

**THE JOHN OF GAUNT SCHOOL**  
**Minutes of the Student and Community Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Time:** 6 pm  
**Place:** The Hub  
**Present:** **In person**  
 Martin Sandford (MS) (chair), Amanda McClean (AM), Sophia Oleszynski (SO), Daniela Coy (DC), Ruby (KS5 student), Eleanor Shergold (ES) (clerk)  
**Via Teams**  
 Pete Gear (PG), Debbie Shadwell (PG's amanuensis), Toby (KS5 student)

**Advisers:** **In person**  
 Helen Kerr (HKE), Matthew Woodville (MWO)  
**Via Teams**  
 Sara Ambrose (SAM), Linda Baines (LBA), Sarah Hill

**Apologies:** Gemma Pugh (GP)

Agenda Item	Actions Agreed	Who
19/23	To refer the need for gender neutral toilets & changing rooms to R&A	MS
20/23	List of link charities and health agencies to be sent to SAM for consideration	ES/GP
23/23	To bring interventions map to January S&C	HKE
25/23	ZLE to be invited to January S&C	HKE
29/23	Governor postcards to be sent	MS

**17/23 Apologies**

Apologies were agreed and accepted.

**18/23 Declaration of Business Interests**

Governors were reminded to declare business interests as necessary.

**19/23 Student Leadership KS5**

Ruby and Toby (KS5 students) joined the meeting.

**Students were asked for feedback on the rewards available for positive behaviour points and how this could be developed further.** They had consulted other year groups. Some want products to be updated to reflect current trends with a better variety of gift cards. HKE is keen that this is driven by students. **Governors asked students if they thought that the rewards system works.** Ruby – yes, particularly for the younger year groups. By the time students get to Y11 they are not so invested in it. HKE asked if there was another motivator, but students had not come up with a solution. HKE said that she looks at the rewards to make sure that the prizes are achievable. Ethical prizes were discussed, which is held in tension with needing to give options that allow good value for money as many students are economically challenged. HKE is happy to be guided by the student body and asked Ruby to carry out a survey. Fidget poppers are disposable and highly plastic. These were requested by ADHD students.

There was a time of discussion about the 'invisible middle' in terms of reward points. Students who excel are perceived to attain more points as do those who struggle with their behaviour.

**Governors wanted to understand how LGBT is represented and whether the school does enough for the community.** Toby and Ruby had sought feedback from other students. Mixed toilets were introduced in the school a few years ago, something that seemed to be a response to the trans issue re what toilets

students use. However, these are still labelled as gender specific. It was suggested that some gender-neutral toilets would be a solution. **This was perceived to be a simple solution, to be referred to Resources & Audit. Governors were pleased with the progress of the Rainbow Award.**

The need for gender neutral changing rooms and the challenges around this was also discussed. There is a strong case for additional resources.

#### **Action – to refer the need for gender neutral toilets & changing rooms to the R&A committee**

**MS**

Ruby and Toby were of the opinion that in general the school does well. LGBT is embedded in lessons. Education is important and the curriculum needs to be kept updated as things are always changing. They received positive responses from peers who are part of the community. Friends Like Us also includes allies. SSC heads this up with a 6<sup>th</sup> form student taking a lead. They are looking to involve the whole school, extending involvement beyond 6<sup>th</sup> form.

**Governors asked if there are any local charities that the school supports.** HKE – the school supports the foodbank every year. Ruby is putting on a Christmas film night for 6<sup>th</sup> form. They will choose a local charity to support. LBA – the whole school charity is Dorothy House, which is also in support of a colleague who passed away during the summer.

**Governors asked if there were any concerns that Toby and Ruby wanted to raise.** There was nothing at this time. Any concerns raised by the student council would be brought to them or LBA.

**Governors asked for feedback on one thing the school does really well.** The 6<sup>th</sup> form support network is really good, a supportive environment for those that may be struggling. Signposting re opportunities for 6<sup>th</sup> form students is also really useful.

LBA, Toby and Ruby left the meeting.

#### **20/23 Minutes and Matters arising**

6/23 – Student voice questions to be circulated and prepared by link Governor – **completed**. Any further questions to be sent to SO

8/23 – List of link charities and health agencies to be sent to SAM for consideration – **carried forward**

9/23 – New Governor to attend Bullying meeting – **completed**. DC attended and was very impressed with the course that students had done in July. There are a few campaigns going on re anti-bullying awareness. Students have asked for a noticeboard to promote these. A survey is being carried out to RAG rate the site for safety. HKE is helping collate this. Students will be writing to parent's with HKE's support as part of the campaign

10/23 – Explore College Links, notably pre-16 Alternative Provision – **completed**. College has appointed a new schools' liaison and admissions manager. HKE is in regular contact with her and HKE's QA visit is due to take place next month

14/23 – Read Admissions Policy for full review at next meeting – **completed**. Policy agreed at October board as per discussion at S&C on 1<sup>st</sup> March. As there are changes to the policy it will go out to consultation this term

The minutes of 14 September were agreed and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **21/23 Attendance**

SAM circulated an attendance update in advance of the meeting. **Governors asked if she is happy with how things are going.** SAM – the school is tracking in line with FFT at 92.7% in comparison with 92.5%. Ideally the school would like to be closer to its target for attendance but this is in a post Covid context. SAM said that Y11 is the biggest challenge and is the most adrift in terms of FFT tracking. This is down to the impact of a significant minority. SAM gave a summary update of how the school is working with outside agencies to address this. There was a significant dip in Y8 attendance in October, the impact of a 3-day week around half term. SAM said that this has a significant impact on attendance, a noticeable trend over

the last 3 years.

The school is following all protocols as per 'working together to improve school attendance' and is seeing the Covid legacy alongside school refusal re MH issues and general medical issues. Persistent absence overall to date is 22% in comparison to 21% for FFT.

SAM left the meeting.

## 22/23 Young Carers

Sarah Hill joined the meeting to give an update. There are 34 registered young carers and the school is aware that there will be more that they don't know about. There is always a need to be proactive as it has an impact on student attendance and ability to engage in lessons and extra-curricular activities. Support starts early on, even before students join the school.

JOG was recently involved in a pilot scheme to give accreditation to young carers, identifying them and putting support in place. It is important to identify barriers as for many this is the norm and they don't want to be seen as different or may not think that its important for the school to know.

There is a standing item each term in the newsletter aimed at identifying and supporting students. A letter is included in all new starter packs. There is a young carers' notice board and the subject is covered in staff training. There is a dedicated email address as well as a 'how am I' form that is reviewed every term. The school works closely with Youth Action Wilshire who provide students with the opportunity to have support outside of school.

The school takes a very personalised approach as each students' needs are different. Some appreciate group support, some are more private. There is a Monday morning group run by a Y11 student, an opportunity to play games and chat with each other or Sarah.

The key to improved emotional wellbeing, academic engagement and attendance is for the school to know about young carers, what they need, what support is beneficial for them at that time and for them to know they are supported.

**Governors asked how many of the 34 students make it to the support group.** Sarah said that the majority of the younger students do and that this tails off as students go up through the years. **Governors asked what the biggest area of concern is.** Sarah – when circumstances change that the school is not aware of. The school has a great pastoral team who students find to be approachable.

HKE informed governors that Sarah is being recognised as one of the county leads in good practice because of the work she is doing. She has established good links with wider carer support.

**Governors asked about students not represented at parents' evenings.** Sarah does provide support when its needed but the online parents evenings have addressed this to a certain extent.

**Young Carers policy** – this was agreed.

Sarah Hill left the meeting.

## 23/23 Behaviour and Bullying

Bullying – the antibullying ambassadors are keen to promote anti-bullying messages through publicity and fun events. There is going to be a colour run, a sponsored event for Y7 and Y8 supported by Active Trowbridge, to stand together as a community against bullying.

**Governors asked if there has been a decrease in the number of incidents being reported.** HKE looks at the data carefully and it has been consistent. There is still a legacy of thinking that if you report bullying it will make it worse. Data is quite limited but is logged when reported. Bullying behaviour is investigated and along with instances of racist and homophobic behaviour it is dealt with robustly. There is still an issue with girls saying that they don't bother reporting derogatory language as its just what happens. The school is working hard to make sure that staff are hyper vigilant so that this is addressed.

Behaviour summary information circulated in advance of the meeting. Over 50% of students have received no negative points this academic year. There are very few students in the support centre. Those that are there are often only there once. There are some students who return frequently. This is partly due to the legacy of Covid. Students who missed transition and/or spent time in a bubble at school. Some of the formative social skills have been learned online. There has been some discussion about addressing this in lesson time and what this might look like.

Rewards still outweigh concerns raised.

HEK gave an update on pastoral team staffing. Sarah Hill has been supporting the year teams. For the first time in quite some time the teams will now be fully staffed.

PP and SEND trends discussed. HKE will bring an interventions map to next S&C.

#### **Action – to bring interventions map to January S&C**

**HKE**

**Governors noted the difference between Y7 and Y11 reward points.** HKE did not know why this is the case. Staff are given regular reminders. **A question was asked about whether different rewards are needed for older students.** HKE – this is where feedback is needed from students.

#### **24/23 Marketing & Comms**

Word of Mouth – the most powerful message in education. Influencing this is difficult. Currently word of mouth is positive. There has been lots of positive feedback from the recent 6<sup>th</sup> form open evening. The school is trying to harness positive feedback through social media. Facebook is going well and MWO is looking at resurrecting Twitter and Instagram, paying for software that links one post across all 3 platforms. This would increase the school's presence.

Working with External Organisations – the school is looking at a transition project working with other organisations with taster days in term 6. HKE and MWO have some ideas around marketing and are looking at how to become a charity with Tesco and ASDA.

CSL – collaboration is being encouraged, with most DLs attending network meetings to foster those relationships. This really helps bridge transition.

Website – this is in a state of flux. MWO met with the designers a couple of weeks ago and some tweaks will follow soon. He is keen to add some testimonials from students on the 6<sup>th</sup> form page. Photos also need to be updated which will be done in the spring when the weather is better.

Letters and Emails Home – currently there is a lack of checks and balances in the system. Sometimes there is too much information being sent out, sometimes not enough. There needs to be a standardisation of the format and use of language and to get a handle on what's being sent out. MWO is working with EGR on this.

Uniform – there was some confusion around the new PE kit at the start of term 1, about which items are mandatory and concerns over the quality, both causing concern for parents. There are also lots of issues around the cost of living. Rather than review the policy now and have to look at it again for next year MWO advised a full review of the policy early in the new year and for this to include consultation. Governors agreed to this course of action.

Lead Marketer – MWO is reluctant to add further salary to the budget with the school joining EQUA. This will be considered at an EQUA level.

The ultimate test of marketing is student numbers and applications. It is a bit soon to know numbers for next year as the closing date isn't until the 31<sup>st</sup>. The school is still receiving applications for the current Y7.

#### **25/23 Y7 Transition**

The programme is successful and primary schools give really positive feedback. Transition starts mid-

February and discussion is already underway with primary schools. There are various activities targeting different cohorts – most able, anxious, those who need to develop confidence in sport, master classes, etc.

The school is working on engaging with families sooner with taster days and enhanced transition for SEN – including Forest school, speech & language and anxious but not SEND. There is a behaviour and attendance afternoon focusing on expectations. A new session has been introduced for those coming from small primary schools.

Primary school visits – HKE does all of these, or ZLE attends if HKE can't.

Summer school was really successful. HKE has met with Hayley from Active Trowbridge and this will run again next year. HKE is keen to invite school staff to come in and support Active Trowbridge to run this so that students can get to know them. **Governors asked if parents pay for students to attend.** This is all free, including food. Is for Y6 and siblings in Y5 as well any other priority Y5 students. **Governors asked how staff would feel about coming in during the summer.** HKE said that there are staff who would enjoy this and they would be paid to attend. The information will be shared early so that staff know the dates.

**Governors asked if master classes are new.** HKE said that they are and that she will give an update at next S&C. **Governors asked about taking JOG students to primary school visits.** HKE said that this is a little tricky but that enhanced transition included being buddied up with students.

**Governors asked if there has been any feedback from the current Y7s.** ZLE will send an email to parents to find out how effective it has been from a parents' perspective. Students are more settled this year in comparison to last year. The school is working well with the primary schools.

**Action – ZLE to be invited to term 3 S&C**

**HKE**

## **26/23 Safeguarding and Student Wellbeing**

Safeguarding Audit – HKE has not been sent the link for this year's audit yet.

Central records check – MS's link governor visit is booked in to check this.

Student wellbeing – the cost of living is an issue for many students. Christmas dinner is proving difficult to provide for all students but something will be provided. The school is doing lots for Children in Need this week.

Safeguarding – social care is really overwhelmed. Social workers are changing regularly. This makes things tricky for the school and even more so for students in need of support. Everyone who has a social worker should have someone from the virtual team to support them. There is one social worker for the whole team. Lack of resources discussed.

## **27/23 Stability Report**

Circulated in advance of the meeting.

Elective home education – when this happens the school leaves the student's place open and checks in after a couple of months. The school does a lot of scrutiny re off rolling as it has a duty of care for the students. **Governors asked questions to clarify.**

## **28/23 Policies**

**Young Carers** – as above, policy approved.

**Uniform** – as per 24/23.

## **29/23 Governor Postcards**

This was discussed and agreed.

**30/23 AOB**

There was no further business to discuss.

The meeting closed at 8 pm. Date of next Student & Community Meeting Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_