



## OATHALL COMMUNITY COLLEGE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY

**Minutes of a meeting held virtually via Zoom on 4<sup>th</sup>  
 January 2021**

<p><b>Present:</b> Stewart Boyling (SB), Brenda Brown (Vice-chair, BB), Julie Burgess (JB); Richard Carter (CRC), Rowena Chalk (Chair, RC), James Horsman (JH); Eddie Rodriguez (ERZ), Nicky Wastie (NW)</p> <p><b>In attendance:</b> Pete Robinson (PR)</p> <p><b>Minutes:</b> Alison Carter (Clerk to Governors, AC)</p>	
1	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>                  Penny Canepa-Anson (PCA)</p>
2	<p><b>APPOINTMENT OF PR AS ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY</b>                  The governors appointed PR to serve as an associate member. RC added that she and BB are confident that a new co-opted governor will be introduced at the January 11th FGB.</p>
3	<p><b>THE RETURN TO SCHOOL, SPRING TERM 2021, AND COVID-19.</b></p> <p>ERZ reported on the current situation, reminding the governors that it might be about to change (a government announcement was due at 20:00hrs, straight after the meeting). He described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes and developments in government guidance since the December FGB.</li> <li>• the plan for delivering lateral flow testing to students and staff.</li> <li>• the schedule for the return to school (year 11 January 11<sup>th</sup> and then the rest of the school January 18th).</li> </ul> <p>Oathall has received an initial delivery of 10,000 testing kits. Loughborough University delivered a useful webinar during the Christmas break on the practicalities of testing, adapting its experience to a school context. ERZ described the layout of the Oathall testing area, staff roles and the barcoding of results for collection of data by the DfE and health bodies. He stressed that testing will have a major impact on the school day, and provided figures on the length of time testing is likely to take – both routine weekly tests for all staff and students, and ‘serial testing’ (which follows a positive result). The aim of serial testing is to avoid groups of students being sent home to isolate: contacts would instead be tested as soon as possible and thus potentially kept in school. A typical number of students identified as having had contact with anyone who tests positive is 40. Because of the time it takes to test such a number, students might be asked</p>

to arrive in school early.

ERZ added that parental permission for testing is required for each student under 16, and a registration form must also be filled in.

The children of key workers, and vulnerable children (currently about 60) will be in school in the coming week and will be tested. This and should give a good idea of how the system will operate.

**JB asked if the data collected via in-school testing will feed into Test & Trace, or if the school will still be expected to manage the self-isolation process.** ERZ explained that Oathall must inform students and parents of any positive test result. The Test & Trace system gathers this data via the test results barcode system. Students testing positive are isolated at school and picked up by parents, who are given written guidance on getting a confirmatory test via the national system. Oathall also has some of the 'second' type of test (PCR test) to give to families who might have difficulties accessing external testing.

**CRC asked what will happen if a parent or student refuses consent.** ERZ said that while the provision of testing became mandatory in schools (during the Christmas break) it is not mandatory for any individual student to *take* a test. A parent, or a student who is over 16, can refuse consent, but the school must still provide an education. He reminded the governors that, as with safety measures in place at school before the onset of testing, the new regime is designed to reduce rather than eliminate risk. He further reminded the meeting that in-school testing is for asymptomatic infection: anyone with symptoms must follow national guidance in reporting and testing.

**CRC asked what safeguarding measures are in place for students who suffer anxiety during testing, and how privacy is provided.** ERZ gave details of the booths and barriers set up in the hall, and the training completed for those pastoral staff members likely to be with each student as they perform their test. He added that it is not planned at present to inform students and families of negative tests, to ease the administrative load. While awaiting their result, students will be asked to stay in a waiting area, rather than returning to class straight away.

**CRC asked how many positive tests would result in the school's testing capacity reaching saturation.** ERZ detailed the volume of regular testing (twice per week of all students and staff) and said that five positive cases, which usually trigger about 40 extra tests, would use up all capacity.

**JH asked if the armed forces might be brought in to those schools at risk of falling behind in their testing.** ERZ said that this might be helpful but is not envisaged.

**JH asked if exams are likely to happen in the summer term.** ERZ replied that there is no news as yet of cancellation, but that he finds it difficult to see how fairness could be guaranteed in the exams process, given the varying disruption to the current year 11 across the country, with some students sent home multiple times to isolate. **JH asked if planning is underway for alternative methods of assessment.** ERZ said that using teacher-assessed grades is a possible scenario, and added that Oathall now has a full set of mock exam results. Students tended to take these exams seriously, aware that their results might be included in summer assessment.

#### Teaching and learning

Teaching staff were given the option of attending the INSET day today (Monday, Jan 4<sup>th</sup>) to set up the remote learning now required in the coming weeks before Year 11 and (a week later)

	<p>other years return physically to school. The SLT aims to balance understandable staff anxiety with the need to educate. Year 11 is the focus this week, with preparations being made to live-stream lessons. Faye Hatchard has managed the training process. Staff who are less confident of their at-home IT are encouraged to teach in school (where IT support is on hand).</p> <p>The school is open from this week to children of key workers and vulnerable children. Staff know which students are likely to struggle to learn at home, and have been actively offering school places. About 60 children will be attending, and they will be tested this week. Guidance, full information and also expectations are on the school website.</p> <p><b>JB asked about students who will suffer anxiety and/or bereavement as a result of the sharp increase in Covid cases. She asked what services, such as counselling, are available.</b> ERZ said that individual need is hard to determine in advance. The Oathall pastoral system, with non-teaching Heads of House monitoring and speaking to their students, along with SEN and form tutors making individual contact with students well known to them, aims to address this.</p> <p>RC reported on her regular contact with ERZ, and extended the thanks of the governing body for the phenomenal work done by the SLT over recent weeks and through constant change. She advised that further special meetings may be called as need arises.</p> <p><b>JH asked if there have already been challenges from parents about the testing process and its efficacy.</b> ERZ said that his experience has been that parents are positive about the school's care for students, and about its reaction to changing guidance from government.</p> <p>PR gave a staff view: Oathall staff are 'on board' with testing. There is some anxiety, particularly about the new Covid strain and the different way it is transmitted among young people. Teachers are in favour of the plan to focus on year 11 and then move gradually to live streaming for the rest of the school, and also about the phased return to face-to-face teaching.</p> <p>There was a discussion about vaccination. The governors were dismayed that teachers and other student-facing staff have not been included in groups to be vaccinated in initial 'waves'.</p>	
	<p><i>The meeting closed at 19:45 hrs</i></p>	

Distribution: Governing Body, Leadership Team, Head's PA, WSCC