Esher Sixth Form College

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY AND POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 4th March 2026 at 6.00pm
Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

Present:
Oliver Schuster, Chair, (OSC)
John Thater, Vice Chair (JTH)
Dan Hards, Principal (DHA)
Claire Douglas (CDO)
Emma O'Brien (EOB)
Flora Burrowes (FBU)

Kate Parsons, Assistant Principal - Student Services & Communications, Advising Officer, (KPA)
Lin Langford, Director of Human Resource, Advising Officer, (LLA)
Michaela Canessa (Guest)
Catherine Davies, Clerk

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Principal noted that the draft Executive Pay Policy relates to the pay of the Senior Post Holders and Clerk and the Chair agreed the Principal and Clerk could remain at the meeting for this agenda item as it was for discussion only.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Trustees were present.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 25 NOVEMBER 2025

The Minutes of the previous meeting of 25th November 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. POLICIES & PROCEDURES:

5.1 Admissions Policy 2027

The Principal introduced the Admissions Policy & Appeals Procedure and gave an overview of changes for 2027 including:

- The admissions policy, entry requirements and appeals procedure have been combined as 1 document with improved formatting to make it easier to read.
- Students can not be accepted during the year or for the second year of study.
- The entry requirement remains as 5 GCSES that are grade 4 and above.
- Heathside Walton has been added as a guaranteed school.
- EHCP wording has been reviewed and a deadline added.

The Chair asked for more information regarding LAC provision and the Committee agreed to remove the last sentence from the text concerning evidence of adoption.

The Chair asked if a form should be included in the policy for parents/carers to complete for Admissions Appeals and the Principal replied that the volume of appeals received is manageable and will consider including an appeals form in the 2028 Policy.

5.2 Complaints Procedure

The Principal introduced the Complaints Procedure which has been updated to incorporate the Complaints against the Board of Trustees Policy and recent DfE guidance.

- Concerns should be recorded and actioned by the appropriate staff member.
- Complaints should be raised within 1 month of the incident.
- Complaints are raised at Stage 1 with the Deputy Principal
- Complaints are reviewed at Stage 2 by the Principal
- Stage 3 is a panel hearing made up of 2 Trustees and 1 independent person.
- A remote option is included for the panel hearing.
- If legal action is threatened, then the complaint is paused.
- The new policy includes a form to be submitted with each complaint.
- The Complaints against the Board of Trustees Policy and Complaints Panel Procedure will no longer be in force when this policy is approved.

The Chair asked if complaints data could be included in the Principal's report and the Principal and Clerk agreed to investigate this further.

5.3 Behaviour & Engagement Policy

KPA introduced the new Behaviour & Engagement Policy that sets out the expectations regarding behaviour and attendance for students.

- The Behaviour and Engagement Framework lays out the 5 levels of intervention.
- Reasonable adjustments are included, the Chair asked if the Equality Act had been considered and KPA replied that it had.

5.4 Misconduct Procedure

KPA noted the Misconduct Procedure has been separated out from the old policy on Academic Engagement. The types of misconduct are listed plus the member of staff responsible for each level of intervention.

5.5 Fitness to Study & Reasonable Adjustment Procedure

KPA noted the procedure states what is reasonable within an educational setting and the limits of individual support that can be provided. Full time on-site attendance is necessary, and it is not possible to provide off site learning. Support is put in place when a student discloses their needs. The fitness to study levels are outlined along with the member of staff who is responsible for each level. The conditions for restarting at the college are also outlined.

5.6 Academic Engagement Procedure

KPA briefed that this procedure also has 5 levels intervention and signposts the member of staff taking responsibility for the student at each level.

5.7 Exclusions and Appeals Procedure

KPA noted this is a new procedure and replaces that Procedure for Student Suspensions and Appeals. If a student is being considered for Permanent Exclusion under the Behaviour and Engagement Policy, then this Procedure is followed for the permanent exclusion and appeal process. The case conference to decide on exclusion is chaired by the Principal or Assistant Principal for Student Services & Communications. The timeline for submitting an appeal is 10 working days from the date of receiving the exclusion letter. An appeal is heard by a panel of 2 Trustees and an independent person and the decision is informed within 10 working days of the panel hearing.

The Board reviewed the Student Contract and Code of Conduct.

5.8 Executive Pay Policy

The Director of HR, LLA, introduced the new policy which is a requirement of the Academy Trust Handbook; the policy applies to the Principal, Deputy Principal and Governance Professional. The Committee discussed who makes up the Senior Post Holders and agreed the Chair is responsible for the Annual Performance Review of the Principal and Governance Professional and the Principal is responsible for the Annual Performance Review of the Deputy Principal. The Committee agreed to continue discussing which roles are considered as Senior Post Holder with reference to this policy and the annual performance reviews.

The Committee approved the policies and procedures and recommended the following to the Board of Trustees for approval:
Admissions Policy 2027
Complaints Procedure
Behaviour and Engagement Policy
Misconduct Procedure
Fitness to Study and Reasonable Adjustment Procedure
Academic Engagement Procedure
Exclusion and Appeals Procedure
Executive Pay Policy

Action: Point 6 of the Admissions policy; delete text related to evidence of adoption and qualification for admissions.

Action: Review adding an appeals form to the Admissions policy for 2028.

Action: Principal and Clerk to report re Complaints data on a termly basis.

Action: Committee to review which roles are considered as Senior Postholder with reference to the Executive Pay Policy and Annual Performance Reviews.

The Chair thanked KPA and LLA for their hard work in putting these policies together.

6 CONSTITUTION

6.1 Amendment to Articles of Association update from Stone King

The Committee agreed the term of a Parent Trustee will be increased from 2 to 4 years in line with DfE guidance. The Chair asked the Clerk to check if the number of Parent Trustees can be increased from 2 to 4.

The Committee noted the minimum age for a Trustee will be 18 meaning that Student Trustees will no longer make up the Board. Staff Trustees have been removed from the Board following guidance in the Academy Trust Handbook.

The Committee discussed ways in which Staff and Students can be represented on the Board; EOB added that she has found the experience of being a Staff Trustee in invaluable and staff representation at Board level should continue. The Principal added the voices of the Staff and Students are important and the Vice Chair agreed that Staff and Student involvement should continue at each Board meeting. The Chair noted that communication to Staff and Students regarding the ending of the Trustee roles should be considered.

The Committee agreed to remove the upper limit on the number of Trustees.

(JHT left the meeting).

6.2 Recruitment of Trustees Update

The Chair thanked Sophie Cook for her service to the Board.
The Clerk welcomed Michaela Canessa to the meeting, and the Committee recommended Michaela to the Members for appointed to the Board.

There is a current vacancy for an external Trustee and the Chair delegated to the Recruitment Committee to meet and agree a recruitment process for the vacancy.

6.3 Procedure for the recruitment and appointment of Trustees

The Committee agreed to discontinue using this Procedure because it is superseded by the Recruitment Committee Terms of Reference. The Recruitment Committee is delegated by the Board to advise and make recommendations to the Members on External and Co-opted Trustees.

(*CDO left the meeting)*

6.4 Trustees' Quality Improvement Plan 2025/26 & Skills Audit 2026

The Clerk advised that she will be sending out the Skills Audit using the format from 2025. The Skills Audit report will be circulated at the next Committee meeting.

The Chair asked that a Board Self-Assessment questionnaire is circulated using the NGA template as the basis. The Chair and Clerk agreed to finalise the questions and circulate.

Action: Clerk to ask legal counsel if number of Parent Trustees on the Board can be more than 2.

Action: Chair and Clerk to finalise Board Self-Assessment questionnaire and circulate.

6.5 Feedback from Trustee Day February 2026

The Chair asked for feedback from the Trustee Day and thanked all involved in putting the day together.

EOB added that she enjoyed the event and in particular the Staff and Student feedback sessions.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

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

* Reviewed policies related to Behaviour and Misconduct.
* Reviewed Admissions Policy 2027
* Noted the importance of staff and student involvement in the Board.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING –** Wednesday 10th June 2026

The meeting closed at 7.42pm
Attendance was 100%

Signed and Date ....

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

1	Point 6 of the Admissions policy, delete text related to evidence of adoption and qualification for admissions.
2	Review adding an appeals form to the policy for 2028.
3	Principal and Clerk to report re Complaints data on a termly basis.
4	Committee to review which roles are considered as Senior Postholder with reference to the Executive Pay Policy and Annual Performance Reviews.
5	Clerk to ask legal counsel if number of Parent Trustees on the Board can be more than 2.
6	Chair and Clerk to finalise Board Self-Assessment questionnaire and circulate