



Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools

Minutes of a Meeting of the
Governing Board of Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools
19th September 2023, 18:00
Held Remotely

Governing Board	Initials	Role	Present / Apologies / Absent
Rosie Booker	RB	Co-opted Governor	Apologies
Natalie Butcher	NB	Headteacher/Governor	Present
Sarah-Jane Gilbert	SJG	Staff Governor	Present
Angie Johnson	AJ	Foundation Governor	Present
Martin Petersen	MP	Co-opted Governor	Present
Linda Russell	LR	Foundation Governor	Present
Melanie Turton	MT	Co-opted Governor	Apologies
Sheila Watts	SW	LA Governor/Chair of Governors	Present
Also Present			
Justine Petersen	JP	Clerk	Present

1. Welcome & opening prayer	SW welcomed all present and thanked them for attending the first meeting of the academic year. The meeting opened with a moment of quiet reflection on what was likely to be an exciting year for the Federation as it moves towards joining St Benet's.
2. Apologies & absence	Apologies were received and accepted from Rosie Booker and Melanie Turton.
3. Declaration of Interests	SW invited governors to declare any business or pecuniary interests specifically relating to items on the agenda or that they had not already declared. There were none.
4. Election of Officers	Elections for the Chair and Vice Chair roles are due in September 2024. SW asked whether any governors wished to take over as Chair. She is happy to continue, but her work commitments mean she has limited capacity to go into the schools. Governors raised no concerns, and it was agreed that SW would continue until elections take place next year. SW welcomed SJG as the new staff governor. Melanie Turtle was co-opted onto the Board for a term of four years. Proposed by SW and seconded by AJ. The decision was unanimous. MT is looking forward to joining the Board. She was unable to attend the meeting because of a training commitment.
5. Full Governing Body	<p>Terms of Reference 2023-24 Unanimously approved without amendment.</p> <p>Governor Code of Conduct The Board unanimously agreed to abide by the NGA Code of Conduct 2023. Governors requested it be uploaded to the website. Action – Governor Code of Conduct to be uploaded to the website.</p> <p>Annual Schedule of Business Approved without amendment. SW reminded all governors to read the schedule and plan for when their actions were due.</p> <p>Register of Interests RB's husband has started working as a member of bank staff for the pre-school.</p>

	<p>Action – All governors to update and confirm their declarations on Governorhub.</p> <p>Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 All present confirmed they had read KCSiE 2023. SW reminded them to confirm this on Governorhub.</p> <p>Action – All governors to confirm they have read KCSiE 2023 on Governorhub.</p> <p>Action to identify FGB review / training for this year and agree at next FGB SW proposed the FGB review did not take place this year, as the Federation is moving towards joining St Benet's. Governors would continue to attend training. NB stressed the need for all governors to complete safeguarding training. This requirement would not change when the schools joined the MAT.</p> <p>Action – All governors to complete safeguarding training.</p> <p>Gov: Does safer recruitment training expire? It is best practice to refresh it. AJ attended training and cascaded the changes to NB.</p> <p>Training Log The log was confirmed as accurate. It would be used to ensure there were no gaps in training moving forward.</p>
<p>6. Delegation of Responsibilities</p>	<p>Review Governing Body Decision Planner and Agree any Changes The planner was unanimously agreed as unchanged.</p> <p>Gov: Do the spending limits need review? They are included in the Finance Policy, and no changes are needed at this stage. An additional meeting could be held for any spending decisions outside of the agreed limits.</p> <p>Proposed Committee Structure The committee structure would remain unchanged. A&S and R&P would meet termly and half termly respectively.</p> <p>Agree Committee Terms of Reference Unanimously agreed without amendment.</p> <p>Propose that Disciplinary and/or Appeals panels are formed as required Unanimously agreed.</p> <p>Agree members of Headteacher Performance Review Panel Agreed as LR, MP, AJ and an external advisor. LR advised the performance review meeting took place on 18th September.</p> <p>Propose as last year we accept governors to participate or vote at meetings including but not limited to by telephone or video conference Unanimously agreed.</p>
<p>7. Agree Committee Members and Governor Responsibilities</p>	<p>Committee Membership The following was agreed: A&S – RB, AJ, LR, SJG, NB R&P – SW, MP, MT, NB.</p> <p>Review Link Roles and Responsibilities Link roles were agreed as unchanged except for the following: MT would take over health and safety. SJG would be link for Pupil Premium and PE Premium.</p> <p>There is currently no link governor for RHSE. It was agreed this would be determined later when action became necessary.</p> <p>Gov: Has a decision been made on whether Jo Nutbeam will continue as an associate governor? SW has contacted her. JN was keen to check whether the Federation joining St Benet's would conflict with her role as an Ofsted Inspector, and SW is awaiting a response.</p>

	<p>Check Who is Safer Recruitment Trained Several members of the Board are trained in safer recruitment. No further action is needed.</p>
8. Dates	<p>Schedule of Meeting Dates It was agreed that R&P meetings would continue to take place remotely. FGB and A&S meetings would be held in the schools.</p> <p>Governors raised concerns about the wellbeing of staff who are required to attend Committee meetings after 17:00. It was agreed that staff could attend remotely should they wish to do so. The time is not a concern for NB or BM.</p> <p>Moving forward, A&S will take place at 17:00, and R&P will be at 18:00. They will continue to take place on the same day. The Clerk and staff could attend remotely.</p> <p>Plan to Prepare and Agree Monitoring Timetable To be determined by the A&S Committee. Action – Plan to Prepare Monitoring Timetable to be added to next A&S agenda.</p>
9. Headteacher Verbal Update	<p>The Federation has continued the positive note from the end of last year. Staff are energised and morale is strong.</p> <p>The main areas of work are the implementation of the CUSP curriculum and Little Wandle phonics. There has been extensive staff training and mentoring by SLT to ensure teachers feel empowered and ready for delivery.</p> <p>Staff are working together on the implementation, and all are supporting each other. They are very busy, but they are positive and aspirational. The curriculum being delivered is of a very high standard.</p> <p>Hickling has gained two more children over the summer. Gov: Where are they from? They live in the local area. The family had heard positive things about the school.</p> <p>One new child has joined Sutton, and two have joined the pre-school. Two new children have joined Catfield. One had previously left to be home schooled. A new child has also joined the pre-school.</p> <p>Five children have left the Federation. Three moved out of area.</p> <p><i>Confidential discussion.</i></p> <p>Staff have been very adaptable.</p> <p>Open days will take place before half term, and there has already been interest. Families have heard positive things around progress made at Catfield.</p>
10. Additional Items of Business	<p>DfE Requirement for school week to be extended to 32.25 hours by September 2024 NB informed governors of the new DfE requirement to increase school hours to a minimum of 32.35 per week from September 2024. Catfield is already compliant, but hours at Sutton and Hickling will need to increase. The guidance has been uploaded to Governorhub.</p> <p>NB stressed the need to coordinate times with other cluster schools, as some parents have children in the Federation and also at Stalham Academy. Stalham is not changing its times. The timing of when the change is announced also needs consideration.</p> <p>Gov: Is the DfE guidance non-statutory? This was initially the case, but it has changed to statutory. It will come into force in September 2024.</p> <p>Gov: Now short are Hickling and Sutton? Both will need an additional 15 minutes per day.</p> <p>Gov: Could afternoon play time be used? Neither school has an afternoon play time.</p> <p>Gov: Lunch times? Lunch is for an hour, but to reduce this to 45 minutes for the youngest children may not be fair.</p> <p>The afternoon is the main concern, and governors are keen to avoid any time that makes it more</p>

	<p>difficult for parents.</p> <p>It was agreed that the hours for all three schools would be 08:45 to 15:20. Parents would be informed just before the October half term with a view to the change coming into effect immediately after the Easter break.</p> <p>NB advised this may have an impact on staffing hours and cost. Infant school staff will need an additional 20 minutes per day, and this will impact on next year's budget. It will be factored in as soon as possible.</p> <p>Gov: There will be an impact on staff wellbeing. How can they be supported with the change? Governors and school leaders will do everything possible to support the wellbeing of those who will be required to work additional time, but this is a mandatory requirement, and staff will be given several months' notice.</p> <p>Signatories for NatWest School Fund Account at Hickling Catfield's school fund is closed and has been submitted.</p> <p>Governors unanimously agreed that NB and Bernie Moore would be signatories for the school fund at Hickling with immediate effect. Proposed by SW and seconded by LR.</p> <p>Federation Development Plan The Plan was uploaded to Governorhub. The overall areas (CUSP, Little Wandle, maths, SEND) are complete and just need fine tuning.</p> <p>Gov: Part of the plan is blank. Is that intentional? Yes, this is the area NB will work on next.</p> <p>Recruitment Update No specific update.</p> <p>Gov: Have new staff settled in well? Yes, and the ECTs are exceptional.</p> <p>Federation Moving Forward SW and NB will meet with the Project Manager later this week to discuss the next steps on the journey towards academisation with St Benet's. There will be an update at the next meeting.</p> <p>NB stressed that staff are very positive about the move, and parents have raised no concerns. The Diocese has agreed to continue to fund the Federation's work with St Benet's in the interim, and NB hopes the transition will be seamless. Sam Nixon will undertake a curriculum review in November, and network meetings have already taken place.</p> <p>Plan for Stakeholder Engagement NB has drafted a letter to update parents about the progress towards St Benet's. It will be sent within the next few days. Parents are aware academisation will take place this year, and NB will be in a position to provide more information around timing soon.</p> <p>RB and NB have discussed pupil voice. RB is keen to do it early this term. She would also like to bring back the termly newsletter.</p> <p>Consideration was given to a Governing Board X (formally Twitter) account to provide updates. NB advised the Federation gets little engagement through X, but Facebook is much more effective. All three schools have Facebook pages, and governors should forward any messages to the school secretaries for inclusion on the feed.</p>
<p>11. Minutes of Last Meeting</p>	<p>The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2023 were unanimously agreed without amendment. SW will sign off on Governorhub. She will sign the confidential minutes for filing in school.</p>

<p>12. Matters Arising</p>	<p>GDPR monitoring at Hickling and Catfield will be done this term. Action – AJ to monitor GDPR at Catfield and Hickling. NB forwarded the insurance details to SW, but SW has not yet checked that cover is adequate. Action – SW to check insurance cover is adequate. All other actions were complete or had been covered on the agenda.</p>
<p>13. Policy Approval</p>	<p>Administration of Medicines Unanimously approved.</p> <p>Safeguarding Unanimously approved.</p> <p>Attendance Gov: Do staff names need to be added to the policy? Yes, NB will ensure this is done. Gov: There is a typo regarding a name on page 5. NB will ensure this is rectified. Action – NB to add staff names to attendance policy and rectify incorrect spelling of MP’s name.</p> <p>NB advised model letters are included at the end of the policy. Most schools are sending these, but the Federation has not previously done so. The letters concern a fixed penalty notice regarding missing nine sessions, and families must now complete a form when requesting time off. Gov: Is the form useful? Yes, it is a record and it shows there is a process involved.</p> <p>Five families at Sutton have already requested holiday absence, including one for 1.5 weeks. The learning gaps are difficult for staff to pick up after the absence. None would be authorised, and all are based on the cost of holidays. The Federation does not authorise holidays, but it has previously taken no action. County recommends fining, but it is an FGB decision.</p> <p>NB has researched another school in St Bent’s. The school sent this letter but also a softer letter that read very well. Governors were mindful that the Federation will need to comply with St Benet’s policies upon joining. Other schools in the cluster are fining for holidays in line with County guidance.</p> <p>SW proposed that, taking all factors into account and in line with other schools in the cluster, the Federation send out the recommended County letter regarding enforcement action for absence. It would also send an accompanying letter in line with the school in St Benet’s. Seconded by MP. The decision was unanimous and will take place with immediate effect.</p> <p>Governors were mindful that Sutton is in the Ofsted window, and it is the school that is most impacted by holiday absence. Ofsted has previously queried the action taken around attendance.</p> <p>Intimate Care Unanimously approved.</p> <p>Recruitment Unanimously approved.</p> <p>Gov: Is this the standard policy? Yes, it is from HR Infospace, and there are no changes.</p> <p>Staff Code of Conduct Unanimously approved without amendment.</p> <p>Gov: The policy was distributed to staff to read and agree at the start of term. Would it make sense for governors to approve it at the end of the academic year? Yes, moving forward NB will ensure it is approved at the final FGB of the year. All staff sign the Code in September as part of annual safeguarding training. Action – Staff Code of Conduct to be approved at last FGB meeting of the year.</p>

	<p>SEND Information Report. NB advised the report only needs consideration annually, but BM will update it termly when SEN numbers are reviewed. It will be monitored by the FGB to show the current picture each term.</p>
14. Any Other Business	<p>LR advised that Headteacher performance management took place the previous day, and the paperwork has been sent to the governors involved. LR hoped to be able to send it to NB on 20th September. Any recommendations would go to the R&P meeting on 11th October. Action – Outcome of HTPM to be added to next R&P Agenda.</p>
15. Date and Time of Next Meeting	Tuesday 12th December 2023, 16:30 at Catfield.
16. Closing Moment with Prayer	The meeting ended with a moment of quiet reflection.

With no further business the meeting finished at 17:53

Signed by the Chair of Governors as a true record of the meeting:

Date:

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