

**Minutes of a meeting of Governors of Queen Elizabeth Grammar School,
Penrith, held on Thursday 4th March 2021 at 5.30pm as a virtual meeting.**

Present

Miss R McMann (Clerk)
Mr M Worrall (CoG)
Dr J Jenkins (CoG)
Mr C Hansford (GbS)
Mr P Airey (CoG)
Mr G Miller (P)
Mr A Worth (S)

Mr P Buckland
Mrs T Boving-Foster (P) (Chair)
Mr J Ray (CoG)
Mr M Bauer (CoG)
Ms J Mills (CoG)
Mrs K Rae (CoG)
Mr R Shephard (CoG)

SLT present: Dr E Mawson
Mr R Dawson
Mr A Martin
Mrs J Scott

Visitors: none

13 Governors in attendance

Quorum per article 114 – 7 Governors
(one half of the governors holding office rounded up to the nearest whole number)

GbS – Governor by Statute
MaG – Member appointed Governor
CoG – Co-opted Governor
S – Staff
P- Parent

Please note that this was conducted as a virtual meeting via Zoom due to Covid-19 and restrictions in place.

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declaration of Interest in Agenda Items

There were no declarations of interest in the agenda items.

3. Any changes to the declaration of Business Interests

There were no changes to the declaration of interests.

4. Minutes of the Governors Meeting Held on 28th January 2021

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes were a true record. Mrs Boving-Foster will sign them as soon as practicable under the circumstances.

5. Matters Arising

Mrs Boving-Foster gave an update from the previous meeting:

- The item on the Sixth Form is to be moved to the next Education and Standards meeting
- There has been a response from the EFSA about the revised Articles of Association. They have requested that the school update its Funding Agreement. This will be dealt with but not immediately as the school has got enough on presently.

Mrs Scott had a matter regarding updating the connected parties information for HSBC. All trustees and SLT must provide two certified forms of I.D. which are to be uploaded. This is a time sensitive process and must be completed by 4th April or; there is a threat that the bank account will be frozen. Mrs Scott will upload the documents once collated and then destroy them. In response to the Governors questions for the necessity of this, Mrs Scott said that she had double checked with the bank and Saints and this is a necessity. Mrs Rae thought it was a little overkill but volunteered to help with the process. **Action point: all Governors to send two forms of I.D. to Mrs Rae (Miss McMann will send her email address). Thereafter, Zoom meetings will be set up so that each Governor can hold up their I.D. for Mrs Rae to verify.**

Mrs Boving-Foster spoke to the Governors about a local governor experience sharing she is taking part in. There is a meeting at the end of March with UCC, Keswick, Appleby, Kirkby Stephen and Alston. Initially this is for Chairs and Vice Chairs to look at Governor specific matters (versus school specific matters) such as self-evaluation. Later there may be an opportunity to spread this out to other Governor link roles, for example, SEN, Safeguarding and Health and Safety to create a network.

6. Minutes of the Finance and Pay Committee held February 2021

Mrs Rae gave an overview of the meeting, highlighting that the Bike to Work scheme was approved, and that is a good green project. Additionally, as is standard in these meetings the bank balances in each account were formally deemed as appropriate. Mr Bauer queried if as per the recommended £85,000 threshold should there be more of a split between the HSBC and other bank accounts. Mrs Rae answered that HSBC is deemed to be secure with minimal risk and there is still money to come out (the timing of the meeting was prior to salary and

pension payments). There have also been issues in the past of transferring money and she reassured all that this is reviewed in every meeting.

7. Mental Health Policy

Mr Martin presented this policy, giving his thanks to Dr Jenkins and Mr Worrall for reading this through before the meeting and offering their suggestions. This is something that is an action point on the SIP and is an increasingly important issue. The policy gives key links and sign posts for parents and students. There is a mental health and well-being section on the website for staff and students. Questions and comments were invited:

- *Can the information be accessed by parents (GM)?* Yes it is on the website and can be accessed by a drop down menu (AM).
- *Is there anything for staff or is it just for students (JR)?* There is information for staff as well as students (AM)
- *The policy is very good. However, the bit that references the Equalities Act is not completely accurate and needs some minor tweaks – happy to amend this with tracked changes (MB).* Would be very grateful (AM).
- *Is it feasible / too high a workload to be the designated Safeguard Lead and the Mental Health Lead (TBF)?* This was something which gave a lot of thought to but there are many cross overs between the two roles and also need a level of clearance to get the information so it makes sense. There is support also from the Pastoral Officer (AM).

Subject to the tweaks to the Equalities Act information, the Governors unanimously agreed to adopt the policy.

8. Remote Learning

Mr Worrall presented this item saying that he felt that it was heartening to provide a large evidence base to fulfil a good monitoring role, showing how efficient remote learning has become over the last 12 months. He added that most schools do not do surveys of this nature thanked SLT for doing this to provide an evidence base. Questions and comments were invited:

- *A very useful report and good to have the context of the surveys with comments. There are a broad range of comments (JJ).* There is a broad range and must go with the majority and those agreeing outweigh the other comments. However, look carefully at all the comments and incorporate constructively. Must not forget the well-being of the SLT who are at the heart of this (MW). Thanks to Mr Worrall and take on board the comments from Dr Jenkins. A lot has been learnt and credit must go to SLT, particularly Mr Dawson and Dr Mawson. It is difficult to please everyone (PB).

- *Is there a plan to follow this up with positive messages (JR)?* There will be a parentmail to go out and students will be able to look at the comments (PB).
- *It would be interesting to feedback the students' responses to parents for example and this cross over would be of good value (TBF).* A good idea so that parents can understand the students' perspective (PB).
- *Good to have an understanding and explanation that different things work for different subjects (GM).*
- *The teacher survey is very positive and they have really risen to the challenge (PA).*

Mrs Boving-Foster gave her thanks for a very positive report.

9. School Re-Opening

This will be covered under the Headteacher's report.

10. Health and Safety

There were no issues to report. It was confirmed that testing will be covered under the Headteacher's report.

11. Safeguarding

There are no significant concerns and the school is getting ready for re-opening. Mr Martin added that really need to see the pupils back in school. Mr Worrall have his thanks to Mr Martin for keeping him up-to-date with a half-termly summary report. The Full Governors' meeting in May will cover the Safeguarding Audit.

12. Headteacher's Report

In addition to the previously circulated report, Mr Buckland had the following updates:

- The position for Assistant Headteacher role has been advertised and there has been a lot of interest in this already.
- An appointment has been made to the MFL department, Mrs Terry.
- There is a member of staff on long-term ill-health who will begin a phased return.

With regards to the re-opening of the school, it was reported that testing will prove to be challenging. Eight staff from Penrith Fire Brigade have been allocated to the school, which is a big help. For the Governors who have volunteered, details and a timetable will be given out. Otherwise, there are very little changes and by Thursday testing will be complete and the school will be working back in 'bubbles' as was the case last time.

There is a significant variation to the live Risk Assessments: facemasks are to be worn in lessons. There are a few medical exemptions to this and a few students were already doing this last year. Mrs Scott is working on updating this as per the Local Authority updated version and will be on the website in time for school opening on Monday.

Mental well-being is a priority and this will be assessed. Additionally, ensuring that Year 11 and Year 13 are in the strongest position for OFQUAL is a priority and the tutoring programme is in place.

With regards to exams, the deadline is 18th June to submit grades. The DfE have not given details on end dates for Years 11 and 13 but it is probable that this will be May 28th. This will allow time to obtain grades and finalise evidence. Mrs Boving-Foster asked what would be happening in other years: would they be following the normal programme or was it too early to tell? Mr Buckland answered that it is too early at the moment: assessing mental health and evaluating how much work needs to be re-visited are the top priorities. The school will review and assess as it moves forward but feels that students should have no more pressure put on than is good for them.

The meeting closed save for a confidential item.