



Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held at  
The Tiffin Girls' School on Tuesday 22 September 2020

### MEETING HELD REMOTELY DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The meeting opened at 6.30pm. Governors present:

|                  |                        |                    |
|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Sarah Beeching   | Shelley Frost          | Donna Newell       |
| Kate Bevan       | Fazl-E Hasnain (Chair) | Carol Perry        |
| Lucy Boiling     | Claire Haynes          | Alison Shakespeare |
| Alexandra Buckle | Adrian Howe            | Hamish Stewart     |
|                  | Ian Keary (Head)       | Matt Toolan        |

Rosemary Jubraj (Clerk)

#### 1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Clerk reminded governors that the Chair of Governors and Vice Chair are elected at the first Governing Board meeting of each academic year, and that one nomination has been received for Chair of Governors. Fazl-E Hasnain has been nominated by Sarah Beeching and seconded by Carol Perry. The Clerk advised that Fazl-E Hasnain has indicated his willingness to stand and Fazl-E Hasnain left the meeting temporarily.

**Decision** - governors voted unanimously in favour of Fazl-E Hasnain taking the position of Chair of Governors for the academic year 2020-21. The Chair re-joined the meeting and thanked governors for their support.

The Chair nominated Kate Bevan as Vice Chair. This was seconded by Alison Shakespeare and the Chair advised that Kate has indicated her willingness to stand. No further nominations were received. Kate Bevan left the meeting temporarily.

**Decision** - governors voted unanimously in favour of Kate Bevan taking the position of Vice Chair of Governors for the academic year 2020-21. The Vice Chair re-joined the meeting.

#### 2. Declaration of Business and Pecuniary Interests

The Chair referred governors to Annex 1 previously circulated and noted the requirement for the Clerk to update the Register of Interests each year. The Clerk confirmed that all governors have returned their signed declarations and that no declarations have been made that are relevant to the agenda items for this meeting.

**Action** – the Clerk to update the Register of Interests and arrange for it to be uploaded to the website.

#### 3. Safeguarding and RSE Training

The Chair invited Sarah Finch, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), to provide a safeguarding update for the Governing Board. This included a summary of the revisions to Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2020 and an overview of the impact of the recent lockdown on safeguarding and pastoral care issues both nationally and locally. The DSL set out the wider pastoral support in place for students.

The DSL also provided an update for governors on the school's provision of statutory Relationship and Sex Education (RSE). Governors asked what proportion of parents have withdrawn their children from RSE and the DSL advised there have none in recent years. Governors asked what would be the mechanism if parents wanted to withdraw their child but the student disagreed. The DSL advised that the student would be withdrawn from RSE and the school has a legal obligation to provide RSE when the student reaches the latter half of Year 11.

*Agenda items taken out of order:*

## **12. Safeguarding – Internal Audit Report**

**SDP – Character:** *students are positive about school and feel safe*

The Chair referred to Annex 5 previously circulated and noted this is provided for governor information. The DSL advised governors that the school is obliged to submit the internal audit report on safeguarding to the local authority on an annual basis. Governors asked whether the school receives feedback from the local authority and the DSL advised not.

The DSL informed governors that the school is currently arranging a date for an external safeguarding audit.

Governors asked when will the transfer of safeguarding data to the MyConcern software program be completed. The DSL advised that all 'live' cases have been done and any new information is recorded on MyConcern. Some monitoring documents and all archive documents need to be transferred.

The Chair informed governors that the Clerk will send the link for the Prevent Duty online course by the end of this week and that they will be informed when the details for the delivery of the LGBT training has been finalised.

Governors requested some updates be made to this document.

*Alison Shakespeare left the meeting temporarily*

## **25. Safeguarding Policy**

**SDP – Character:** *students are positive about school and feel safe*

The Chair referred governors to Annex 17 previously circulated and noted the proposed revisions are aligned to the revised Keeping Children in Safe in Education effective September 2020. Guidance regarding remote learning in the event of a partial or full school closure is included.

**Decision:** Kate Bevan proposed that the Governing Board approve the revised Safeguarding Policy. This was seconded by Claire Haynes and governors voted unanimously in favour.

**Action:** the Clerk to arrange for the revised policy to be uploaded to the school website and circulated to all staff.

Governors thanked the DSL for her presentation and report.

*The DSL left the meeting.*

## **4. Governor Code of Conduct**

The Chair referred to Annex 2 previously circulated and noted that the proposed revisions relate to remote meetings.

**Decision:** The Chair proposed that the Governing Board approve the revised Governor Code of Conduct. This was seconded by Donna Newell and governors voted unanimously in favour.

**Action:** The Clerk to circulate the revised Code of Conduct to governors for signature and arrange for it to be uploaded to the school website.

*Alison Shakespeare re-joined the meeting.*

## **5. Safeguarding Declaration**

The Chair referred to Annex 3 previously circulated and highlighted the annual requirement for governors to sign a declaration confirming they have read and understood the relevant sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). The Clerk confirmed all signed declarations have been received.

6. **Apologies for Absence** – none, all governors present. The Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

7. **Non-governor Participants and Observers** - Emma Kilburn (Deputy Head)

8. **Minutes of Previous Meeting – 14 July and 25 August 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2020 were considered by governors. Hamish Stewart proposed, Alexandra Buckle seconded and those governors who had been present at the July meeting agreed the minutes as a true record.

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 25 August 2020 were considered by governors. Sarah Beeching proposed, Alison Shakespeare seconded and those governors who had been present at the August meeting agreed the minutes as a true record.

9. **Matters Arising**

**14 July meeting, the Chair reported:**

- Paragraph 5 (a) – two shortlisted firms will be interviewed on 30 September for the internal audit work
- Paragraph 8 – the premises visit on 2 October will take place remotely
- Paragraph 9 – the school term dates for 2021-22 are on the school website
- Paragraph 10 – the governor self-evaluation has been uploaded to the portal
- Paragraphs 21 to 30 and 32 – revised policies have been uploaded to the portal, circulated to all staff and published on the school website where relevant
- Paragraph 31 – governors were informed on 2 September via email of the Regional School's Commissioner approval of putting back the Stage One Test for admissions to Thursday 15 October and putting back the Stage Two Test to late November. The School has since confirmed that the Stage Two Test will take place on Saturday 21 November.

**Decision:** As the admissions test dates were agreed under delegated authority, the Chair proposed that the Governing Board approve the revised test dates as set out above. This was seconded by Adrian Howe and governors voted unanimously in favour.

**25 August meeting, the Chair reported:**

- Paragraphs 4-7, revised policy addenda have been uploaded to the portal, circulated to all staff and published on the school website

10. **Chair's Report**

The Chair gave governors the following updates:

- The DfE guidance on 'cyber security in schools - questions for governors' has been uploaded to the governor portal. The January GB meeting will include a report on the school's IT security arrangements to address the questions included in the guidelines.
- Donna Newell's term as parent governor ends in October 2020 and the Clerk has started the process for the election of a new parent governor. The closing date for nominations is 30 September.
- Some minor changes have been made to the governor induction document relating to completing safeguarding and other training to reflect current arrangements. This document is on the governance page of the school website.

11. **Head's Report**

The Head reported to governors on the following areas:

New colleagues – the Head listed the teaching and support staff who joined the school in September.

Site updates – the Head showed governors some photos of recent changes to the site, including additional handwashing facilities and canopy outside the hall, new seating in the canteen to reduce handling of chairs.

GCSE and A-Level results – the Head reminded governors of the information previously provided regarding the centre assessed grades for GCSEs and A-Levels summer 2020.

Destinations – the Head provided a summary of Y13 destinations.

Vision and Values / Strategic Targets 2022-23 – the Head reminded governors of the school’s vision and values. The strategic targets for 2022-23 were shared with staff at the start of term.

SDP 2020-21: – the Head reminded governors of the key elements of the School Development Plan that is structured around the core values of Community, Love of Learning and Character.

September update: – safeguarding and prevent training updates for all staff, examination review meetings with Heads of Department are ongoing, remote focus evenings delivered to each year group, Chromebooks being rolled out this week, external lettings have started, virtual house assemblies have taken place, Y12 transition day went well, different coloured lanyards by year group for Years 7-11 are working well, additional bike racks are being installed.

Exclusion data: – the Head provided a summary of exclusions in 2019-20.

Number on roll: – the Head informed governors of the numbers of students on roll by year group and the total number on roll is 1,219.

Attendance: – the Head showed governors overall attendance figures for 2019-20 for Y7-11, Y12-13, SEND, pupil premium and sixth form bursary students. The data also included the same information for the two previous years. The Head advised that all absences relating to self-isolation are being monitored daily.

## STRATEGIC FOCI FOR THIS GB

### 13. Examination Results 2020

**SDP – Love of Learning:** *all students continue to make excellent progress*

The Chair noted this report will be discussed in the confidential section of the meeting.

### 14. Student Attainment and Progress Key Performance Indicators 2020-21

**SDP – Love of Learning:** *all students continue to make excellent progress*

The Chair referred governors to Annex 7 previously circulated and the Head advised that the proposed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2020-21 are unchanged from the KPIs for 2019-20.

**Decision:** The Chair proposed that the Governing Board approve the Student Attainment and Progress KPIs 2020-21. This was seconded by Matt Toolan and governors voted unanimously in favour.

**Action:** the Clerk to amend the School Development Plan accordingly and upload to the governor portal.

### 15. Governance Annual Report 2019-20

The Chair referred governors to Annex 8 previously circulated and noted this report has been published on the school website and circulated to all parents.

### 16. Actions arising from Governor SEF 2019-20

The Chair referred governors to Annex 9 previously circulated and noted this table summarises the GB actions for 2020-21 and is provided for governor information.

### 17. Governance and Terms of Reference

The Chair referred governors to Annex 10 previously circulated and noted the proposed revisions are highlighted in the document. Information regarding remote meetings has been included (page 18) and the new paragraphs on page 7 regarding delegated authority mirror the wording added to the Scheme of Delegation in May 2020. Significant changes are proposed to the Audit and Risk Group terms of reference (page 23), as per the Academies Financial Handbook effective September 2020.

**Decision:** The Chair proposed that the Governing Board approve the revised Governance and Terms of Reference. This was seconded by Sarah Beeching and governors voted unanimously in favour.

**Action:** The Clerk to upload the revised document to the portal.

#### 18. Finance Report – M12 Accounts / 20 July Minutes

The Chair referred governors to Annex 11 previously circulated and advised that the actual unaudited result at 31 August 2020 is a surplus of £178k compared with the budgeted surplus of £52k. Most pluses and minuses (such as reduced catering and lettings income, furlough income, reduced exam fees, reduced occupational costs) are due to COVID-19. However, non-COVID-19 related items (teachers' pay & pension grants (£39k), lower staff cost (£44k)) are the main reasons for the positive variance of £126k.

#### 19. Budget 2020-21 and Medium Term Financial Plan

The Chair referred governors to Annex 12 previously circulated and advised that the budget for 2020-21 shows a surplus of £31k and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) also shows surplus for the next two years. The Chair noted that these are uncertain times and the actual results may differ due to unpredicted costs.

Adrian Howe, Finance and Contracts Committee (FCC) Chair, informed governors that the FCC reviewed the draft budget in detail at the July extraordinary meeting and highlighted the financial risks regarding lettings and catering income. The budget update provided by the Finance Manager includes a £40k increase in opening reserves for 2020-21 as there was a higher than predicted surplus at the end of 2019-20. Also, the school has committed £90k towards the sports hall planning costs, see agenda item 23 below. The Head advised internal lettings are unlikely for the foreseeable future due to the pandemic.

**Decision:** Adrian Howe proposed that the Governing Board approve the budget for 2020-21 (page 3 of Annex 12). This was seconded by Donna Newell and governors voted unanimously in favour.

The FCC Chair directed governors to the MTFP on page 13 of Annex 12 and noted that from September 2021 onwards the school will no longer be subject to lagged funding associated with increasing the number of forms of entry from 4 to 5 and then from 5 to 6. The level of reserves will be monitored carefully by the FCC. This document is based on reasonable assumptions and provided for GB guidance. There is no requirement to submit the MTFP to the ESFA this year.

**Decision:** Adrian Howe proposed that the Governing Board approve the medium term financial plan (page 13 of Annex 12). This was seconded by Sarah Beeching and governors voted unanimously in favour.

**Action:** The Clerk to inform the Finance Manager that the budget for 2020-21 and MTFP have been approved by the Governing Board.

#### 20. Governor Training Report

The Chair referred governors to Annex 13 previously circulated and noted that Sarah Beeching and Lucy Boiling spent a considerable amount of time completing the DfE Leadership Development Programme for Governors in the summer term. Sarah and Lucy presented a summary of the training course, comprising 3 units on strategic leadership, effective governance and financial oversight, educational improvement. Key lessons for the GB were outlined.

With respect to the recommendations noted in Sarah and Lucy's evaluation forms, the Chair advised:

- (i) Staff retention – the Pay and Personnel Committee (PPC) review the reasons for staff departures every term. In addition, the PPC annually receives a report summarising matters discussed at exit interviews. The main reason for staff leaving is the cost of living in Kingston.
- (ii) Financial benchmarking – the DfE's financial benchmarking report is reviewed by the FCC at the June meeting. This was not done in June 2020 as the DfE have not published the 2019 report. However, the November 2020 FCC meeting will review the first version of the 'Integrated Curriculum Financial

Planning' model to ensure that resources are allocated appropriately to meet the learning needs of students.

- (iii) Fraud – the school's internal control system and procedures are efficient and effective, and this is confirmed by internal and external auditors as their reviews and testing have not resulted in any significant recommendations for improving the system. However, no internal control system can eliminate all risks and it therefore provides only reasonable but not absolute assurance that no fraud will take place.
- (iv) Risk management is continually under review, especially with respect to the current unpredictable COVID-19 situation.
- (v) Systems and procedures for 'overseeing the school's financial performance and ensuring that the money is well spent' are good and effective.

## 21. ESFA Letter to Accounting Officers

The Chair referred governors to Annex 14 previously circulated and advised that this letter covers COVID-19 support, changes to the Academies Financial Handbook and Academies Accounts Direction. This letter, as with all such letters from the ESFA to Accounting Officers, is on the portal.

## 22. Admissions Information Year 7 Entry 2018-2020

The Chair referred governors to Annex 15 previously circulated and highlighted to governors that only two appeals were made regarding admission to Year 7 in September 2020, neither of which were upheld.

## 23. Sports Hall Update

The Head provided governors with the following update:

- The DfE have agreed in principle the CIF bid of £2.9m for the sports hall
- Further DfE requirements have been met
- Full approval won't be granted until full planning consent is in place and the stage 2 design complete. This could cost up to £270k. The Support Tiffin Girls' School Company have committed £180k and the school has committed £90k.
- Two contractors are being interviewed 24 September
- The school is engaging with local councillors and local resident groups
- Planning application 4-5 weeks' time
- Full approval target is January/February 2021

The Chair informed governors that the school's payment of £90k is an advance payment. Therefore, it is a cashflow item and will not have any impact on reserves unless the project does not proceed either because planning permission is not given by RBK or because the ESFA rejects the tender proposal. Based on the Head's discussions with RBK and ESFA, the risk of the project not going ahead is low.

**Decision:** the Chair proposed that:

- (i) the SLT proceeds with the planning application and formal tender proposals from the two shortlisted contractors
- (ii) costs to be incurred for this initial work will be approximately £270k
- (iii) up to £90k to be provided by the school towards these costs (£180k balance will be provided by the Support Tiffin Girls' School Company)
- (iv) the governor working group (comprising Shelley Frost (Chair), Kate Bevan, Lucy Boiling and Matt Toolan) reviews the tenders and recommends the preferred contractor to the GB for approval before submission to the ESFA and
- (v) the overall supervision of the project to be done by the working group.

This was seconded by Alexandra Buckle and governors voted unanimously in favour.

#### **24. Contingency Plan for Remote Education**

The Chair referred governors to Annex 15 previously circulated and noted the comprehensive plan in place in the event of another school closure. The Head set out additional plans in the event of a student, form group or year group being unable to attend school due to COVID-19.

Governors asked about contingency plans if a number of teachers are off sick. The Head advised that the same principle applies, e.g. where staff are self-isolating but not unwell, those staff will deliver lessons from home using Google Classroom, or Google Meet, and a cover assistant or another member of staff will supervise the students in school.

#### **26. Probation Policy**

The Chair referred governors to Annex 18 previously circulated and noted this is a new policy regarding the introduction of a probation period for teachers recruited in specific circumstances, as set out in the report summary. This policy has been reviewed by the Pay and Personnel Committee at their June meeting and they are recommending it to the Governing Board for approval.

**Decision:** Claire Haynes proposed that the Governing Board approve the Probation Policy. This was seconded by Carol Perry and governors voted unanimously in favour.

**Action:** the Clerk to arrange for the policy to be circulated to all staff and uploaded to the governor portal.

#### **27. Appraisal for Teachers Policy**

The Chair referred governors to Annex 19 previously circulated and highlighted the proposed revisions as set out in the report summary. These have been reviewed by the Pay and Personnel Committee at their June meeting and they are recommending them to the Governing Board for approval. Consultation has taken place with teaching union representatives and teaching staff. The HR Director has advised that no amendments are required following consultation.

**Decision:** Carol Perry proposed that the Governing Board approve the revised Appraisal for Teachers Policy. This was seconded by Alison Shakespeare and governors voted unanimously in favour.

**Action:** the Clerk to arrange for the revised policy to be circulated to all staff and uploaded to the governor portal.

#### **28. Items of urgent business - none**

#### **29. Key Dates**

The Chair drew attention to the dates of the meetings and governor visits for the autumn term as set out on the agenda.

#### **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

The Chair informed governors that Donna Newell's term of office as parent governor will complete on 18 October. The Chair thanked Donna for her contributions to the governance of the school over the last four years.

The Head thanked governors for all the additional contributions they have made in supporting the school to fully reopen at the start of September.

The meeting ended at 8.40pm