



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ESHER SIXTH FORM COLLEGE ACADEMY TRUSTEES

Wednesday, 9 July 2025 at 6.00pm

Present:

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| Tim Oliver (Chair) | John Thater (Vice Chair) |
| Dan Hards | Oliver Schuster |
| Emma O'Brien | Thea Torosyan |
| Liz Gilroy-Scott | Mark Aulds |
| Natasha Meade | Jane Duscherer |
| Sophie Cook | Dave Roberts |

Brian Scott (Guest), Divanio Crooks (Guest)
 David Irving (Member), David Lavarack (Member), Clarissa Wilks (Member)
 Sagar Patel, Deputy Principal, (Advising Officer),
 Stephanie Wiles, Director of Finance and Estates, (Advising Officer)
 Catherine Davies (Clerk)

1. PRESENTATION BY VICE PRESIDENT OF THE STUDENT UNION

The Chair welcomed the guests, Brian Scott and Divanio Crooks to the meeting. Brian and Divanio will be appointed as Members in the coming weeks.

The Vice President of the Student Union gave an overview of the make-up of the current Student Union team who were elected following a campaign held in April. The first Student Union event was Culture Day followed by a Colour Run which attracted a large audience of students to watch. The Student Union team spoke to prospective students at recent Open Days and have produced promotional videos for upcoming events. The Summer Festival was a great success and raised funds that will be donated to charity and plans are being made for many events in the Autumn term.

The Chair thanked the Student Trustee for the excellent presentation and looks forward to hearing about future events at the upcoming meetings.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Mark Aulds (Parent Trustee) declared an interest as the Link Trustee for Health & Safety at Esher Church of England High School.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Flora Burrowes, Tom Clark, Mark Nelligan and Claire Douglas.

4. CONSTITUTION

4.1 Student Trustees

The Board noted the appointment of Flora Burrowes and Thea Torosyan as Student Trustees.

4.2 Re-appointment of External Trustee

The Board noted the re-appointment of Natasha Meade for a second term.

4.3 Procedure to elect a Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair noted a recruitment process had been run by the Members for the role of Chair and the successful candidate is expected to nominate themselves for the role of Chair. The Chair will be stepping down at the next meeting (as Chair) and subsequently as a Trustee.

A Trustee asked who can make a nomination and the Chair replied that Trustees of the Board are able to propose and second a candidate.

The Board agreed to the Procedure to elect a Chair and Vice Chair.

4.4 Committee Membership and Chairs 2025/26

The Board approved the Committee Membership and Chairs 2025/26.

4.5 Schedule of Meeting Dates 2025/26

The Board approved the Meeting Dates 2025/26.

4.6 Code of Conduct 2025

The Board approved the Code of Conduct 2025.

5. MINUTES OF THE ACADEMY TRUST MEETING HELD ON 26th MARCH 2025

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 26th March 2025.

6. MATTERS ARISING

AT03-001 Deputy Principal to bring 6.3 data to next meeting. **The Deputy Principal gave an overview of 6.3 data which showed 15% of UCAS application in the 2024/25 cycle were from 6.3 students. Additional data relating to students who left the College up to 4 years ago showed the continued support the Progression Guidance Department gives to students once they leave the College and wish to apply to higher education.**

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Chair thanked the Principal for his written report. The Principal updated the Board with a verbal overview including:

- The SFCA has received the NJC teaching pay claim for 2025/26 from the teaching unions.
- The real time rise of the funding rate is 1.73% for the next year and the National Insurance grant has been confirmed until March 2026.
- Ofsted has delayed the publication of its consultation regarding the new framework until September and intend to roll it out in November 2025.
- Attendance has been impressive at the recent Parent Information Evening for students attending in 2025 and Open Evening for 2026 applicants.
- The new build classroom block will be ready for a handover in mid-August.
- The College is fully staffed for September.

7.1 Finance Reports and approval of budget 2025/26

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced the Managements Accounts for 8 and 9 months that had been reviewed at Finance and Estates Committee meeting.

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced the Budget 2025/26 and noted the recently received Programme Weighting grant which led to an update to the Budget.

A Member asked for more information regarding student enrolments numbers and the Director confirmed that the current College size is the largest it has been. The Principal added that the Finance and Estates Committee will be considering the size of the College at the next meeting.

The Chair thanked the Director of Finance and Estates and her team for their hard work in drafting the 2025/26 Budget.

The Board approved the Management Accounts for 8 and 9 months to 30.04.25 and 31.05.25.

The Board approved the Budget 2025/26.

7.2 Health & Safety Report

The Director of Finance and Estates introduced the summary report for the year ended 31st August 2025 and noted that an internal audit of Health and Safety had taken place during the year which gave a “substantial” level of assurance.

A Member asked for more information regarding Audiebant and the Director gave an overview of the speaker system that is going to be installed around the College and will provide audible messages across the campus and can be used in emergency situations such as a lockdown.

A Trustee asked what provision will be made for students who are deaf or have hearing loss and the Deputy Principal replied that a risk assessment will be carried out for any student who is deaf or has hearing loss and a plan put in place to ensure they are notified of an emergency.

A Trustee asked if a lockdown practice drill had taken place and the Principal replied that a practice drill took place in December 2024. The next drill will take the new Disaster Management Strategy into account.

7.3 Review of Quality Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal introduced the Quality Improvement Plan and highlighted the following Targets:

Targets 1 – 3: The data indicators are positive in terms of A Level Results and most Btec subjects but there is a possibility that 1 Btec subject maybe below the internal benchmark.

Target 4 – Level 3 Reform. This has been achieved.

Target 5 – Rewrite of Curriculum Policy. This remains on hold until the publication of the new Ofsted framework.

Target 8 – Attendance. This has been achieved due to the approval of the Attendance Strategy by the SLT and an increase of 1% in attendance compared to the previous year.

A Trustee asked for more information regarding benchmarking sixth form attendance data and the Board discussed the difficulty in comparing attendance data across Colleges and forming targets.

A Trustee who is a parent commented on the excellent communication sent out to parents when a student is absent. The Student Trustee noted that transport delays can impact attendance too.

Target 14 – Mission and Values. This target has been partially achieved; excellent progress has been made in embedding the Mission and Values in the Self Assessment Review Targets but some targets are waiting for the updates to the Ofsted framework due in the Autumn.

Target 17 – Recruitment and retention. This target has been achieved; the People Strategy has been approved by the SLT and the Employee Value Proposition will be shared with staff in the next academic year. The recruitment of staff has been streamlined by using the Pinpoint online system.

Target 19 – Communication Strategy. This target is on-going as the Communications Strategy is due to be approved by the SLT and will focus on clear communication with parents and students. The Board discussed initiatives to ensure communication with parents is clear and consistent.

(Oliver Schuster joined the meeting)

8. STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-28

The Principal gave an overview of the pathway of revising the Strategic Plan from a long document to the new current format that is aligned with the College Mission and Values. The Strategic Aims pin point the progress to be achieved over the next 3 years.

The Board agreed with the minor changes made at the Strategy and Policy Committee meeting and agreed with the wording update in Aim 7 (from AI to Emerging Technologies).

The Board approved the Strategic Plan 2025-28.

9. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Principal gave an overview of the Risk Register that had been approved by the Audit Committee, in addition the following Risks have been updated:

Risk 4 – Student misuse of AI in non-examined assessments. Following the release of the AI guidance from the DfE on 11 June, the Digital Strategy was updated and approved by the SLT.

Risk 8 – Uncertainty around National Insurance Grant. The Board agreed to keep the gross and net scores as agreed at the Audit Committee meeting.

The Board approved the Strategic Risk Register.

10. LINK TRUSTEE REPORTS

The Link Trustee for Career Progression gave an update regarding the Quality in Careers Standard that the Progression Guidance Department is working towards. (Strategic Aim 9 of the Strategic Plan). This national quality award has 4 components: careers education, careers advice, careers information and careers guidance. These components align with the Gatsby Benchmarks.

The Link Trustee highlighted the feedback from the Enterprise Co-ordinator at Surrey County Council on the work of the Progression Guidance Department to achieve the Standard.

The Link Trustees for Safeguarding and EDI updated the Board on a meeting with the Assistant Principal for Student Services and Communication. They discussed upcoming initiatives including plans for sessions regarding AI and misinformation, the review of the Mental Health Strategy and plans to create a space near Reception for students to seek support. Peer Connect Ambassadors are being introduced in September to support new students. The Fitness to Study and Reasonable Adjustment Procedure is due to be reviewed and a new policy on Bullying will be introduced in the Autumn.

The Chair thanked the Link Trustees for their updates.

11. REPORT BACK FROM COMMITTEES

The Chair of Quality and Standards highlighted the Committee's discussions regarding the Student Survey and the External Quality Review of Modern Languages which was very positive.

The Vice Chair of Strategy and Policy explained that 2 of the Human Resources policies were directed back to the SLT to be drafted as procedures. The Committee also suggested changes to the Strategic Plan which have been actioned. The size of the College regarding student enrolment numbers was also considered.

The Chair asked the Director of Finance and Estates to give an update regarding the new Classroom Block following the Finance and Estates Committee meeting. The Director noted that the build should be finished in mid-August and ready for use at the start of term. The Caretaker's Cottage should be renovated by the end of August. A lease agreement is being drawn up so the Cottage can be leased to a member of staff.

The Vice Chair of the Audit Committee updated the Board that a new internal auditor has been appointed, Tiaa Ltd.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Clerk updated the Board that all Trustees need to validate their ID via this link [Verify your identity for Companies House - GOV.UK](#) by the end of October.

The Code of Conduct and Register of Interests will be circulated via DocuSign and Microsoft Forms in September.

Action: Trustees to verify their identity via the link from Companies House.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 24TH September 2025 at 6.00pm

*The meeting closed at 7.20pm
Attendance was 75%*

Signed and date

Signed by:
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01 October 2025 | 2:20 PM BST

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

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| AT4 - 001 | Trustees to verify their identity via the link from Companies House |
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SUMMARY OF TRUSTEE CHALLENGE [C] / SUPPORT [S]

| C/S | Minute | Topic |
|-----|--------|---|
| C | 7 | A Member asked for more information regarding student enrolments numbers and the Director confirmed that the current College size is the largest it has been. The Principal added that the Finance and Estates Committee will be considering the size of the College at the next meeting. |
| S | 7 | The Chair thanked the Director of Finance and Estates and her team for their hard work in drafting the 2025/26 Budget. |
| C | 7 | A Trustee asked what provision will be made for students who are deaf or have hearing loss and the Deputy Principal replied that a risk assessment will be carried out for any student who is deaf or has hearing loss and a plan put in place to ensure they are notified of an emergency. |
| S | 7 | A Trustee who is a parent commented on the excellent communication sent out to parents when a student is absent. |