



## ST MARY'S COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY HELD VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE ON THURSDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021

Present:	Mrs S Beecroft (Resources Chair 20/21) (SB) Mrs E. Best (Interim Principal) (EB) Mr P. Case (PC) Mr M Conboy (Chair 20/21) (MC) Mr A Kheratkar (AK) Mr P. Moore (PM) Rev Fr N. Wynn SM (BMAC Chair 20/21) (NW) Mr M. Wright (MW)
<b>Staff invited to be In Attendance:</b>	Lisa Farnhill (Clerk to the Board of Governors) (LF) Katrina Hollern (Business Manager) (KH)
<b>Students invited to Be in Attendance:</b>	Amaan Khan (invited but NOT in attendance) Alisha Kamran
<b>External parties invited by the Chair:</b>	Diana Frangou (RSM) (DF) Stephen Jones (ESFA) (SJ)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mr C. Beesley (CB) Mrs P. Lightbown (PL)

#### **Absent:**

#### **ITEM 1 - OPEN AND WELCOME**

The meeting was opened by Chair MC, welcoming members and attendees, with a particular note of welcome to Alisha Kamran attending as a student observer and Diana Frangou from RSM attending to deliver feedback from the recent IBR. MC thanked everyone for their time and invited Fthr NW to open the meeting in prayer.

#### **Item 1 - Noted**

---

#### **ITEM 2 - APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The apologies of PL and CB were detailed and accepted by the Board, with members asking for their thoughts and prayers to be passed onto PL.

**Item 2 - Accepted:** *The Board accepted the apologies detailed above.*

---

### **ITEM 3 - DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The standing interests of EB, NW, SB and LF were declared.

***Item 3 - Noted:*** *The Board noted the interests declared.*

---

### **ITEM 4 – TAG POLICY AND HANDBOOK TRAINING**

EB provided detail of the context to which the policy was written, outlining the requirement to draft a centre policy with the option to utilise the JCQ template, which EB confirmed had been adopted by SMC, with appropriate amendments to reflect College practice.

EB confirmed that as per the guidance, the policy was succinct and high-level with the additional detail included within the staff handbook, with both documents reviewed by a working group of staff and governors, with subsequent training for staff on all elements. EB advised that there was a requirement for the Head of Centre to submit a Centre Policy Form which included a statement of compliance and a copy of the policy, which for SMC had been submitted on 26<sup>th</sup> April, well in advance of the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> April. Following submission, the students had been provided with a copy and it was also available on the college website.

EB informed the Board of the need to take account of JCQ guidance which had been embedded by a link in the policy which included guidance for the creation of the centre policy, which must also give reference to how the College could take into consideration additional needs including adaptations, reasonable adjustments and access arrangements for those requiring them.

EB provided details of the 3 stage process for quality assurance process as follows:

1 – a review of the centre policy form by the awarding organisations, noting this may not be the awarding bodies used by SMC. This would provide assurance on the arrangements in place, to ensure they are appropriate. College's with gaps in the policy may be offered some support (noting that as yet the College had not been contacted with the expectation being that this indicates the policy was comprehensive).

2 - For Colleges where the policy does not provide adequate reassurance, or where there are gaps in the information, the awarding body will arrange for support and guidance to be issued and arrange a (virtual) college visit.

3 – After submission, Colleges, both targeted and random, will be contacted by the awarding organisation to conduct checks of the implementation of the centre policy. Targeted centres can be based on risk factors including but not limited to inflated or deflated grading.

EB drew the attention of the Board to the slides indicating the purpose of the policy, confirming that the presentation would be circulated for members to refer to slides 5 to 8 which highlighted the content and relevant page numbers, summarising how the policy meets the guidance, advising that links to the relevant guidance were included in the policy.

EB concluded by informing the Board of an update since the initial meeting with the working group. The Board were informed of a requirement for evidence to be submitted with the TAGs, for at least 1 A level class and 2 GCSE classes including English and Maths, noting that the College only offered the two GCSE's so both would be sampled. The sample of 5 students per class would be requested in the week of 21<sup>st</sup> June and submitted within 48 hours.

EB advised that the operational elements were documented within the TAG handbook, confirming that this was in line with the suggestion of JCQ - that centres would have a number of supportive documents for the operational approach to ensure valid and reliable outcomes for students. EB confirmed that these were referred to in the centre policy with live links incorporated into the final published version.

EB reassured the Board that there had been a wealth of supportive information and guidance, which had been digested by the senior staff and informed the documents, which were based on the JCQ template, but adapted to meet the needs of the College, whilst taking into account the initial guidance and supplemented by operational guidance and information, asking MM to provide details of the supplementary handbook.

MM shared his screen to present the training slides to the Board.

MM provided detailed information of the College's approach, including the time line, staff training and robust quality assurance steps to ensure that the outcomes were fair, justifiable and evidence based.

The three training sessions for staff were detailed, highlighting the importance of staff understanding in relation to the policy, process and evidence base, including the practical elements of how to upload the information.

MM reiterated the need for the TAGs to be evidence based focusing on what had been delivered and as a holistic judgement from across the course, through work and performance and not predicted grades.

The differing appeals process to the CAGs was outlined, which could now see a judgement, not just the administration, appealed against.

The broad range of evidence to be used to formulate grades was explained in detail to the Board, highlighting the suggested additional weighting to different types of assessments and the rationale for this, with more weighting on recent assessments, in particular, those covering more of the curriculum and with consistent conditions that were quality assured, including mock exams. It was noted that assessments that analysed single topics or areas, including homework, classwork or monthly summative assessments would have less weighting as these would be more open to circumstantial factors. MM described the evidence as an inverted pyramid, adding that this was advisory, without being prescriptive, stating no fixed percentage weighting would not be allocated to each area.

MM detailed the timeline, informing the Board of actions undertaken to date and actions to be completed, highlighting the importance of documenting and evidencing the quality assurance work to support any subsequent appeals.

MM confirmed that a similar quality assurance process as used in the CAG's would be adopted, with evidence collated and stored centrally to ensure appeals on results day can be managed swiftly even if staff are not available due to the altered date and pre-booked leave.

MM provided details of the internal and external deadlines, with assurance that the processes in place would ensure that these would be met, inviting questions from the Board.

**A member asked** how special consideration for pupils in extenuating circumstances would be taken into account when calculating the grades to ensure grades were fair for all pupils. MM advised that information had been collected throughout the students time at the College by the SEND co-ordinator, with special consideration applied to grades given in the assessments as they were taken.

This had been followed up with a survey to all students to provide the opportunity to detail any variation or special consideration, with this process resulting in a number of students coming forward to outline their circumstances.

Evidence was requested and information gathered which could be used to support a concession or consideration, with this information provided to the teacher and applied to mock exam results or towards the TAG, including detail of how this impacted the TAG. MM summarised the JCQ guidance and confirmed that students were given the opportunity to substitute work.

EB added that the considerations were reviewed by a panel with evidence shared and documented on a variation form which would be included in the evidence file, and, if necessary, transferred by the teacher to be transposed onto the student evidence form.

**A member commented** on the professionally delivered presentations, with the Chair thanking MM and EB for their detailed presentations. MC noted this year, the TAGs offered a more accurate way to provide results than had been seen nationally with the CAGs, indicating the evidence provided offered assurance of an accurate process that was fair and robust. The process was described as comprehensive and above criticism providing students with a fair evaluation of progress right through their studies.

**Item 4 - Resolved:** *The Board of Governors noted the details of the training provided.*

**ACTION** – Clerk to distribute the presentation slides to members for a detailed review of the content of slides 5 to 8.

---

#### **ITEM 5 - APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021**

The Chair proposed that the minutes fairly reflected the content of the meeting and asked members if they were happy to accept the minutes as approved. Unanimous approval was provided.

**Item 5 - Approved:** *The minutes of the meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> March were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting held by video conference.*

---

#### **ITEM 6 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021**

The Clerk summarised the matters arising and actions from the previous meeting, noting that the only outstanding item would be covered by Diana in Part B.

**Item 6 - Noted:** *The Board noted the details of the report and verbal update.*

---

#### **ITEM 7 - RESOURCES COMMITTEE UPDATE**

SB informed the Board that the minutes were circulated in the supplementary folder and offered a comprehensive account of the business covered. SB drew attention of the Board to key items to note as follows,

- HE - advising that discussions were held around the number of students who had struggled to adapt to learning online, with support outlined. It was noted that a number from LHU

would re-sit and one student from UCLAN had withdrawn following the challenging year of the pandemic, highlighting the financial impact for next year from the withdrawal, which would not be significant.

- Nurseries – noting that two nurseries had closed and progress in the remaining nursery was positive.
- HR – the report as circulated to the Board was highlighted to members as a key item, with SB indicating that the Committee had raised concern over the quality and reliability of agency staff, with reassurances provided by staff regarding the consistent use of one agency that offered a supportive service, in terms of reliability and quality.
- Teach out plan progress – SB noted how reassured the Committee were by the care and support for redundant staff
- H&S - again SB confirmed that the Board had received a copy of this key report, indicating how impressed the Committee, and SB as link governor had been with the work undertaken, particularly in relation to COVID safety measures. It was noted that as had been seen across the sector, students had not routinely uploaded their results to the NHS but had been reporting in to college and evidenced by low in college rates, with no in college transmission
- Premises – SB advised the Board that the Committee had received a full update on repairs to the roof with reoccupation scheduled once redecoration and mould treatment concludes in the coming weeks
- Finance – SB advised that KH had provided detailed updates through the management accounts which would be detailed to the Board later in the agenda. SB noted that a further one-page summary of progress against the emergency funding had been requested and provided, acknowledging her appreciation for the work of KH in keeping the budget extremely well controlled and on track.

#### **Item 7.1 - Emergency Funding Update**

MC invited KH to summarise the new emergency funding one-page report, with KH advising the Board that the College had claimed £531,529 from December to April, with no claim necessary in May or June, with the next to be made in July which would mostly be to fund the redundancy payments. It was noted that the process was going well, and was becoming more efficient each month.

The Chair reminded the Board that the total funding agreement was £5m, with applications to increase significantly in year 2. MC confirmed that staff costs would reduce in the final year, however, the College running costs would remain the same. MC highlighted that it should be noted that the College remained ahead of where it had expected to be by continuing with efficiencies where possible and it was hoped that this would be maintained to the end.

#### **Item 7.2 - HR Update Including an Update on the Staff Consultation**

EB confirmed that phase one had concluded and that a full review had been held with the Chair and HR manager ahead of her maternity leave and a summary report had been presented to the Resources Committee as summarised by SB.

#### **Item 7.3 - Termly Health and Safety Update**

KH was invited to add in any additional detail following the summary by SB, with KH confirming that COVID-19 dominated the plans and safety measures, however, all other statutory requirements were met as reviewed by the Committee. KH added that the risk assessment had been revised and

shared with SB and that policies relating to health and safety were under review, with EB confirming that an update would be included in her Principal's report under item 9

**Item 7 – Noted:** *The Board noted the update from the Resources Committee.*

---

## **ITEM 8 – QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE UPDATE**

As Vice Chair of the Committee, PM provided an update on behalf of Committee Chair CB.

PM confirmed that the meeting had taken place in the previous week, complimenting the staff on the quality of the reports and presentations, described as consistently thorough, adding that the staff presenting all displayed commitment and in-depth knowledge.

PM summarised the following work of the Committee:

- **Item 8.1 - Equality and Diversity** - PM confirmed that the Committee had received a report and plans for the coming year, noting that training for staff would be increased in this area in the coming year
- **Item 8.2 - The Curriculum Strategy Report** – the organisation and work towards full re-opening had been provided in detail and had impressed the Committee, noting that the full onsite delivery plans had been delayed due to the increase in the variant of concern, with these now in place for September
- **Item 8.3 - Safeguarding update**– PM confirmed that KS had delivered a detailed report providing information on activities undertaken and plans for continuing to improve support and maintain staff training
- **Item 8.4 - In Year Attendance, Retention and Withdrawals** – it was highlighted how the College was above national averages for retention in all areas with attendance also remaining positive. The Committee had commended staff for their work on this
- **Item 8.5 - HE Update** - PM confirmed that PL summarised the final OfS report which had provided assurance to the Committee that the college had met its requirements in relation to Consumer Protection

PM added that in addition, the Committee received an update on the Peer Pods Reviews, with staff working in groups of 3 to undertake peer observations, with the process well received with positive feedback and clear evidence of impact and follow up actions with further developments planned for September.

PM advised the Board that the Committee also reviewed reports on the TAG Process, commending the SLT for their support, training and communication for staff, student and parents.

PM concluded that the meeting had been positive, reiterating his praise on behalf of CB and the Committee for the level of commitment from staff that continued to hold high expectations, being thorough and well prepared for the questions of the Committee members.

EB reiterated her support and praise for staff, for their commitment and the quality of their work, confirming that this would be passed on.

**Item 8 – Noted:** *The Board noted the update from the Quality and Standards Committee.*

---

## **ITEM 9 - PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (PART A)**

EB informed the Board that as detailed in the student letter circulated, plans had been put in place to ensure a safe return to full face to face learning once the year 13 students had stood down, however, this decision was reviewed in light of the prevalence of the variant of concern locally. EB reminded the Board that the blended learning model still provided students with 66% of lessons face to face, with online lessons taking place live over MS Teams to ensure the quality of delivery was maintained.

EB summarised the meetings and stakeholder involvement in the decision, following the contingency framework, working with the ESFA, local authority, Public Health England North West and communicating the decision to parents and students whilst continuing to encourage students to take the lateral flow tests and report their results, noting a decline in the reporting of results by students.

EB informed the Board that the College had agreed to implement an in college PCR surge testing programme, organised and implemented by College staff, with all students that were present agreeing to participate, which resulted in an 87% completion rate for students. Staff also participated with a 97% test rate, with only two staff unable to due to extenuating circumstances. EB advised the Board that the tests were collected from the College to be taken for laboratory testing and a draft press statement was prepared, with plans drafted to move to full online learning should there have been a high rate of positive cases from the tests. EB informed the Board that only one positive case was identified from one of the student tests, therefore the college were able to maintain the blended approach to lessons.

**A member commented** on the high level of local cases with other providers having whole and partial closures, thanking EB and her team for all they were doing to keep the staff and students safe.

**Another member** provided details of the local surge testing and vaccination programme, with venues and availability for those over 18 to attend throughout the borough, including at the church opposite College. EB confirmed that they had been working with the vaccination centre at the church and had agreed to undertake the tests in College to ensure that they were completed and returned. **The member commended** the college for this approach, informing the Board that at a local school outbreak, students in a school where 100 positive cases were identified were provided with tests to give to family members. Despite the high prevalence and promoting the need to identify positive cases, only 10% of tests were returned, congratulating the SMC staff for supporting their learners and for encouraging them to help the community to stay safe.

**A member asked if** anyone over 18 could be vaccinated at the 'pop up' sites, with the member advising that anyone with contact with any elderly, or high risk person could receive a vaccination and no evidence of the connection was needed.

### **Item 9.1 - KPI update**

EB summarised the report circulated to members, drawing attention to the decline of 3 learners since the last report and providing an overview of learner numbers across all levels. EB ensured reasons for withdrawals and destinations (where known) were provided to the Board.

EB summarised the Peer Pod process informing the Board of the efficient organisation and positive impact, noting that full details had been provided to the Quality Committee, along with the retention details which were above the Sixth Form Colleges National Averages and internal targets in all areas.

EB confirmed that financial KPI's would be detailed by KH under item 10.1 and invited questions with none received.

**Item 9 including 9.1 – Noted:** *Members noted the details of the Principals report and KPI update.*

---

## **ITEM 10 – FINANCE**

### **Item 10.1 – Management Accounts**

KH provided a detailed overview of the monthly management accounts to the Board highlighting the following key information:

- The deficit YTD is £370,991 against a budgeted deficit of £394,446, a difference of £23,455.
- The cumulative cost of planned redundancies is £117,811 with the budget revised and cumulative budgets based on these figures
- Redundancy figures have been revised following staff resignations, with the planned deficit reduced in line with the savings
- Efficiencies continue to be made across all departments where possible.
- Income budget has increased by £17,000 to include a Teachers Pensions Grant and COVID-19 testing allocation
- COVID-19 cover needs remain low, with the Personnel budget reduced by £44,000, with £24,000 in year savings with Staff Costs reduced overall by £68,000
- The teaching budget has been reduced by a further £5,000 due to updated teaching methods
- The financial costs budget has been reviewed and reduced by £75,000 due to legal costs being less than expected.
- The general education budget is on track and administration is close to budget, both budgets remain unchanged.
- Premises budget remains unchanged despite some savings due to increased expenditure on utilities
- The leisure centre will not re-open. An amount has been included in the revised budget to cover the difference between CJRS received and staff costs. No further costs will be incurred
- Budgets for the nurseries are on track. No further income is due from the closed nurseries, however, some costs remain outstanding with the overall deficit reduced by £4,500.
- HE has a YTD surplus of £30,000, an increase of over £23,000 due to staffing, premises and marketing savings
- The cash balance at the end of April was £301,000. The agreed Emergency funding is profiled in the Cash flow

KH was thanked for the comprehensive update, with members noting how difficult it was to control budgets under the additional pressures of the pandemic and closure.

### **Item 10.2 – Risk Based Cash Flow**

KH informed the Board that this had been submitted to the ESFA in line with their requirements for the emergency funding agreement. It was noted that it included actuals to the end of March and a commentary, noting that the next return was a quarterly monitoring report to include actuals to the end of April due by the end of May, which would include the management accounts as presented.

**Item 10 – Noted:** *The Board noted the financial update.*

---

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair asked members if they had anything to raise, with nothing noted. The Chair thanked the student observer for their attendance, adding that he hoped that they would be able to continue to observe meetings and feel able to contribute in future meetings.

Part A closed at 7.10.pm

---