



MINUTES OF MEETING OF GOVERNING BOARD

Monday 19th January 2026, 7 pm

Oathall Community College

Present: Toby Houghton (TDH) Head Teacher; Rowena Chalk (RC) Chair; Brenda Brown (BB) Vice Chair; Nicky Wastie (NW); Vicky Cobb (VC); Sarah Wild (SW); James Horsman (JH); John Parry (JP); Richard Carter (CRC); Emily Lomax (EM); Steve Hall (SH).

In Attendance: Laura Gyngell (LCG)

Minutes: Donna Murdoch (DM) Clerk to Governors.

No	Item
1.	<p>Apologies and absence.</p> <p>Carol Mactaggart gave her apologies.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of interest.</p> <p>None</p>
3.	<p>Senior Leadership Presentation</p> <p>Safeguarding.</p> <p>LCG gave a presentation to the governors about safeguarding at Oathall Community College. She updated the governors about the core team, staff structure and how Oathall is training more staff and increasing the knowledge and experience of staff. LCG spoke of the categories in safeguarding, prevent measures and female genital mutilation. LCG explained the "Continuum of Need" which is a framework, primarily in child protection and social care, that categorizes the level of support children and families require, from universal services (Level 1) for no extra needs, through early help (Level 2) for emerging issues, to complex/specialist services (Level 3) for significant challenges, and finally to statutory intervention (Level 4) for severe harm or risk, ensuring the right support is provided at the right time by various agencies. It acts as a guide for professionals to make consistent decisions about escalating or de-escalating support based on specific indicators of vulnerability or need.</p> <p>LCG spoke about a safeguarding questionnaire sent to all students and 630 were completed. Most of the responses were positive and 88% of those students felt happy and safe. 98.3% said they are really comfortable with online safety. A number of assemblies are being held in relation to different subjects such as inappropriate behaviour and the use of racist language.</p>

	<p>LCG also spoke about the system used called My Concern which allows staff to report any concerns that they may have and how they manage that. Oathall will also be using a new system called Smoothwall Monitor which will monitor students' online activity.</p> <p>Designated staff are alerted in real-time and within minutes of an event being detected. Notifications are by email, and by phone for the highest suspected risks. All alerts come with contextual evidence to support next step decision-making.</p> <p>A governor asked what the cost of this system was. Oathall will be starting a free trial period initially and then they will receive a quote so the exact figure is not known at this stage.</p> <p>A governor asked if there was any filtering and monitoring of staff accounts. LCG replied that they do have the ability to do that, but it is not something that they do.</p> <p>A governor asked if there would be a dramatic increase in the My Concern records with this new system. LCG replied that the new system doesn't automatically add them to My Concern and the team can decide what is added.</p> <p>A governor asked how often the reports were reviewed. LCG said that they are reviewed throughout the day, every day.</p> <p>A governor asked if there is a requirement for an external audit by someone other than Ofsted . LCG replied that there wasn't, but it is always good practice to do this and this is done through WSCC and also the Federation of Schools. The Federation of Schools will audit each other this year. A governor asked if they would see the results of that audit. TH replied that they wouldn't but the safeguarding governor would be aware as it is the governor's responsibility to ensure that the school is conducting safeguarding properly and meeting all the legal requirements.</p>
4.	<p>Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15th December 2025.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 15th December 2025 were approved and signed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>
5.	<p>Business and finance reports.</p> <p>The business report for the period of November and December 2025, along with the budget monitoring report for the same period were provided to the governors.</p> <p>In December, Oathall recruited a new digital and media officer, a part time site officer and two catering assistants, who all started in January.</p> <p>Following the confirmation that WSCC will cover the costs of a full replacement, the astro project will recommence on 26 January. The project will take between 10 and 12 weeks.</p> <p>Oathall hosted their first primary school visit to the farm in December. They fed the sheep, planted acorns and were introduced to all of our small mammals.</p>
6.	<p>Policies to be approved.</p> <p>6.1 Freedom of Information Policy – approved</p> <p>6.2 Data Protection Policy – approved.</p> <p>6.3 Medicines in schools Policy – updated to include the Global Health Insurance Card and approved.</p>

7.	<p>Chair's Report</p> <p>RC, TH & BB will be attending Independent Review Panel (IRP) training next week. RC will also be attending admissions and appeal panel training in February.</p> <p>RC reported that she has now clarified a question from the clerk in relation to the complaints policy. West Sussex legal team have confirmed that a complaint panel can be recorded for the purpose of taking minutes of the meeting as long as all parties agree. The policy will be updated to reflect this.</p>
8.	<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <p>TH gave an overview of the recent year 11 mock exam data. The year 11's had a mock grade release morning where they were given their mock exam results in an envelope. TH said that at this level they are predominantly looking at what the English and maths results show in terms of indicators of how the year group is doing so far. He discussed the data in comparison with last year 11's mock exams. This helps to show if they are adding value or are there any areas of concern. Most of the data is in line with where they were last year. Whilst they are pleased with last year's results, they wanted to see an improvement on the upper end of the maths results which they have seen an uplift and if this continues, then this will have a good impact. They also saw an increase in the performance of pupil premium students. Overall the figures are really encouraging.</p> <p>The governors would like to thank the exams team for all their hard work.</p> <p>The MP Alison Bennett attended Oathall and spent time with the prefects, had a tour of the school and presented an award for a Christmas card competition.</p> <p>Lindfield Life magazine reported on Oathall's musical 'Shrek' and also the Jane Austin themed celebratory tea party that was held to mark the 250th anniversary of her birth.</p>
9.	<p>Governor visits/SEND/Pupil premium updates.</p> <p>There were no reports for this meeting.</p>
10.	<p>Actions:</p> <p>The Safeguarding training has been completed by all governors. The majority of the governors have now completed the effective financial governance in schools training.</p>
11.	<p>Any other business.</p> <p>None</p>
12.	<p>Date of next meeting –</p> <p>Tuesday 24th February 2025 at 1900 hours.</p>