



WOKING COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wednesday 26th January 2022 at 6.30pm
Learning Resource Centre

Present:	Rosh Sellahewa Jonathan Miles Ben Smith Yasmin Aslam Alastair MacAulay Anne Middleton Cullum Mitchell Andy Williams Brett Freeman	Acting Chair Principal
In Attendance:	Nuweed Razaq Helena Clarke Barbara Maude	Deputy Principal Director of Support for Learning Clerk to the Board of Trustees

Item	Agenda Description	Action
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence & Declarations of Interest In the absence of the Chair (due to a family bereavement) and the Deputy Chair (currently on holiday), Rosh Sellahewa kindly agreed to take the Chair for the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Mike Mulheron (who was having to self-isolate) and as already stated, Tim Stokes and Rob Kemp. The apologies were agreed.</p> <p>No other Trustee or member of SLT declared any pecuniary or other direct or indirect personal interest in any item on the agenda.</p>	
2.	<p>Introduction The Acting Chair outlined the strategic intent of the meeting, which was focus primarily on whole Board training on the key areas of Safeguarding and OfSTED.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting To Board received both the open and confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th December 2021. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and approved for signature by the Acting Chair</p>	

4.	<p>Matters arising</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Matter</th> <th>By whom</th> <th>By when</th> <th>Status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Circulate notes from Staff & Student Focus Groups</td> <td>BMA</td> <td>ASAP</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Circulate Careers Bulletin for information (ongoing once per term)</td> <td>BMA</td> <td>ASAP</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Circulate College's organisational chart</td> <td>BMA</td> <td>ASAP</td> <td>Completed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Convene follow up Staff and Student Focus Groups in March 2022</td> <td>BMA/TST</td> <td>March 2022</td> <td>Ongoing</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Acting Chair noted that items 1 to 4 had been completed and in respect of item 2, he commended the work of the Careers team, endorsed by the whole Board, in producing such an impressive and comprehensive careers bulletin. The Board had found it very informative to see the breadth of careers advice being provided weekly to all students.</p>		Matter	By whom	By when	Status	1	Circulate notes from Staff & Student Focus Groups	BMA	ASAP	Completed	2	Circulate Careers Bulletin for information (ongoing once per term)	BMA	ASAP	Completed	3	Circulate College's organisational chart	BMA	ASAP	Completed	4	Convene follow up Staff and Student Focus Groups in March 2022	BMA/TST	March 2022	Ongoing	
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	<p>PRINCIPAL'S REPORT</p>																										
5.	<p>The Principal gave an oral update on cross college issues. In addition, both the November and December 2022 Management Accounts had been circulated with the agenda and he was happy to take any questions on the Accounts.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the deferred Members AGM had been held the previous week, on the 20th January 2022, and it had been a very positive and constructive meeting. The plan was to set up a portal repository so that Members could access key documents to ensure they were kept routinely updated.</p> <p>Turning to College KPIs, the College had received 1,224 applications for 2022/23 which was broadly in line with two years ago and all other KPI's were on track. Attendance was at 96% and when questioned as to how this compared to previous years, the Principal advised that as there were no comparative data for 2020/21 due to the cyber-attack, and attendance for 2019/20 had been impacted by the pandemic, it was difficult to give an accurate comparison. However, the sense was that attendance was slightly down. The impact of COVID-19 was still having a part to play but it was not significant. The vast majority of students had been double vaccinated, boosted and the College continued to operate WOJO (windows open; jumpers on).</p> <p>Trustees queried how many staff were off and were advised that currently there were only 3 members of staff having to self-isolate. Those that were off, but not ill, were still continuing to teach from home.</p> <p>Trustees also asked if there was any different process for recording absences linked to COVID or other reasons and were advised that there was no differentiation as to the cause of an absence.</p> <p>In terms of capital projects, the new classroom block would start this week with a finish date at the end of this calendar year. Negotiations continued with the Old Woking Community Centre (OWCC) and the process was currently waiting on Surrey County Council providing funding to Woking Borough Council to be able to progress matters but this had not yet</p>																										

happened.

Trustees, having reviewed the November and December Management Accounts, confirmed that they were satisfied with both the accounts and accompanying commentary and did not have any further specific questions.

6. WHOLE BOARD TRAINING SESSION - SAFEGUARDING & PREVENT

The Board then received a training session on Safeguarding & Prevent Policies and Procedures at the College facilitated by Helena Clarke, Director of Support for Learning and one of two Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL).

Trustees had been invited to complete the online Safeguarding and Prevent modules prior to the meeting and all Trustees had also been required to both read and sign Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.

Helena Clarke explained the role and responsibilities of the individual members of the Safeguarding Team at the College, including the Safeguarding Link Trustee, Anne Middleton.

In terms of the Trustee's role this was identified as follows:



Trustee Role in Safeguarding at Woking College

According to KCSIE 2021, Trustees:

- Have strategic leadership responsibility for the College's safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure there is a whole college approach to safeguarding.
- Ensure appropriate policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote children's welfare.

The role of the Safeguarding Trustee:

- Meet regularly with DSL.
- Check processes and policies are in place and are fit for purpose.
- Review the single central record.

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Anne Middleton confirmed that since appointed as the designated Safeguarding Trustee she had met twice already with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and had also met with Tess Ledingham, the Student Well-being Officer and Kirsty Crook who oversaw the Single Central Record to discuss and review the College's Safeguarding policies and processes.

In terms of giving the Board a flavour of what Safeguarding at the College looked like on a day to day basis, the Board reviewed the following responses:



Safeguarding at Woking College: Day to Day

The pastoral team's safeguarding work on a day to day basis consists of:

- Being a listening ear and source of support for students.
- Liaising with parents and carers
- Sourcing internal or external additional support for students (ILM, Counselling / mentor or Surrey Care Trust, Mindworks, RASASC, Catch 22 etc)
- Responding to external agency requests and attending meetings (children's services, police, multi-agency)

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The DSL explained that the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) currently had a 2-year waiting list and therefore for College students arriving at the age of 16, they may well not get referred for the entire time there were at College. Hence, additional services were attempting to take up some of the referrals and organisations such as Surrey Care Trust, Mindworks etc were providing valuable additional support for students.

Trustees asked about CPOMS and were advised that this was the College's electronic safeguarding software. When students arrived from their secondary school any referrals already logged would be carried over automatically onto the College's system ensuring that there was a full and consistent history of any concerns.

The DSL explained that approximately 300 CPOMS were logged on average per month and of those, some may need to be referred externally. Possibly 1 -3 external referrals were made per term and these usually related to a disclosure and were not linked to mental health concerns.

Trustees asked of the 300 CPOMS logged how many students did that actually relate to and the DSL advise possibly 200 different students. Not all CPOMS were high level, many could be low level concerns.

Turning to KCSIE and key safeguarding concerns, the Board reviewed the definition of abuse and neglect and looked at the ways in which children may be abused. Increasingly, the DSL explained that abuse was moving online, and the abuse was by another child or children or peer on peer in the manner of unhealthy relationships. It was important to remember that the students at College were legally classified as children as they were under the age of 18.

As at September 2021, there had been 18 logged concerns over online behaviour relating to image sharing etc. The College had provided information on the website for parents in how they could support their children to recognise the risks and legality of this type of behaviour.

The DSL also highlighted the recent formation of a College bereavement group. In terms of the national picture, 1 in 22 young people aged 16 experienced the death of a parent and at the College, there had been 56 logged bereavements for current students with a quarter of those being immediate family. This had a massive impact on a student's ability to attend College and study effectively and bereavement linked subsequently to many mental health concerns.

In terms of radicalisation (the process of someone developing extremist views) and extremism, the DSL explained the support available and training undertaken by staff, including regular face to face sessions and online options together with the engagement with external agencies in supporting students where there are concerns around radicalisation.

Looking at the College's Prevent Strategy, the DSL advised that this could be flagged up as a concern on CPOMS, for example, something may be said by a student in a lesson that raised a concern.



The Prevent Strategy

The College's Prevent work is intended to deal with all kinds of terrorist threats to the UK which may originate from a range of extremist groups.

- concerns about a student at risk of radicalisation, are made on CPOMS - the standard Safeguarding referral process and reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency and a referral may be made.
- The DSL meets regularly with the H.E. Prevent Co-Ordinator for the South East: [Almagir Sheriyar](#).
- ***Make sure you are familiar with the full document of the college Prevent strategy (on College website).***

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In respect of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) including County Lines then this was discussed at some length including OfSTED's Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges which had been published in June 2021. The key messages from the review included that sexual harassment and peer on peer abuse was happening in all settings and had become "normalised" for children and young people. Staff needed to be vigilant and responsive and create a culture of zero tolerance and an environment where students felt able to disclose harassment and abuse and know that they would be listened to.

In response to the report, the College had set up a working party and developed new resources ("I'm not OK" and "It's not OK" cards for students and help via the website).

In November 2021 a survey had been issued to all students asking about their experiences and views on sexual harassment and abuse inside and outside of College. This had led into the working party drafting a Respect Charter. This was currently out for consultation and included the fact that certain types of "banter" were not appropriate and recognised that certain phrases were not OK to use.

Trustees queried why there appeared to be an increase in type time of behaviour. The DSL advised that there were a number of factors, such as, the College's cohort had been adversely affected by the pandemic; they had been deprived of going out to social events; their social skills had been hindered; and they had no academic exam experience to act as a focus.

In terms of mental health, then students' perception of mental health concerns indicated that possibly they were more tolerant than previous year groups and many students found it easier to label themselves as having mental health issues.

Of all concerns raised on CPOMS, mental health was the largest category with 336 entries logged so far in this current academic year. The range of concerns was vast from anxiety and

	<p>panic attacks to suicidal thoughts, self-harm and eating disorders. Whilst the College already had in place a Head of Student Wellbeing they were now considering employing, in addition, a mental health nurse for next year.</p> <p>The DSL also explained to Trustees that the national picture reflected that mental disorders in young people aged 17-19 had increased from one in ten in 2017 (10.1%) to one in six in 2020/21 (17.4%).</p> <p>1-2-1 support was available from the Head of Student Wellbeing and mentors and counselling was at full capacity. The DSL advised that it was important to recognise that the team could not be expected to respond outside of normal working hours. Any out of hours message received a standardised out of hours response that referenced all the external support options available.</p> <p>Trustees asked about the support available for young carers and it was confirmed that when this was flagged up it automatically referred a student to the Young Carers Group.</p> <p>The Principal advised that the College hoped to be starting work with the Gordon Ramsey Cooking Academy, providing cookery lessons for those students going off to University and the first cohort to be offered that option would be the Young Carers Group.</p> <p>In addition to the Young Carers Group the DSL also explained that there was an Anxiety Support Group who could help students access a wide range of available support.</p> <p>Finally, the DSL explained the CPOMS protocols and confirmed the security system through which CPOMS operated, which had been unaffected by the cyber-attack. All members of staff had a login for CPOMS and the logging of any safeguarding concern immediately alerted the Head of Year and the DSL's who would review the concerns and decide on an appropriate course of action.</p> <p>The Board thanked the DSL for the presentation and asked that the power point presentation should be circulated to all Trustees for their information.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>WHOLE BOARD TRAINING SESSION - OfSTED</p>	
	<p>The Board then received a training session on the Education Inspection Framework and preparation for an OfSTED inspection facilitated by the Nuweed Razaq, Deputy Principal.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal started by challenging Trustees on what, in their opinion, were the key strengths of the College and what impact had they had on the College?</p> <p>Trustees responded with the quality of teaching and learning; Safeguarding; the enrichment programme; and the varied curriculum.</p> <p>When questioned on how were they able to verify the quality of teaching at the College they replied by the interrogation of the various reports they received, benchmarking against national comparisons when available; the September Conference when they heard from, and could directly challenge, Heads of Department on the performance of each curriculum area; attendance at the Self-Assessment validation panels and mid- year SAR reviews; and Link Trustee visits.</p>	

In terms of the College's approach to Safeguarding, as had been evident from the previous presentation, the College had a very robust system in place and were at the forefront of sector safeguarding practices. The Board also had an experienced and designated Safeguarding Link Trustee who was in regular contact with the Safeguarding Team.

In terms of the enrichment programme, there was a very wide-ranging offer and whilst Trustees could not attend many of the events specifically for students, they were able to attend some of the external facing events such as the Annual Art Exhibition, the Christmas production; lunchtime lectures etc.

The College offered a varied curriculum with both traditional A levels and also BTECs but in addition they also had a Level 2 programme with over 100 students and were making a massive difference to those students who did not have GCSEs.

The Deputy Principal then challenged Trustees on **how well informed they were and more importantly how did they actually know what was going on in College in contrast to what they were told?**

Trustees replied that as stated earlier, they were able to interrogate data; attend the September Conference, participate in the Self-Assessment process and utilise the Link Trustee Scheme. They also had the ability to come into College at any time to see for themselves the student experience. The Chair had re-started student focus groups following the pandemic and this gave the Board the opportunity to cross check what they were being told against what they saw for themselves.

The Deputy Principal then asked Trustees **what were the major risks and challenges facing the College and how are these monitored and managed?**

Trustees discussed the recruitment of students as the number one risk – both over recruitment and under recruitment. The two aspects of that risk were set out in the Risk Register and the controls in place to mitigate the risks were reviewed regularly by SLT and then termly by the Finance & Audit Committee and then the Board. An example given was the scenario-based Disaster Recovery exercise which had previously been reported to the Board.

The Deputy Principal went on to challenge Trustees **on how did they know the College compared to other institutions either locally or nationally?**

Trustees cited national benchmarking data when available but also S7 data and the meeting considered the use of ALPS which converted College data and compared it to every other College.

Looking externally, the Deputy Principal asked Trustees **what they thought was the perception of the College in the community and how did they know?**

An example was given of the Open Evenings and the positive responses the College generated in terms of both numbers and feedback. Trustees, prior to the pandemic had attended these events and some had also attended the virtual sessions held during lockdown.

Trustees were then asked **how involved did they get with the College's Self-Assessment Report?**

	<p>More recently, the Board had designated an entire meeting to a comprehensive review of the Self-Assessment Report, with Trustees being asked to review and challenge on particular sections and this process worked well. Trustees also attended the SAR validation meetings and Link Trustees were also now attending their curriculum area’s mid-year review as well.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal went on to challenge Trustees on how could they see the “wood for the trees” with so much detail in the SAR?</p> <p>Again, here the Link Trustee scheme gave them the opportunity to ask questions themselves and they received comparative data over a three-year period so they could detect trends and track trajectories.</p> <p>On the subject of challenge, how did Trustees challenge SLT? Could they give examples?</p> <p>On this point, the Finance and Audit Committee had challenged SLT on whether the compliance risk within the Risk Register should be one combined risk or separated out into separate strands. The query had been subsequently discussed with the internal auditors when they reviewed the College’s Risk Management Framework and the College had received follow up advice confirming their approach was satisfactory, but it evidenced the challenge of Trustees and SLT seeking external advice on the right approach.</p> <p>The Board also used Staff and Student Focus Groups to get an “on the ground” view of life within the College and had also taken the decision to speak independently to the forensic investigators following the cyber-attack.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal then asked Trustees how did they know what learners thought about the College?</p> <p>Again, Trustees referenced the Student Focus Groups, student survey results, the attendance of students at Board level on occasions and the ability of Trustees to come in and talk to students either as part of a Link Trustee visit or on other occasions.</p> <p>The Deputy Principal queried what Trustees knew of the narrowing of achievement gaps between different groups and here the Board felt they received comprehensive data on this subject. The Deputy Principal explained the work that was ongoing in terms of unconscious bias.</p> <p>Finally, the Board looked at the importance of Trustee attendance and how (British) Woking Values were promoted in the College.</p> <p>The Acting Chair, on behalf of the Board thanked the Deputy Principal for the training presentation.</p>	
8.	<p>Any Other Business There were no other items of business to discuss.</p>	
9.	<p>Date & Time of Next Meetings It was agreed that the next meeting of the Board would take place on Wednesday 23rd March 2022 at 6.30pm.</p>	