

Extraordinary Full Governors Meeting – Part I Minutes

Date/Time	10 January 2019 – 17.00			Location	Okehampton College
Attendees	Initials	Attendees	Initials	Attendees	Initials
Derrick Brett	DB	Gavin Jordan	GJ		
Bridget Down	BD	Tania Skeaping	TS		
Mary Ellery	ME				

Apologies	Initials	Reason
Julia Capell	JC	
Mike Gurney	MG	Medical Appointment
Marilyn Livingstone	ML	
Timothy Pratt	TP	
Phil Whitley	PRW	
Absent without apology	Initials	
Christopher Wright	CW	

ACTIONS
DECISIONS
QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES

In Attendance	Initials	
Steve Alford (Thomas Moore – Exeter)	SA	
Craig Griffiths	CG	
Nikki Offer	NO	
Kirsty Nixon	KN	
Sulina Tallack	ST	Clerk to Governors

1.1 and 1.2 Apologies and Pecuniary Interests

- Apologies were received from JC, MG, ML, TP and PW. The meeting was content to accept their absence.
- The Chair reminded those present that conflicts of interest must be declared at the start of the meeting and throughout as issues arise, and to leave the room whilst an issue is discussed as appropriate.
- The meeting was quorate.

2. Review Okehampton College uniform consultation

It was noted that the presentation was sent out to all Governors and those not able to attend had submitted proxy votes based purely on the presentation and not on the wider discussion and input from our guest SA from Thomas Moores, Exeter.

A presentation was given by NF

Key points;

3 layers of involvement have taken place.

1. **Kirkland and Rowell survey** – Summary collated - June 2017 – a general survey looking at whole school improvement. Uniform was one of five priorities highlighted.
2. **Uniform survey** – June 2018 – a more in-depth survey used to establish if there was a wish or want for a new uniform and if so what that would look like. The survey went out to parents of Year 6

children within the wider Federation, staff and all of the Year 7,8 and 9. Newsletters were sent out advising of the survey and the survey itself was emailed and hardcopies made available to all. Every possible combination of uniform was put together and voted on, including an option that was the same as that already in use. The outcome was that the majority of responses were in support of change. The key priority for parents with uniformity and consistency for their children.

3. **Vote on uniform** – September – December 2018 – using the options identified in the previous survey staff, students and parents were given the opportunity to vote on the proposed uniform options. This final vote did not include year 6 children but all parents from the current year 7, 8 and 9 year groups were given the opportunity to vote.

Year 7 - 80% of parents voted.

Year 8 - 25% parents voted.

Year 9 - 50% of parents voted.

The outcome being that 613 voted for the blazer option and 304 voted for the existing jumper option.

NF advised that the comparison costings were based upon the options shown in the June 2018 survey and that they were based on a worst case scenario.

An email was tabled from a parent who had objected to the uniform change which gave governors an idea of the concerns that had been raised by a few parents during the course of the consultation. All the concerns were addressed in the content of the presentation.

Governors Questions

How much is a real life cost?

SA from Thomas Moore advised that for most children, parents purchase 2 jumpers per year at £9.99 i.e. £39.96 in a two year period. Blazers are more expensive at £32.99 but tend to last much longer and most students have 2 (girls) or 3 (boys) in their entire school life i.e. £32.99.

Do children tend to wear both a jumper and a blazer?

SA Most schools where there is an option use both a jumpers and a blazer but it depends upon the culture of each individual school.

How do the families that purchase from the store feel about the change?

The majority of schools now have a more formal uniform and this change started around 2006. In the majority of cases once children have tried on the new uniform they are pleased with the change. This has been the case with all of the schools we have worked with.

What are the concerns and worries raised and can we answer all of them?

There have been relatively few with several parents voicing their support. The key issues seem to be the cost and the impact upon special educational needs children i.e. in terms of tightness around the neck.

What can we do to help in terms of cost?

We look to answer the concerns by setting up several different support option e.g. a uniform loan scheme and a hire purchase type option. The year six pupils were already going to have to buy a unified full uniform although this is slightly more expensive.

Is there help financially for those requesting it or is it just the pupils receiving pupil premium?

Potentially yes. There is a loan scheme we can bring in and were looking at other ways to make it easier.

What about the issue for the SEN child? Is there an option for a clip on version of the tie?

We will need to look into this.

Bearing in mind ongoing issues with hoodies. Can you wear a hoody is with the blazer?

The Hoody is not a part of the standard uniform. There is a PE Hoody which can be worn as a coat but it is not uniform and should not be worn in class. The school would be very clear in its expectation, however, it cannot be done at the moment as our current uniform leaves much open to interpretation.

What about the other years that this is not being brought in for?

For years 10 and 11 there is the option to have new uniform but it is an individual decision. SA advised that the other year groups quickly decided that the new uniform was 'cool' and started to wear it even though they did not have to.

What about trainers and other school clothing elements?

At the moment we are just looking at the main uniform, no changes will be made at the moment and children can still wear black leather trainers and other items, as is the case now.

What is the experience of other schools outside of Devon?

CG gave feedback about other schools in London. At a school that was simply swapping one blazer for another he found the same issues raised that we have received here. He has found that children need something to challenge and at the moment with a relaxed uniform that gives them nothing minor to challenge. With a formal uniform the children tend to focus on challenging how the uniform is worn rather than other, bigger issues. He also discussed the evidence of achievement being linked to expectation, the benefits of false authority and the building of confidence in teachers and the lack of loss of face in children. Being able to pick up a minor uniform issues developed a culture of authority and shows that the teachers are paying attention. He advised that the majority of schools in the London area where he previously worked did not have to bring in a more formal uniform but did so anyway. He advised that changing the uniform can give the opportunity for strategic change and can be used as a vehicle for positive action.

Has this process given us enough information to make a decision? If 60% of people are happy with the current uniform in the first survey should we make this change?

The first survey was a very general survey and if you look at the overall wording it shows that the majority of parents want to change. KN advises that the consultation process has been far more inclusive than in other schools that have gone through this process. DB drew attention to the fact that in the November newsletter the wording makes the assumption that the uniform would be changed.

If we choose to opt for further consultation would it mean that we couldn't bring in a new uniform in September?

No, it would still be possible, although tight. The key issue with doing this is in timing and the impact upon parents, suppliers. The practice of introducing the new uniform has come from other schools and the way we are looking at phasing has come from their experience. The main impact is on the current year seven and eight pupils.

If this were to go ahead how are we planning on communicating everything?

There will be a big push once a decision has been made.

NF ran through the decision to be made.

Option 1

- Use the feedback from the survey and uniform vote to communicate the new uniform.

Option 2

- Give parents, students and staff another chance to vote between the current uniform and the 'known' proposed uniform.

All staff left the room apart from the head. 18.25 There were five proxy votes, five in person votes and one no vote.

Governors RESOLVED upon Option 1 and this was carried unanimously.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Actions: Okehampton College to communicate decision and to explore support options.

Time and Date of next meeting

- 5th February 2019 at 14:15 at Okehampton College (room 407)
- Meeting closed at 18.33

Action Table from 30.11.18

WHO	WHAT	WHEN
NF	Communicate decision and to explore support options.	Immediately