



The Castle School

A SPECIALIST COLLEGE FOR COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

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MINUTES of a Meeting of the Full Governing Board held on Thursday 4th September 2025 at 4.30pm, on Teams

Present: Helen Cabell (HC) (Chair) (Co-opted Governor), Nicola Markham (NM) (Vice Chair) (Co-opted Governor), William Alexander (WA) (Parent Governor) Jo Davis (JD) (Staff Governor), Chris Fisher (CF) (Co-opted Governor), Jon Hewitt (JH) (Headteacher), Charlie Kowalski (CW) (Parent Governor), Jane Seymour (JS) (Co-opted Governor)

In attendance: James Whybra (JW) (Deputy Headteacher), Anne Hunter (AH) (Clerk)

1. Apologies Received

No apologies for absence were received. Adrian Crawford, Indira Hann and Emily Owles did not attend the meeting. The meeting was quorate.

2. Election of the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors

2.1 Period of Office of Chair and Vice Chair

Following discussions at previous meetings relating to the continuity of the roles of the Chair and Vice Chair AH confirmed that the Governing Board had the ability to decide on the period of office of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Full Governing Board. It was noted that whatever decision was made the period of office would cease for a Governor on the date that their term of office ended. If they then continued as a Governor and wished to continue in the role of Chair or Vice Chair they would need to be re-elected into that role. It was noted that the decision on the period of office had to be made prior to any elections to the role.

Governors considered what period of office they would want for each role and agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair should be elected for a period of three years or until their term of office ended whichever was sooner.

2.2 Election of the Chair and Vice Chair

Being the first Full Governing Board (FGB) of the new academic year, a vote was held for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair for 2025/26.

Chair – John Hewitt (JH) nominated Helen Cabell (HC) for the role of Chair. All voting Governors agreed unanimously with this nomination.

Helen Cabell took over the role of Chair from the Clerk.

Vice Chair – JD nominated Nicola Markham (NM) for the role of Vice Chair. All voting Governors agreed unanimously with this nomination.

Therefore, as agreed during the previous item, Helen Cabell was elected Chair and Nicola Markham Vice Chair of the Full Governing Board for a period of three years.

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2.3 Review of Standing Orders for the Procedural Workings of the Governing Board 2025/2026

An updated version of the Standing Orders had been provided to Governors prior to the meeting and AH went through the proposed changes. These included the inclusion of items that could now be found on GovernorHub, and changes arising from the new committee structure and revised Link Governor Positions.

AH asked that considered be given to adding a heading before the Link Governor Position entries entitled "Link Governor Positions" and wording to state that "The following Link Governor Positions have been agreed:". The revised Standing Orders were agreed subject to the addition of the wording put forward by AH.

Action 1 – The Clerk to amend the Terms of Reference as agreed by FGB and upload a copy to GovernorHub.

3. Declarations of Interest on Items Pertaining to this Agenda

There were no declarations of interest declared.

4. Any Other Urgent Items of Business to be Raised at this Meeting

The following items of business were raised:

- JH asked that the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy be considered.
- NM raised the rules related to non-attendance of Vice Chairs at Committee Meetings.

5. Governance and Training

5.1 Completion of Statutory Forms (Business Interests, Code of Conduct, Declaration Forms)

AH reminded Governors of the need to complete their statutory forms and declarations which could now be completed on GovernorHub. AH requested that all forms and declarations be completed by the end of September at the latest.

Action 2 – All Governors to complete their statutory forms and declarations by the end of September.

5.2 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

AH confirmed that the 2025 version was now available and could be found on the compliance section of GovernorHub. Governors were asked to read the 2025 version and confirm that they had read it by the end of September.

Action 3 – All Governors to read the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 version and confirm that they have done so by the end of September.

5.3 Governor Training

AH confirmed that she would advise of any relevant training courses and asked Governors to let her know if they had any specific training needs.

HC also reminded Governors to complete the Skills Audit questionnaire and return it to AH as soon as possible.

Action 4 – All Governors return the Skills Audit questionnaire to AH as soon as possible.

6. AOB items

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

JH advised that the model policy had only been received from West Berkshire at the end of last week and therefore there hadn't been time to update it and include on the agenda for this

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meeting. As the policy needed to be in place from the start of the academic year there was a need to get it agreed as soon as possible. JH confirmed that the new policy had not changed much from the previous version and had been further updated by the School to include the names of those with specific responsibilities relating to the policy eg the Designated and Deputy Safeguarding Leads. As Governors had not yet had sight of the policy it was agreed that JH would send a copy of the updated policy to all Governors and that approval of the policy would be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with the Headteacher.

Action 5 – JH to send a copy of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to all Governors and the Chair, in consultation with the Headteacher, to consider and decide whether to approve the policy.

- **Rules Related to Non-Attendance of Vice Chairs at Committee Meetings**

NM asked if there were any rules relating to an elected vice chair of a committee who wasn't attending committee meetings and therefore not supporting the chair in their role? AH advised that there was no specific rule about chairs or vice chairs not attending relevant committee meetings. The only rule related to a governor not attending any meeting in a six-month period. It was noted that if a governor only attended part of a meeting they were still counted as "in attendance" at that meeting.

7. Dates and Times of the Next Meetings

Finance and Premises Committee, Thursday 9th October 2025 at 4.30pm, to be held on Teams

Student and Staffing Committee, Thursday 16th October 2025 at 4.30pm to be held on Teams.

Full Governing Board, Thursday 20th November 2025 at 5.00pm, to be held at Castle @ Theale

The meeting closed at 4.50pm.