC to present at the November Corporation meeting.**

A Governor asked for what was fixed and still moving in relation to ALPS performance. TC confirmed that the 2018-19 dataset had been used as a benchmark for judging 2019-20 results. This will be recalibrated once the 2020-21 results are received.

TC confirmed that performance was encouraging – delivering an ALPS of 3, given the caveats he discussed during his presentation. He confirmed that one of the bigger areas for improvement this year is in Level 2 vocational outcomes.

### 6. Curriculum

#### 6.1 Curriculum Policy – Paper 003

Tim Cullinan

This short overarching paper sets out the College's main curriculum intent. There are a significant number of supporting papers which accompany this as well.

A Governor queried Section 5 – Curriculum during the Covid crisis in relation to wanting to see reference to employability and creating rounded students who can add value to society. The Principal confirmed this was referenced on page three but could be strengthened further. **Action AJ/TC:** to strengthen and circulate to Governors once changes have been made, outside of the meeting cycle.

The Corporation accepted the policy subject to minor redrafting.

A Governor queried progress on the Enrichment offer to students.

The Principal confirmed this was now on student timetables and had commenced this week.

## **6.2 16-19 Tuition Fund – Paper 004**

Sarah Oldfield

The College has been awarded £166k through the 16-19 Tuition Fund, to be used to support young people to overcome gaps in learning. SO outlined the specific criteria and the next steps to follow (students who achieved grade 3 or less in English and Maths, but who lost out on teaching during lockdown). She confirmed the College was at the stage of identifying specific students to support through use of the funding. Support will be provided through small group tuition. Support can be aimed at English and Maths or another subject where a learning gap has been identified for a student.

There is a tight timetable to deliver support using the funding and this has to be within the year. It cannot be used for IT equipment and is specifically for funding staff to work with small groups.

The Principal confirmed he had signed a contract with the EFSA and that this was a binding agreement. The Principal highlighted the fact that the agreement is subject to claw back and any capacity issues/delays could mean the funds would not be spent in the timeframe. The plan of work needs to be published on the College website.

## **7. Permanent exclusions from College**

### **7.1 Permanent Exclusion Policy – Paper 005**

Andrew Jackson

AJ highlighted that there had been a slight revision of the version which the Corporation had seen in spring, relating to Covid-19. The only real change is the preference for face to face meetings if disciplinary panels need to be convened, however the College reserves the right to keep them as remote panels should this be needed.

The Corporation approved the policy in principle, subject to the two-week policy approval process commencing beyond the Corporation meeting. **Action all Governors**

### **7.2 Report on 2019-20 permanent exclusions – Paper 006**

Andrew Jackson

AJ presented a new report, based on a request from a Governor. The Governor concerned thanked ELT for acting on the request.

AJ confirmed there was a need to define how the College defines disadvantage to ensure clarity. **Action AJ, supported by BG**

## **8. Admissions Policy for 2021 entry - Paper 007**

Donna Trusler

DT highlighted a range of changes which were highlighted in the report:

1. student and staff safety – references to convictions
2. restart – clearer student expectations relating to this
3. student applications which were inappropriate or ill-informed - direct work will now be offered to support students with applications whilst still at school
4. reserving the right not to interview
5. late applications and the process by which they will be dealt with- ramifications for the student experience, appeals process, and ability to manage staff workload.

A Governor asked whether the College's stated desire to support at risk or disadvantaged students was referenced in the policy. This was confirmed to be case.

The Corporation approved the policy, subject to the fortnight policy approval process commencing beyond the Corporation meeting. **Action all Governors**

## **OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES & ASSETS**

### **9. 29 September Audit & Risk Committee recommendations – Paper 008 Philip Parkinson**

- External assurance programme - deferred due to the pandemic. The programme has been rescheduled so that essential work will be done at an appropriate time.
- Cyber Essentials - a government scheme to protect against IT threats. The Committee discussed the vulnerability of organisations to online threats due to enormous reliance on online activity during the pandemic. The Committee was assured that the College have this in focus.
- Auditors have asked for more funding. CD and PP spoke to the auditors outside of the Committee meeting about their increased fee and workload. They outlined the enhanced risks to the Corporation and indicated that they needed to undertake further work. An additional fee of up to £2k has been agreed.

There were no formal requests to the Corporation from the Committee.

## **EFFICIENT & EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE**

### **10. 14 October Governance & Search Committee recommendations Joyce Black**

JB confirmed there was no written report on this occasion as the Committee met immediately before this Corporation meeting.

JB confirmed the Committee had looked at the outcomes of the Governor Skills Audit (reflecting on Governors' skills, experience, knowledge).

They had compared these with trends over previous years. They confirmed there was good coverage of skills, and highlighted three areas to bring to the Corporation:

- The Corporation is light in terms of experience and knowledge relating to resources and finances
- What should governors be doing in terms of their personal development to address skills gaps? Link governor activity has been in abeyance as a result of the pandemic. What are the ways in which this can be addressed?
- The Clerk to the Corporation has issued the programme of SFCA webinars. It would be beneficial for Governors to sign up to the live sessions or access the recordings.
- Link governor role – visits postponed, but College is still open for governors to visit. There may be opportunities next term to think about what Governors want to learn

about the functional areas within the College. There will be opportunities to work with PW/RM to set these up.

- What can Governors do to add value to the College experience? Can Governors think about their own networks and how these could be deployed to benefit the College? Perhaps there are resources which can be offered in addition to networks? PW, SD and RM will think through what the opportunities could look like for Governors.
- Governors' participation in Task & Finish Groups – these will meet remotely to begin with. Invitations will go out to all governors to boost their engagement with the College. These enable Governors to work outside of their own comfort zone at times.
- With greater engagement then the next skills audit might reflect the view that Governors feel more confident about the learning they have done.

The Clerk to the Corporation confirmed that a new Student Governor pursuing a one-year course of study had been selected by JB and RM, following submission of a statement of interest and a successful interview. RM confirmed the start date for his tenure as 11 November 2020. RM will offer an induction to Jash prior to the next Corporation meeting and also ask Jasmine Andean (fellow Student Governor), to contribute to his induction.

The Chair reported that there had been a request from Jim Philips for a 3-month leave of absence, due to work commitments.

Principally the absence would be from Corporation meetings. Jim has stated he will make himself available to attend the Estates & Finance Task & Finish Group.

The Corporation approved Jim Philips' leave of absence.

#### **11. Governor training and development needs**

- Governors have been indicating to the Clerk which webinars they would like to participate in. These are offered by the SFCA. The first one took place on 13<sup>th</sup> October.
- Governors' completion of Safeguarding training- to date there has been 75% completion and this will be followed up over the course of the next week or so. **Action DT/RM**
- JB attended the SFCA's Governance Policy Committee. The SFCA is setting up new regional hubs as well as a mental health hub. It is also looking to provide a service to support staff, librarians, receptionists, Exams Officers etc. Governors could also join these hubs, if interested.

#### **12. Any Other Business**

Walija Fatima did not join the meeting, however the Clerk to the Corporation was tasked with working through how the Corporation could thank her for her service and issue her certificate of appreciation – **Action RM**

### 13. Confidentiality

The Corporation considered the exclusions data recorded in Paper 006 to be confidential.

### 14. Next Meeting

5.00pm, Wednesday 11 November 2020, via Zoom

The Chair thanked all staff for their achievement and dedication and wished staff a peaceful half term.

The meeting concluded at 18:46

Chair's Signature: .....

Date: .....

<b>Actions arising from 23 September Corporation Meeting</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>Date for completion</b>
Arrange a time for SD to sign the Corporation minutes	RM and SD	19 November 2020
Vaughan Fund - report on fundraising – to be reported at the Vaughan Committee meeting on 11 November 2020.	RM	Before 11 Nov 2020
Sign the Provider Review	SD	In train
Proceed with series of actions relating to recruitment of an External Governor	RM	Deadline extended to 3 November 2020
<b>Actions arising from 14 October Corporation Meeting</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>Date for completion</b>
Report to the Corporation on student employability	AJ/PW	16 December 2020 Corporation meeting
Update the Corporation on work experience at the next Corporation meeting	AJ	11 November 2020 Corporation meeting
Update the Corporation on the Institute of Technology Bid	PW	16 December Corporation meeting
Table Strategic Development Plan at next meeting of the Corporation	RM	11 November 2020 Corporation meeting
Present information on disadvantaged student outcomes at November Corporation meeting	TC	11 November 2020 Corporation meeting
Strengthen the Curriculum Policy's reference to student employability	AJ/TC	asap
Provide any queries or feedback on the Permanent Exclusion Policy	All Governors to AJ/PW	asap
Arrive at a clear definition of 'disadvantage'	AJ with BG	Before next Corporation meeting
Provide any queries or feedback on the Admissions Policy	All Governors to DT	asap
Follow up completion of Safeguarding training by Governors	DT/RM	
Make arrangements for Walija Fatima's end of tenure as Student Governor	RM	asap