

**Biddenham International School & Sports College: Minutes of a meeting of the Full Governing Board (FGB)  
held on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.00pm**

| <b>Governor</b>                | <b>Position</b>                        | <b>Attendance<br/>2023/2024</b> | <b>Present</b>          |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| David Bailey                   | Head Teacher (Ex-Officio)              | 2/2                             | David Bailey (DB)       |
| Carole Bell                    | Co-opted Governor (Chair of Governors) | 2/2                             | Carole Bell (CB)        |
| Abdul Shakoor                  | Staff Governor                         | 2/2                             | Abdul Shakoor (AS)      |
| Anne Day                       | LA Governor                            | 2/2                             | Anne Day (AD)           |
| Sarah Crafter                  | Co-opted Governor                      | 1/2                             | Sarah Crafter (SC)      |
| Saqib Hussain                  | Co-opted Governor                      | 1/2                             |                         |
| Nezma Begum                    | Co-opted Governor                      | 2/2                             | Nezma Begum (NB)        |
| Tara Rogers                    | Co-opted Governor                      | 2/2                             | Tara Rogers (TR)        |
| Carlene Nisbett                | Parent Governor                        | 2/2                             | Carlene Nisbett (CN)    |
| Catherine Walters              | Parent Governor                        | 2/2                             | Catherine Walters (CJW) |
| Georgina Ainscough             | Partnership Governor                   | 2/2                             | Georgina Ainscough (GA) |
| Nikhita Hodge (formerly Saggi) | Partnership Governor                   | 1/2                             |                         |
| Richard Watson                 | Co-opted Governor                      | 1/1                             | Richard Watson (RW)     |

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| Apologies: Saqib Hussain, Nikhita Hodge  |
| Not in attendance:   |
| Also in attendance:<br>Eleanor Grylls (EG) – Head of School<br>Heather Harris (HH)– School Business Manager<br>Clare Warburton (CW) - Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour & Inclusion)<br>Eve Piotrowski (EP) – Head Prefect<br>Darius Tatu (DT)– Head Prefect |
| Minutes: Sue Newman (SN) - Clerk to Governors  |

| Item No. | Item  | Action |
|----------|---|--------|
| 1.0      | <b>Welcome and apologies</b><br>Apologies were accepted from Nikhita Hodge and Saqib Hussain. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and all present introduced themselves.   |        |
| 2.0      | <b>Declaration of Pecuniary and Other Interests:</b><br>There were no interests to declare.   |        |
| 3.0      | <b>Governing Board Governance</b><br><b>Confirm appointment of new Co-opted Governor</b> – Richard Watson had been appointed by e-mail as a co-opted Governor and this decision was ratified by those present.<br><b>Terms of reference and Chairs for B&amp;W, Curriculum and Pay (2024) Committees</b> – The terms of reference had all been reviewed at the relevant Committees. No changes had been made to the terms of reference for the Curriculum and Pay Committees and only minor changes had been made for the Business & Welfare Committee. The terms of reference were all approved as circulated.<br><b>Governor Visits</b> – The Clerk had e-mailed all Link Governors and Staff Members to make initial introductions. Many had already opened discussions, set a date or completed a visit. It was confirmed that the visits could be spread throughout the year.<br>GA arrived.<br><b>Governors’ Annual Report</b> – CB had drafted the Annual Report and circulated in advance of the meeting. This provided a summary of the FGB’s discussions throughout the year and – once agreed - would be placed on the school website for information. The draft document was accepted by those present.<br><b>Governor training session</b> – It had been agreed to postpone this until the new year, as a number of Governors had been unable to make the original date suggested. This would now be organised for either 20 <sup>th</sup> January, 3 <sup>rd</sup> February or 9 <sup>th</sup> March. <b>Lynne Mudhar would canvas Governors for the most popular date.</b> | LM     |
| 4.0      | <b>Minutes of the last Full Governing Board meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and matters arising.</b><br>The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record and were signed as such.  |        |

*Signed as a true and accurate record*

Chair:..... Date:.....

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|            | <p>All actions had been completed. Tonight’s meeting would include a Safeguarding update and all Governors would be asked to redo the Key’s online Safeguarding Course later in the year. All catering staff had been reminded of the school’s stance on student lunch debt and the need for a supportive approach to this. <i>Governors queried whether any students were struggling with this, and it was confirmed that one student had been provided with a free meal as they did not have the means to pay for a lunch.</i> There had been a big push in school to encourage families to maintain an appropriate credit and to pay any debts accrued. It was not clear whether the 6<sup>th</sup> Form microwave situation had been resolved but this would be discussed with Ed Evans.</p>  |  |
| <p>5.0</p> | <p><b>Report from Head Prefects</b></p> <p>This item was tabled at the start of the meeting to allow the Head Prefects to leave early.</p> <p>The Head Prefects reported that there was an ongoing issue with access to toilets within school, with the boys’ toilet having been vandalised and the girls’ toilet flooded. DB explained that staff had responded to antisocial behaviour in the toilets by closing them during lessons, with students only having access when accompanied by a member of on-call staff (which had always been the case during lessons). The toilets were also being more closely monitored when open. This approach had stopped the antisocial behaviour. In fact, it had made the toilets more accessible in some ways, as students were more inclined to use them now they were not being used for vaping etc.. <i>In response to a Governor query, it was confirmed that any student with an urgent need to access the toilet was issued a “red card” to allow them to use the toilet in Reception without an escort.</i> The Head Prefects stressed that the girls’ toilet in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form block had been flooded for 2 weeks, and students were having to queue to use toilets elsewhere in school. The Head Prefects suggested it would be useful to hold an Assembly on toilets to ensure that both staff and students were more aware of which could be used when. DB stressed that students could always access a toilet during lesson time by arranging an escort through the on-call service. It was also suggested that any specific issues with the 6<sup>th</sup> Form block should be raised with the Head of Year. HH had been surprised to be asked to install locks on the 6<sup>th</sup> Form toilets as she had not thought it would be necessary by this stage. AS clarified that there were a small minority of students in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form who were involved in this behaviour and three of these had recently been suspended for minor vandalism of the toilets. <i>Governors recognised this was an on-going issue and suggested that students discuss the issue further with Mr Brown and Mr Adams. It was also suggested that the Student Forum have a discussion on behaviour in the toilets. Governors queried how many on-call staff were on duty at any given time and it was confirmed that there was one for periods 1 and 2 and then 2 after this.</i> However, any student who had an urgent need to go to the toilet during a lesson should notify their teacher and they would respond supportively. DB stressed that this use of the on-call system had been introduced to deter antisocial behaviour and students trying to avoid being in class. This had proved successful. There was no desire to stop students with a genuine need from going to the toilet. DB also advised the meeting that there was an ongoing issue with the 6<sup>th</sup> Form block drainage – which was being managed – and the water in this block did occasionally freeze over.</p> <p>The Head Prefects then advised the meeting that the Christmas in a Box scheme was being run again this year alongside the local Foodbank. Over 50 boxes were being put together in tutor groups, which would be collected on 14<sup>th</sup> December. There would also be a Christmas Jumper day to raise funds for Save the Children. The Student Forum were working on a proposal for a Culture Day on 17<sup>th</sup> April, to celebrate the range of cultures within the school. The intention was for the Queens Park Community Organisation to be involved. If it went ahead, it was hoped that the exam year groups could be involved during their lunch break.</p> <p>The Head Prefects had been made aware that the school would be issuing student ID cards and asked if there was any firm timescale for this. HH advised that these would be issued as part of the new visitor system, which would be installed in Reception (with additional readers elsewhere on site). She had already received quotes for this work, and it was hoped the system would be installed in the first few months of next year.</p> <p><i>Governors queried whether the situation in the canteen had improved, and the Head Prefects confirmed that the queues were now much faster, staff appeared happier, and the food was no longer cold.</i> DB added that staff had introduced 2 queues inside, which moved students through more quickly and meant they were also queuing inside for most of the time. This had the added benefit of making it easier for staff to manage behaviour in the queue. <i>CB confirmed she had discussed this issue with DB and had been into school to see the queuing system in operation.</i></p> <p>The Head Prefects left the meeting.</p> |  |
| <p>6.0</p> | <p><b>Safeguarding Annual Report</b></p> <p>The Safeguarding Annual Report had been circulated to all Governors. The management team for safeguarding had now been expanded by one additional member of staff. The SENDO was safeguarding trained and was working specifically with SEN students in school to help them understand what safeguarding was. There was also an additional trained member of staff in the SEND team as a safeguarding lead (a Level 3 TA) and the EAL Lead was also safeguarding trained. Training had been provided to voluntary workers, for example the Bedford Blues team had been into school for in-house safeguarding training. This had opened up a great line of communication with them, which would make it easier to receive ongoing feedback from them. The Safeguarding Lead had also</p>   |  |

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delivered training to all the current Teaching Assistants. A safeguarding bookmark had been created for all identified SEN students, along with an e-mail group for them, to open up a line of communication. Staff were completing some work to help students identify their “trusted adult” and were recording this information on a spreadsheet. Staff would follow up with any student who had provided no information to date. The term “trusted adult” came from the Ofsted questionnaire, but it was suggested that it might be preferable to rebrand this to “who do you trust?” in school. Students had been informed that all staff were suitably trained and could be identified as a trusted adult – this was not just limited to the Safeguarding Team. *In response to queries from Governors it was confirmed that students could identify a 6<sup>th</sup> Form student or someone from outside school as their trusted adult (although where this was the case, students would also be asked to identify someone inside school).* Staff were in the process of developing little cards that students could give to their trusted adults identifying them as such. The PSHE lead and Wellbeing co-ordinators were working closely together and met regularly with the Heads of Year to consider whether there were any issues that needed to be picked up in PSHE. An additional Assistant Head of Year role had been created so that each Head of Year now had 2 Assistants, freeing up additional time for safeguarding.

CW drew Governors’ attention to page 8 of the Safeguarding Report, which provided information on the current use of outside agencies. At present there were 13 students accessing support through Open Door, with an additional 5 students on the waiting list (2 of whom had had their initial assessments but not started yet). The Councillor was now well embedded within the school and raised any concerns she had about students, including where they were having curriculum issues. Six students were accessing support from Aquarius (students affected in some way by substance or alcohol misuse) with 3 currently being seen. The system for accessing support from the School Nurse had changed last year and support was now accessed through a referral system. They were currently supporting 28 students, 4 of whom were being seen regularly (an increase on previous years). *In response to a Governor query, it was confirmed that the School Nurse remit could now include any concerns raised by the school about a student’s physical health (not mental health or prescriptions).* The School Nurse also sat on the Safeguarding Core Group, which had proved really useful. There were 13 students in Year 7 and 38 students in Year 8 in school counselling. It was noted that other agencies didn’t work with students below the age of 13, so this was a particularly important service. Ten students were receiving support from CAMHs and 11 from the Mental Health Schools Team. Last year it had proved challenging to meet the high threshold for support from CAMHs, but staff were now finding different routes into this, including Early Help Assessments and through other agencies. There had been fewer Early Help Assessments this year as staff were dealing with this in a different way, and there were still a number running from previous years. CW had recently taken back responsibility for the Student Safeguarding Leads project as it had rather fizzled away. There were now 28 Leads identified across Years 8-13, including a mix of genders and a mix of existing and new students. The Leads received their initial training from CW, with additional training provided by Bedford Council. One of the Governors complemented staff on the incredible support that had been offered to their child. *Governors then queried how the Student Safeguarding Leads were protected and supported and it was confirmed that they received weekly supervision with CW. They also had to take notes of any conversations they had, which CW went through with them.* Staff recognised that this was a considerable responsibility to give to students and CW confirmed that if any of them were ever involved in a significant issue, Bedford Council would also be asked to provide support. *The Governors then discussed whether this project could potentially expose a student to something inappropriate and CW stressed that all students were aware that any issues discussed would be shared with staff.* In addition, staff were quite careful about where they placed the students and the level of support and protection that was offered. CW also stressed that this was the third year the project had been running and no student had yet been asked to become involved in anything significant – it was usually friendship and self esteem issues. *A Governor then queried whether the school had any legal protection in place to cover this project and it was confirmed this was not required. Governors noted that there had been changes to the way PREVENT now worked and queried how this affected the service. CW explained that the Boards would be run by the Police again (as they used to be). It was also confirmed that the school were still required to make referrals and had made 5 last year.* The service had also maintained contact with the school to see how things had progressed after the referrals had been made. *Governors queried whether they were allowed to know the content of referrals and CW confirmed this would not be appropriate.* However, CW did discuss more significant issues with CB during their regular meetings (but only on an anonymous basis). It was important that the Governing Board were fully engaged in safeguarding in school. *Governors then queried at what point a parent would be involved if a concern was raised with a Student Safeguarding Lead and it was confirmed that CW – as the Designated Safeguarding Lead – would be responsible for making this decision.* There was no legal definition of when this should happen, but CW would make a moral judgement. She also stressed that she was not able to take any action without parental consent (unless getting that consent could put a student at risk). There had been 5 new referrals to Children’s Social Care, along with a number of ongoing cases carried over from previous years. There were 3 Child Protection Plans in Year 7, 3 in Year 8, 1 in Year 10 and 3 in Year 11. There were now much more robust

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|     | <p>processes put in place before a student would be “moved up or down” through the system. There had been a high number of Team Around the Family cases in each year group. It was recognised that Children’s Social Care were now having to deal with ever more significant issues. There were currently 49 identified Young Carers in school and the school were proactive in both identifying and supporting these students, with a regular breakfast club and other activities during the week. <i>Governors recognised that staff were dealing with a high number of issues in school but that the response was robust.</i></p> <p>The meeting then broke off into small groups to consider various possible safeguarding scenarios and how you should respond to each. Having discussed these scenarios, each group fed back to the wider meeting.</p> <p>CW left the meeting.</p>  |  |
| 7.0 | <p><b>Budget update and financial approvals</b><br/> <b>Finance Manual and scheme of delegation update</b> – It was noted that no changes had been made to the Finance Manual and scheme of delegation this year.<br/> <b>Budget Update</b> – Governors had received the update report that had been considered at the last B&amp;W Committee meeting. There had been very little change from the September position. HH explained that the payroll in November (which included both pay rises and backpay) had been slightly higher than forecast, but this would balance out in future months. The school had received slightly more income than anticipated, along with slightly more SEN and Pupil Premium funding. There would also be a £76k grant to cover the pay rise. Overall, HH was hopeful this would lead to a slightly higher surplus at the end of year than originally forecast. She would be in a position to provide a more accurate forecast after the end of the month. Capital expenditure would also be higher than set out in the budget. This was now estimated at around £500k (but with the additional security measures still to cost). The FGB reviewed the School Business Manager’s report and noted there was no further news on the proposed re-roofing work to be done by Bedford Council. It had been confirmed that there was no reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete on the school site. The school would receive their latest building conditions report in January. Governors were disappointed to hear that the damp issue in one of the bungalows had returned. It was possible this was being caused by something under the bungalow, or possibly by a drainpipe emptying into a soakaway. The Council’s Surveyor had been out to view the problem again and had suggested fitting a humidistat. However, HH did not believe the problem was being caused by condensation and the Council had agreed to investigate further. HH had sought 2 quotes for the new visitor system and would be considering these shortly. The Legionella survey had been completed. HH had originally intended to go through the report with the Site Team but as the report was quite complicated, she was going to go through it with the Surveyors first. The regular Legionella testing was being completed as required. HH had also received quotes for the air conditioning maintenance but had yet to award the contract. HH advised the meeting that she had just given notice to the current payroll providers as she had not been happy with the service provided. She would seek recommendations from other schools and then go out for new quotes.<br/> HH left the meeting.</p> |  |
| 8.0 | <p><b>Principal’s Report</b><br/> A written Principal’s Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The validated data had now come through for last summer’s exams and this was very positive (having gone up slightly). It was believed this now placed the school within the top 25% of schools nationally for progress. It was recognised that all major student groups in school had done well (although the data for Looked after Children was statistically insignificant as there had only been one student in 2022 and none last year). The Principal’s Report provided an update on attendance and DB stressed that the aim was to improve on last year. To support this, a Whole School Attendance Lead had been appointed and the free school breakfast had been introduced for all students. Overall, attendance was currently better than at this point last year and was also currently above national. It was noted that the target of 92% might appear low but the reality was that it would take time post Covid for the attendance levels to creep back up. This would continue to be a priority in school, with a particular focus on improving the attendance of the lowest groups of students eg SEN. DB then explained the work that was being proposed to further improve site security and provide greater control over access to the site. This would include work to make the north end of the site more secure, installing gates across the Quad and fencing up to the tennis courts. DB stressed that he had always liked the openness of the site but there was a need to protect and secure staff and students and ensure there was no risk of students witnessing anything harmful. <i>In response to a Governor query, it was confirmed that staff had all received training in de-escalation and restorative processes.</i> It was recognised that both locally and nationally, there had been an increase in parents taking an aggressive stance in raising concerns / complaints. There was a need to promote the correct pathways for parents to raise and escalate concerns, but it would also be beneficial to better manage access to the site, and to improve site security. One of the Governors said they had found it helpful when a teacher had contacted them to inform them of an issue that had arisen in school relating to their child. This had felt</p>   |  |

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|      | <p>like a good way to involve the parent and de-escalate the situation. DB agreed that this allowed staff to manage the conversation proactively and to ensure the parent understood the school’s position. DB then added that site security had been raised as an issue in both the recent staff and student surveys. The school had already introduced high vis. jackets for duty staff and were in the process of introducing lanyards for all staff. Governors discussed how everyone now lived in an “instant world” and it was noted that this issue had been discussed at a recent Key Stage 4 Governor Link Visit. However, there were many tools and techniques that could be used to manage and de-escalate a situation more effectively, including sometimes taking time to consider a situation and respond appropriately. One of the Governors commented on how sad they were to hear this feedback and to hear about what staff were having to contend with from irate parents. In their experience – and having spoken to other parents – staff were always very responsive to queries and issues raised and handled issues professionally. <i>Another Governor then queried whether the Attendance Team were made aware when students were on trips as there had been occasions when a parent had been contacted to say a child hadn’t come into school, when the child was actually out on a school trip or in the Sanctuary. Governors queried whether this might have an impact on attendance figures.</i></p> <p>DB advised Governors that the recent open evenings had been very positive and there had been 266 first choice applications for September. <i>Governors queried whether the school would be pressed to take more than the PAN of 240 and it was recognised that this was possible.</i> However, to achieve this, the school would need to be funded to develop some new buildings. Governors discussed some possible locations for further development.</p> <p>NB left the meeting.</p> <p><i>Governors noted that attendance of students was a key issue and queried whether staff absence was also monitored.</i> In response it was confirmed that this was managed on an individual basis but that overall staff attendance – and moral – in the school was positive. <i>Governors then queried whether student absence might be higher in classes where a teacher was absent, but it was not felt that this was likely.</i></p>  |  |
| 9.0  | <p><b>Chair’s report</b></p> <p>The Chair had circulated a report detailing her visits into school, which included meetings with DB and CW. She was also due to meet with CW again next week to discuss safeguarding. She was particularly pleased that safeguarding and SEN were now key issues on the agenda for the Business &amp; Welfare Committee. The Chair had also met with Julie Shepherd to review the Single Central Record and had been impressed with the rigorous management that was in place. There had been one issue identified with a member of staff who had worked abroad where it was difficult to be sure there was sufficient evidence in relation to their overseas work references. Julie Shepherd would be following this up. <i>Governors then discussed the social media check which was now undertaken during recruitment of new staff and queried what would be considered a “red flag”.</i> It was recognised that this could include any content that was deemed unprofessional (even from their personal life). It was confirmed that ruling a candidate out for this reason was now acceptable and would not be seen as discriminatory.</p> <p>CN left the meeting.</p> <p>During one of their meetings, the Chair and DB had discussed the Palestinian situation. DB and EG had also met with SH and NB – as parents and Governors – to discuss the situation and the approach the school should take. It had been agreed that this was not a topic for discussion in lessons, however it had also been recognised that the school had a political activity policy and that students should be able to express sympathy for one side or another as long as they were not offensive. A judgement had been made that staff should generally ignore actions of students such as painting flags on hands. <i>Governors queried whether there had been any guidance issued by the DfE and it was confirmed there had been, but it was quite prescriptive and not particularly helpful.</i> Staff confirmed they had met with one parent who had raised concerns. EG had also met with staff to discuss. The school were looking to provide staffed “talking spaces” for each Key Stage, for students to share their views. Staff would signpost students to these spaces where needed. It was noted that younger female students had possibly been the most expressive in discussing this issue. Overall, it was recognised that staff and students needed support on this issue, especially as there were Palestinian students in school and others that sympathised with them.</p> <p>TR left the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair noted that school numbers in the Borough had grown enormously in recent years and there was now a great need for additional secondary school places (although primary school requirements had reduced). However, this was thought to be a relatively short-term situation and by 2028 the numbers would start to decline again. At present there were no Year 11 spaces available within the Borough.</p> |  |
| 10.0 | <p><b>Report from:</b><br/>Curriculum Committee (3<sup>rd</sup> October)<br/>B&amp;W Committee (12<sup>th</sup> October &amp; 16<sup>th</sup> November)<br/>Pay Committee (27<sup>th</sup> September)</p>   |  |

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|      | The minutes of these meetings had been circulated and there were no questions raised. CB wished to commend EL on the extremely useful explanation of the SEN situation in school that had been provided to the B&W Committee.   |    |
| 11.0 | <p><b>Policies and other documents for approval:</b></p> <p>Curriculum Committee:<br/>ECT Policy</p> <p>B&amp;W Committee:<br/>Safeguarding<br/>SEN Policy &amp; SEN Information Report<br/>H&amp;S Policy</p> <p><b>Unfortunately, the meeting was no longer quorate so it was agreed that these policies would be ratified by e-mail after the meeting.</b></p> | SN |
| 12.0 | <p><b>Any Other Business</b><br/>There was no other business.</p>   |    |
| 13.0 | <p><b>Next Meeting</b><br/>The next meeting was scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024.</p>   |    |
| 14.0 | <p><b>Confidential Item: Taken at the start of Item 9</b><br/>See Part 2 Minutes.</p>   |    |

| ACTION POINTS |  |        |
|---------------|--|--------|
| Item No.      | Item   | Action |
| 1             | LM to canvas Governors for a new date for the Governor Training Session. | LM     |
| 2             | Policies to be circulated by e-mail for approval after the meeting.      | SN     |