

QUEEN ELIZABETH GRAMMAR SCHOOL, PENRITH

Minutes of a meeting of the Governor's Education & Standards Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 15th June 2020 at 5.30p.m via Zoom.

Present: Mr M Worrall
Mr P Buckland Miss R McMann (Clerk)
Mrs Boving-Foster Mr A Martin
Dr J Jenkins
Mr A Worth

Visitors: Mr Munro to present the SEND item.

Quorum per Terms of Reference – 4
Governors in attendance – 5

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were accepted for Mr Hansford, Ms Mills and Mr Bauer (work).

2. Declarations of Interest in Agenda items

There were no declarations of interest

3. Minutes of Education and Standards meeting held in November 2020

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes were a true record. Mrs Boving-Foster will sign these when she next visits school.

4. Communications Policy

Mr Buckland presented this item stating it was something the school needs to have in order to set expectations for staff, students and parents. Questions and comments were invited:

- *In the welcome information (under number 6), it would be incredibly difficult for some students to maintain eye contact: thinking of SEN students as an example (AW). Would not want to place any additional stress upon students and thus, agree with this point (PB). It was agreed to remove the reference to eye contact and instead students will just be expected to stand in front of the member of staff.*
- *Use surnames in sports and also they are on the back of their kit and so will this need to be changed (AW)? The sports kits are fine but not calling students by their surname is an aspiration to move towards (PB).*

- *Page 3, is the time of 8.45am to 3.45pm too limiting or is this a protection mechanism for staff (TBF)?* The intention of this is to protect staff and to clarify the hours in which parents should expect a response but of course staff are free to respond outside of those hours if convenient to them (PB).
- *Should there be an acknowledgement email sent marking when the 5 working days commences (not clear for part-time work) in order to manage expectations (TBF)?* Where necessary will clarify when to expect a response (PB).
- *In point 3.5 emails are not on the list in the methods of communication (TBF).* Number 4 deals with emails. Parentmail and EduLink are whole school communications (PB)
- *In points 3.5,3.8 and 4.2 should there be a record kept of phone calls to protect staff (TBF)?* Agree that there should be a reference that a record will be kept and shared with parents (PB). **At the suggestion of Dr Jenkins it was agreed that this should be added in with the wording of ‘this may be followed up by....’ in order to also ensure this does not become an onerous process with extra work.**

Subject to the above revisions, it was unanimously agreed to adopt the Communications Policy. Mrs Boving-Foster asked that this is communicated well with parents.

Mr Buckland updated the committee on a decision to alter the Head Boy / Girl selection. In order to address gender issues, the title will now be replaced with ‘Head Student Leader’ and 6 individuals will be voted on as opposed to the old system whereby 3 boys and 3 girls were selected.

5. SEND Update

Mr Munro gave the committee a verbal update. He reported that more staffing and a lot of upskilling is going to be required, largely due to next years’ intake. This is due to students joining with bigger EHCPs, including one partially sighted child. In response to Mr Worrall’s question about physical adaptations for the partially sighted child, Mr Munro said that they had Guide Dogs for the Blink do an assessment and felt that most elements have been covered and are looking at other resources for help and training.

Mr Munro also informed the committee that since Covid-19 and the need for emergency home learning, it has raised questions about working in a better way, particularly provision for long-term absences. With this in mind an iPad system is being trialled but this will be with strict conditions and a policy would need to be put in place. This is in the early stages and Mr Munro emphasised that school is the best place to be and is aware that this will be a big ask for staff to work in a different way.

Dr Jenkins, as SEND Link Governor, informed the committee that she had prepared an assurance report as a result of a meeting with Mr Martin and Mr Munro. Whilst this was not available prior to the meeting, she summarised that she felt the main action points arising from it were as follows:

- Some assurance that school looking at value for the SEND spend, linking budget with improved outcomes for students with SEND. Checking what works well and what does not.
- Oversight of SEND provision in 6th form -(this may already be happening and thus, will discuss with the Sixth Form Link Governor, Ms Mills).
- Process to automatically check if SEND support needed for excluded students - happens informally now at pastoral review meeting.
- Consider carrying out NASEN self-assessment of Governors SEND knowledge, and/or school to consider doing the NASEN self-assessment re SEND provision.

It was agreed that a copy of Dr Jenkins report will be sent as an appendix to the minutes. Mr Munro thanked Dr Jenkins for her time and input.

Mr Munro was thanked for the time taken to update the committee and he left the meeting.

6. iPads

Mr Dawson shared his screen to give the Governors an in-depth PowerPoint detailing a long-term proposal to move towards an iPad system and SLT have agreed on this. However, it is important to note that the intention is not to move towards being an Apple school - it is more bespoke than that. For example Mr Dawson cited that EduLink works well and school will continue to grow this, Microsoft works across all devices and iPads are the best devices. Additionally, the school will not become paperless either – value is placed on children having the ability to write well. Mr Dawson detailed the extensive research he has done using other schools that opted for this route as case studies. He highlighted that he felt the tender process would be key as there are eight suppliers. Overall, Mr Dawson's vision is that in four years time, other schools will aspire to be like QEGS.

Questions and comments were invited:

- *This is both very positive and very exciting, well done. However, feel that this may need to be escalated to Full Governors as there are lots of implications for learning, as well as cost (TBF).*
- *Very impressive – will those on pupil premium have their devices paid for (JJ)? Yes (RD).*
- *One of the overriding comments from the student voice is that textbooks become paperless so this would be a good win to communicate (JJ).*
- *If students have their own iPads is it possible that they adopt these into the system (AW)? It is possible but all the advice is not to enter into that idea (RD).*
- *Would it please be possible to build in some potential costs for the Full Governing Body, even for the pioneering group (TBF)? Looking at around £300 per head which equates to £18,000.*
- *Very supportive of this move. If this goes ahead there will be work to do on prospectus, an announcement on the website so that future parents are aware of the system in place (MW).*

To conclude it was agreed that although an exciting and promising proposal, this needs to go to the Full Governing Body as it is such a big project with financial commitments attached to it. Mr Dawson will record the presentation so that all Governors have the opportunity to listen to it prior to the meeting on 8th July. Thanks were extended to Mr Dawson for his hard work on this.

7. Headteacher's Update

Mr Buckland had the following updates:

- A lot of work has gone into putting evidence together for Year 11 and Year 12 GCSE / A Level awards, ensuring that the data stacks up, matches the policy and there are electronic files for samples and appeals. Credit to all teaching and support staff for their hard work.
- Looking at ways in which to run results day this year in light of Covid developments.
- The numbers for Sixth Form are looking really positive, with 15 external students joining and 130 internal students.
- Discovery Day has had to be postponed due to Covid and thus, Friday 3rd September will only have Year 7 and Year 12 students in so that the Year 7s can have their Discovery Day then,
- The Headteacher's PA, Miss Murray, is leaving at the end of the year to start her own business.
- All other appointments have been made and there will be a list for the Full Governors meeting, and even though there are 2.5 extra staff members, this has come under budget by around £60,000 due to lower scale appointments.

Mr Worth noted that the support staff have been amazing in the process of getting information organised for grade assessments.

Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed

Meeting closed at 7.20pm