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

Wednesday 25th March 2026 at 6.00pm

Present:
Oliver Schuster, Chair
Dan Hards, Principal
Mark Aulds (MAU)
Flora Burrowes (FBU)
John Thater (JTH)
Natasha Meade (NME)
Liz Gilroy-Scott (LGS)
Jane Duscherer (JDU)
Alex Davy (ADA)
Claire Douglas (CDO)
Michaela Canessa (MCA)
Thea Torosyan (TTO)

David Lavarack,(Member),
Sagar Patel, (SPA) Deputy Principal, (Advising Officer)
Kate Parsons, (KPA) Assistant Principal (Advising Officer)
Anna Mawson, (AMA) Assistant Principal (Advising Officer).
Jorja Bullock (JBU), Director of ALN, Catherine Davies (Clerk)

1. PRESENTATION FROM ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS DEPARTMENT WITH KATE PARSONS, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL STUDENT SERVICES & COMMUNICATION AND JORJA BULLOCK, DIRECTOR OF ALN

KPA briefed the Board on the following:
The group of students with the highest needs are those with an EHCP; there are also significant groups of students with ADHD, autism, dyslexia and other additional needs.
The number of students with exam access arrangements (that include extra time, using a computer, rest breaks and using a small room) is large.
The number of students with SEND needs is increasing nationally (as well as at the College) and the external options for help are limited.
The SEND White Paper will bring major reform to the EHCP system in England from 2028.
Managing parental expectation is a continuing challenge for the department.
JBU gave an overview of Quality First Teaching (QFT), including the phrase “every teacher is a teacher of SEND” to create an inclusive learning environment. JBU explained how QFT is implemented at the College, for example the weekly teaching tip given to staff.

JTH asked how new teachers are given QFT skills and JBU and AMA gave an overview of the induction process for new staff that includes QFT.

The Chair asked how the SEND White Paper will affect the ALN department and KPA replied that the changes will help but the details haven’t been published.

The Chair thanked KPA and JBU for the interesting and informative presentation and the continued hard work of the ALN department.

(JBU left the meeting)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Natasha Meade declared her interest as a parent at Heathside Walton School and Thea Torosyan declared her interest as former pupil at Heathside Weybridge School.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mark Nelligan, Tom Clark and Emma O'Brien.

4. CONSTITUTION

4.1 Appointment of External Trustee

The Chair welcomed Michaela Canessa to the Board. Michaela was appointed on 5th March 2026 by the Members and is joining the Strategy and Policy and Quality and Standards Committees.

4.2 Committee Membership & Chairs

The Board approved the Membership and Chairs.

4.3 Moving date of July Board Meeting to 1st July

The Board approved the move of the date to 1st July 2026.

4.4 Articles of Association update

The Chair introduced the draft Articles of Association and table of changes which include increasing the age of a Trustee to 18, extending the term of a Parent Trustee to 4 years and removing the limit of the number of Trustees making up the Board.

A Member asked how the changes had been agreed and the Chair replied that the changes had been discussed and agreed at the Trustee Training Day in February and the Strategy & Policy Committee Meeting in March.

The Board approved the draft Articles of Association subject to DfE clearance.

The Board authorised the Chair to approve any amendments required by the DfE for clearance.

4.5 Terms of Reference Remuneration Committee

The Board approved the Terms of Reference of the Remuneration Committee subject to the following changes:

Updating wording of Item 3 to "at least 3 Trustees", changing wording to Academy Trust from Board of Trustees and removing Item 10.

Action: Clerk to update Terms of Reference Remuneration Committee.

5. MINUTES OF ACADEMY TRUST MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2026

The Board approved the Minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting of 11 December 2025.

6. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal introduced his report and updated the Board with the following:

- As a 16-19 College, there is no requirement to provide a transition plan to the DfE re post-16 qualification reform.
- Bidding for Post16 capacity and construction funding programmes is via Surrey County Council and the guidance is still to be released.
- The SLT are focusing on readiness for Ofsted, Level 3 Reform and quality assurance processes.

The Chair asked for more details regarding the national funding rate and the Principal replied that there is likely to be a gap between the national funding rate and the pay agreement for staff.

7.1 Student Union Presentation

FBU and TTO updated the Board on recent activities including:

- Christmas events included food donations and a chocolate tombola.
- A gifting Valentines event was successful.
- International Women's Day was celebrated with awareness raising events.
- Green Week has included a clothes swap and plant sale.

The Student Union has made a range of video on social media that have had a high level of engagement.

The Board thanked the students for their excellent presentation and their hard work in the past year.

7.2 Management Accounts, plus forecast outrun, cashflow & commentary for 4 and 5 months to 31.12.25 & 31.01.26

The Board approved the management accounts for 4 and 5 months to 31.12.25 & 31.1.26.

7.3 Review of Quality Improvement Plan

The Deputy Principal introduced the Quality Improvement Plan and noted:

Target 8 – Level 3 Reform – Some of the new AAQ's will be defunded to allow for the introduction of V levels. At the College, the Performing Arts Btecs will continue to be funded for the next 4 years but Health and Social Care and Human Biology will be defunded in 2027. There is uncertainty concerning the content of some of the new V levels and lack of details makes promoting the courses to prospective students tricky. The Principal added that the S7 Colleges are working to make sure the value of AAQ's is retained, and more guidance has been given regarding subject combinations that cannot be taken together, for example Film Studies and Film & TV.

Targets 11, 12, 13 – Data – The recent DfE data for the College reflect scores above the national average and excellent figures for value added, progression and retention. The value-added score for disadvantaged students is an area of focus for the SLT; the Inclusion Strategy has been written and is being implemented.

MAU asked for more details regarding the Human Biology Btec that was introduced in 2025 and is being defunded from 2027 and the Deputy Principal replied that DfE changes make planning ahead difficult.

NME asked for details of how students are identified most at risk (Target 1 – Inclusion Strategy) and the Deputy Principal gave an overview of criteria used to identify students at risk including EHCP, Bursary, free school meals, those re-taking GCSE English & Maths, Open Social Care and Youth Justice. The data from students in these groups is then analysed (including attendance) and those with lower rankings are offered mentor support. KPA added that work is being carried out to improve the data collection and give live rankings.

8 POLICIES

8.3 Admissions Policy 2027
The Board noted the addition of Heathside Walton to the list of schools guaranteed entry to the College.

8.4 Complaints Procedure
The Board noted the 3 stages of the Complaints Procedure and the new form to be used at Stage 1.

8.5 Behaviour & Engagement Policy
KPA noted the change to the wording in Item 5 to comply with the Equality Act (Student changed to Students).

8.6 Misconduct Procedure
ADA asked if parents could be copied into correspondence regarding a Level 2 concern and KPA agreed.

8.7 Fitness to Study & Reasonable Adjustment Procedure
ADA asked if parents can be contacted for Levels 0-5 and KPA agreed.

8.8 Academic Engagement Procedure

8.9 Exclusion & Appeals Procedure + Student Contract
The Board noted the final stage of the appeals process for an exclusion will be a Special Committee hearing made up of 2 Trustees and a person who is independent of the College.

ADA asked if the list of reasons for authorised absence other than illness could be outlined in the Student Contract and KPA agreed to take this comment into consideration next time its updated.

8.10 Executive Pay Policy
The Chair noted this is a new policy and is in line with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook.

The Board approved the following policies:
Admissions Policy 2027
Complaints Procedure
Behaviour & Engagement Policy
Misconduct Procedure
Fitness to Study & Reasonable Adjustment Procedure
Academic Engagement Procedure
Exclusion & Appeals Procedure
Executive Pay Policy

Action: KPA to amend Misconduct Procedure to copy in parents to a Level 2 concern.
Action: KPA to amend Fitness to Study & Reasonable Adjustment Procedure so that parents are contacted for Levels 0-5.

Action: SLT to consider a list of reasons for authorised absence when the Student Contract is next reviewed.

The Chair thanked KPA for her hard work in bringing the policies to the Board.

9 DfE SCHOOL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

The Board approved the DfE SRMA checklist.

10 REPORT BACK FROM COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Strategy & Policy noted that a new approach to Admissions will be considered at the next meeting.

The Vice Chair of Finance & Estates noted the Committee discussed the capital budget and new projects for consideration.

11 LINK TRUSTEE REPORTS

The Link Trustee for Safeguarding and EDI updated the Board that an internal audit of Safeguarding has been given the highest level of grading.

The Link Trustee for Careers Progression updated the Board that an evening for higher education delivered in person and on-line to parents and carers had recently taken place as well as the Higher Education & Apprenticeship Day with over 80 universities attending.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair thanked the Director of Finance and Estates for all the work she has done for the College over 14 years including expanding the estate, academisation and maintaining a strong financial position.

The Chair thanked FBU and TTO for their service as Student Trustees.

13 WHARE ARE THE THREE THINGS WE HAVE DONE IN THIS MEETING THAT HAVE MADE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE COLLEGE?

- Insight and overview into ALN and SEND provision
- Approval of key policies
- Approval of Articles of Association

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING : 1st July 2026 at 6pm

The meeting closed at 7.35pm
Attendance was 80%

Signed and date ………………………………………………………………………………………

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

1	Clerk to update Terms of Reference Remuneration Committee.
2	KPA to amend Misconduct Procedure to copy in parents to a Level 2 concern
3	KPA to amend Fitness to Study & Reasonable Adjustment Procedure so that parents are contacted for Levels 0-5.
4	SLT to consider a list of reasons for authorised absence when the Student Contract is next reviewed.