

THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL
Minutes of the Student and Community Committee Meeting
Tuesday 26th April 2022

Time: 6 pm
Place: The Hub and via Zoom
Present: **In person**
Jo Trigg (JT) (chair), Amanda McClean (AM), Eleanor Shergold (Clerk) (ES)
Via Zoom
Pete Gear (PG), Martin Sandford (MS), Helen Thorne (HT), Adrian Hart (PBSC Manager),
Joshua (Y10), Poppy (Y10)
Advisers: **In person**
Linda Baines (LBA), Sara Ambrose (SAM)
Via Zoom
Helen Kerr (HKE)
Apologies:

Agenda Item	Actions Agreed	Who
67/22	To discuss Friends and Friends funds	PG/SAM
68/22	Character Education to be a focus agenda item a couple of times next year	JT
69/22	To forward email conversation with SAM re PA	JT
74/22	Governor postcards to be sent	JT

64/22 Apologies

There were no apologies.

65/22 Declaration of Business Interests

Governors were reminded to declare business interests as necessary.

66/22 Student Leadership and Student Voice

Joshua and Poppy were welcomed to the meeting. They gave feedback on questions provided in advance.

How are relationships between the schools in town – does the wider community feel a ‘safe space’? Both students feel perfectly safe and that there is no malice between the schools. Perhaps there has been rivalry in the past but the community as a whole feels like a safe space. **Governors asked if there are any areas that feel less safe.** Both felt that there are places that you need to be more careful but that this was more about common sense than an issue the school can fix.

On line learning and safety – how important is this to you and do you feel the school helps you to feel more confident in this space? Is there more we could do as a school to help with online safety? Students didn't think that the school could do much more as parents also provide support. Microsoft also has some protection. Online safety is drilled into children in primary school. **Governors asked about online safety for students whose parents aren't as supportive.** Students perceived that there would be a greater need for support when this is the case.

Safety – there seems to be a number of students this year hanging around in and outside toilets, is this intimidating to other students? Are there places in school that feel more intimidating and is there anything more we can do? Students did not think that this was really a problem. There are some occasions when people hang around the toilets. This is not consistent and more intimidating for the younger years perhaps.

Thinking about the school site in general and how the school operates, is there anything that you think could be improved or changed? Things that we do really well? Feedback given – it was thought that the heating could be turned off earlier. Also, in the winter it is really cold outside and there are not many places to go inside.

Governors thanked the students for attending and for spending time thinking about the questions asked.

Poppy and Joshua left the meeting.

It was acknowledged that online safety is revisited regularly for students as not all have support at home and things are constantly evolving.

LBA left the meeting.

67/22 Minutes and Matters Arising

21/22 – the Character Education Kite Mark application will be circulated when it has been completed

40/22 – Friends of JOG and Friends funds – update carried forward

59/22 – year to date information has been added to starters and leavers data

61/22 – proposed amendments to the Admissions policy will be made next year to the 24/25 policy

63/22 – a welcome letter will be sent to all Y6 students from the chair of governors

The minutes of 1 March were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

68/22 Character Education

SAM gave an update at the meeting. In some ways lots of headway has been made with the infrastructure. Progress is being made in aligning the school values and using this language in the classroom – the idea of living a value filled life. Class charts is the primary tool. Staff award positive points and reports can be run from there. It is live and there is a Character Education section on school the website.

The Kite Mark is a very in-depth process and requires more investment of time in staff training. To be awarded the Kite Mark the school would be inspected. The language needs to be further embedded. In morning welcome one of the values is used each week. Students would be able to communicate what the values are. More work is needed for staff to be able to communicate these confidently and how these are reflected in the curriculum and the Gatsby benchmarks. All classrooms need to have the values displayed.

SAM gave an overview of what is working well and where some of the challenges are. She has worked with the DLs re extracurricular provision. Primarily the focus has been on resilience, excellence and ambition – celebrating successes.

In terms of attitude and impact, it is not embedded yet. **Governors asked whether the school is close to a decision as to whether to go for the Kite Mark or concentrate on deeper embedding.** SAM was of the opinion that it would be better to invest more time in embedding. Assemblies are there, in conversations with students and award points, it is there. It needs to be more in the fabric of the school, which takes time. The infrastructure is there. Fortnightly reports can be run from class charts. **Governors said that it would be good to see how it is reflected across the values, e.g., ambition might be more difficult to see, the more examples staff have from colleagues the more confident they will feel.**

Capturing what students do outside of school is difficult. SAM has explored a digital platform with Oakford, but this is still involves uploading information.

Governors asked where SAM thinks the school is in terms of timelines. SAM – the current Y7 are in a good place. It is being trialled with Y8. In 2 years time the school would be in a better place to apply for the Kite Mark. To ensure opportunities for all in terms of cultural capital this is reflected in trips and the extracurricular offer. Covid has had an impact on this. **Governors recognised that it is still a difficult time.**

Governors noted that it would be good to have this as a focus item a couple of times next year to see how things are changing and becoming further embedded.

69/22 Attendance

Data circulated in advance of the meeting. Attendance is a focus area for June S&C.

Persistent absence (PA) is a concern at 35% for the whole school. SAM – this is very difficult to benchmark accurately. How the DfE is tracking attendance has changed since pre-pandemic and is now recorded fortnightly on one given day. SAM has tracked the bi weekly average and thinks that the data is 5% adrift if it is viewed in this wider context. Pre-pandemic PA was 13-14%. The challenges around reducing PA were discussed.

Action – to forward email conversation with SAM re PA

JT

To reduce PA absence needs to be challenged, which becomes an emotive subject, more so post pandemic. There are definite successes – the minibus goes out every Friday to Seymour and regularly collects 9 students, all of whom are PP and have had poor attendance patterns on a Friday. Additionally, there is a lot of work going into early intervention. Letters have been sent to parents of students on the cusp of PA. **Governors noted that people are naturally more reticent since the pandemic.** SAM – there are still a lot of rearranged holidays. There has also been a rise in the number of students being absent due to grief and to attend funerals. **Governors asked about the long term impact on individual students health and school behaviour.** SAM – SEN is a bigger concern as attendance is on the decline and below national. SEN students naturally have more medical appointments and more complications when unwell. There are also significant mental health issues and not enough resources out there to support them when they are unable to attend school.

Governors asked about the overlap between PA and children missing in education. SAM and HKE explained the different levels of response. They meet with SHI fortnightly. When missing for a set amount of time there is a specific referral that SHI will do. SAM and HKE meet with the student development team and discuss this type of thing and the best course of action. Automated truancy calls go out when students are not at school. Phone calls always take place if no reason is given for absence. HKE has set up welfare calls with vulnerable students. It is multi-pronged but the teams work closely together. Much of the response is determined by the legal requirement. It kicks in the day that the student misses school and escalates according to the situation, becoming more formal. Children missing in education are more vulnerable in addition to life opportunities being compromised.

SAM left the meeting.

70/22 Behaviour and Bullying

Adrian Hart (PBSC Manager) was welcomed to the meeting. He has been in post for 6 weeks. He is tightening up on routines and procedures while getting to know students and focusing on maintaining a consistent approach so that students know what to expect. His next task is to look at how best to utilise the skills in the team and how to differentiate isolation. HKE – the school is delighted that Adrian has joined us. He is highly qualified and line manages the PBSC staff. His proactive approach is really positive.

HKE has been reviewing behaviour reports over the term – not just data but information shared with year leaders and SLT. The year started off really well with the number of behaviour points awarded. Covid has had an impact on positive behaviour points and HKE has reminded staff that we all work better with praise.

PBSC – the weekly average of the number of students sent to the PBSC in term 3 was 70 in comparison to 95 in term 4. HKE has looked into this further. A number of students were sent there more than once, struggling to maintain expectations. Adrian has been able to facilitate interventions supported by PBSC staff. External intervention is so limited that it allocated as soon as it comes up. Part of the behaviour improvement plan is to look at what the school wants to get out of behaviour intervention. HKE is compiling a database of intervention received and the impact that it has had.

In summary – in term 3 there were 504 incidents where students were sent to the PBSC for a second warning. This involved 185 students. 97 of these students went at least twice, 67 at least 3 times. HKE gave some background information to this and hopes that Adrian will be able to take some of the students who are struggling under his wing. He has been proactive and met with lots of parents last half term and with every year team to make sure that communication is effective. He is really supportive of the student development team. HKE works closely with VMA and SHI to get the right intervention in place.

HKE – one of the things that is lacking is the capacity for tutors to take on an element of a pastoral role. Time is taken up with checking homework, reading, learning, etc, which are all important but give little time for any pastoral concerns to be picked up. HKE hopes that it will be possible to build in balance in the new year.

Governors asked about the massive drop in positive points awarded. HKE the last 2 terms have been tricky because of Covid. This then means less consistency in points given and is a concern as one of the things that has been a motivator is the rewards menu. This has been set as achievable but if the points are not awarded then the prizes are not attainable. HKE plans to address this more widely with staff.

Governors asked about the trend in negative points awarded. HKE – this was fairly consistent in terms 1 and 2 and dropped in term 3. HKE expressed concern that since half term it has really peaked again.

Governors asked about the impact of year groups working from home, whether this has had a negative impact. HKE – there has been an increase in behaviour that starts outside of school and comes into school. Not just on social media but with neighbours, etc. Having been cramped for 2 years some of that social conditioning has been missed. There are less boundaries online and then students come back into school with social conditioning reflecting online rules. There have been a few instances of large groups of students swarming on smaller groups. The school is working with year leaders to address this.

Positive Environment Guidance – **governors expressed concern about lack of information re positive rewards and that the guidance seemed to focus more on minimising physical intervention.** HKE outlined procedures around use of physical restraint and how rarely it is used (3 times in the last 10 years). Training is to be updated. **Governors asked about the training and how many staff are trained.** HKE is looking into refresher training for about 8 members of staff.

In terms of Positive Environment HKE is looking at the new Ofsted framework and an environment conducive to mental wellbeing and teaching and learning. To make the physical environment reflect what the school expects from the students.

Adrian left the meeting.

71/22 Safeguarding and Student Wellbeing

Data and safeguarding audit circulated in advance of the meeting.

MS, link governor for safeguarding, gave a summary overview of the audit.

Although the answer to the following question is yes, *‘Are all staff aware that mental health problems can indicate abuse or neglect as well as having an impact on their behaviour and education? Are there clear systems in place for identifying possible mental health problems and taking immediate action when a child presents with a mental health concern that is also a safeguarding concern?’* MS highlighted the scope for improved capacity in terms of resources. HKE – SAM and HKE both have government funding to undertake MH lead training. They are doing different courses so that they complement each other. HKE has led a lot of staff training on MH awareness and MH first aid. Some members of staff have also done the MH first aid training. This is regularly revisited in staff briefings.

Overall MS reported that he was happy with his link governor visits and the outcome of the audit.

HKE reported that Peer on Peer abuse is ‘effective’ rather than ‘highly effective’ as this is a work in progress. The working party is ongoing. JMO led a staff briefing recently. HKE has taken assemblies for all year groups.

The school is in the process of working with the Princess Diana Memorial Trust training students to be anti-bullying ambassadors. EAD is taking the lead on this.

Governors made the observation that lower attendance is always a cause for concern – if students aren't in school where are they. Confidence was expressed that the school has this in hand.

Safeguarding data – governors asked if the school is seeing the figures increase. HKE – child protection is moving to a different model, changing the landscape a little. The school is working more closely with the police. The impact of Covid continues. The school is starting to see an increase in MH issues and domestic abuse. This escalation was expected. The student development team has looked at how they can be more proactive as a team. One of the things they have been able to do in response to the increased need is for every member of the team to work from home for half a day.

72/22 Stability Report – Starters & Leavers

Due to staff sickness there was no data update for this meeting.

Y7 admissions. HKE reported that she is just about to start primary school visits. The school is oversubscribed and is using Wiltshire Council's admissions service to manage appeals. The school is losing 170 Y11s and gaining 270 Y7s.

73/22 Policies

Equality and Diversity – brings together 2 previous policies and ties in with the Equality Objectives.

Student Confidentiality – dates refreshed and format updated, otherwise no updates.

Both policies were agreed.

Behaviour for Learning – this policy was approved at the February board meeting. A couple of grammatical points were raised. However, governors agreed that this would be picked up at the next review.

74/22 Governor Postcards

This was discussed and agreed.

75/22 AOB

JT informed the committee that she will step down from S&C at the end of this school year. Consideration will need to be given to the role of chair of S&C and the number of governors on the committee.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm. Date of next Student & Community Meeting – Tuesday 14th June 2022.

Signed: _____ Date: _____