

QUEEN ELIZABETH GRAMMAR SCHOOL, PENRITH

Minutes of a meeting of the Governors' Risk and Audit Sub-Committee held on 28th February 2022 at 6.20pm held via Zoom.

Present: Miss R McMann (Governance Professional)
Mr P Airey
Mrs T Boving-Foster
Mr G Miller
Mr J Ray (Vice Chair, Chaired meeting)

Quorum per Terms of Reference – 3 Governors

Governors present: 4 until the end of item 4, 3 Governors thereafter for the remainder of the meeting.

SLT present: Mr Buckland, Mr Dawson, Mrs Scott

Visitors: none

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted for Mrs Rae, Chair (work related) and Mr Worrall (family).

2. Declaration of Interest in Agenda Items

There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.

3. Minutes from the meeting held in November 2021

It was confirmed that all action points from the previous meeting have been done. As per the discussion in the previous meeting around the required number of internal audits, it has been agreed that Mr Ray will conduct two per year.

It was unanimously agreed that the minutes are a true record and Mrs Boving-Foster will sign these when in school.

4. Update on Statutory Accounts

There is nothing to update on these presently as there is no resolution to the ongoing situation. In response to a question around deadlines and missing these. The school has currently missed the December and January EFSA deadlines which results in being named in a document that details schools that have not submitted their accounts. The deadline for Companies House is 31st May and there is a small fine for not submitting these. It was noted that there may be a chance to appeal this, should the school find itself in this position.

With regards to the school website, the accounts would normally be displayed by now. Should there be any questions as to why they are not there, Mr Buckland will respond with a statement acknowledging that there is an ongoing investigation. It has

been decided that the use of a PR firm is not required for this, as it is expensive for very vague advice.

Mr Miller left the meeting.

5. Risk Register

As per the previous minutes, Mr Buckland, Mrs Scott and the rest of SLT have looked at this in-depth and updated the document. This has been previously circulated to the committee and Mr Buckland explained that any changes had been marked in red and he felt it is as good as can be.

Mrs Boving-Foster, whilst not questioning specific ratings / items on the document, queried if the document was produced in the spirit that it should be. For example, she cited that everything said it was mitigated against and there are no action points. From the Governing Body's point of view, she feels that the register forms part of the strategic oversight and thus, without any action points she felt it does not feed into the school's strategy.

Mr Ray asked Mr Buckland if he felt the document was useful or fulfilling a requirement? Mr Buckland answered that he felt it was useful to look at this annually. This was completed over two long meetings, where the document was analysed line by line and was a useful process although the document is not referred to all the time and these are things the school does on a daily basis. The school has plans and systems in place to mitigate the risks. Mr Dawson added that if the risks are not mitigated against, then the school is not doing its job properly.

Mr Buckland suggested that perhaps the format of the document could be changed and Mr Airey added that it would be perhaps be useful to have a column very briefly detailing how each risk is mitigated which gives Governors the option to explore further if they want to and acts as an aide memoir.

To conclude, it was agreed that this would not be resolved in this meeting. Mr Ray suggested that this be discussed further when he, Mrs Boving-Foster and Mrs Scott next have their fortnightly meeting. He added that he would also value the input of Mrs Rae on this. Therefore, it was agreed to do this and bring this back to the next meeting in June.

6. Internal Audit

Mr Ray conducted an internal audit in November of last year and the report has been circulated to the whole Governing Body. He was pleased to report that each audit gets better and this was the cleanest report yet. The update to the Financial Procedures Manual is certainly an aid. The next internal audit is to take place once the February Management Accounts are available.

Mrs Scott reported that the team are busy working on ensuring the school is ready to go digital with tax as per legal requirements. This is scheduled to be in place by 1st April, though the requirement is not until 1st October. This will make things easier in the long-term but getting everything in place is hard work.

The next meeting date is 27th June 2022 following the Finance and Pay meeting to be held via Zoom.

The meeting closed at 6.50pm.