CORPORATION BOARD

CONFIRMED MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 19 MAY 2026 AT 4:00PM EASTON COLLEGE, ROOM JB031

Present:

Marcus Bailey	MB	Chair
Jerry White	JW	Principal and Governor *(until 6:55pm)*
Jill Wade	JWa	Governor
Noel Bartram	NB	Governor *(remote via MS Teams)*
Philip Pearce	PP	Governor
Phillip Belden	PB	Governor
Sarah Appleton	SA	Governor
Sean Green	SGn	Governor *(remote via MS Teams, from 4:06pm)*
Laura Stewart	LS	Staff Governor
Shirley Barker	SB	Staff Governor
Lacey Ross	LR	Student Governor, SU President *(until 6:45pm)*
Lillian Rackham	LRa	Student Governor

Attendees:

Chris Caddamy	CC	Executive Director Data Digital and Transformation *(until 6:55pm)*
Jen Eves	JE	Chief Operating Officer *(until 6:55pm)*
Jodie Mitchell	JM	Director of Governance and Legal
Martin Colbourne	MC	Chief Finance Officer *(until 6:55pm)*
Seb Gasse	SG	Chief Learning Officer *(until 6:55pm)*
Claire Harber	CH	Governance and Legal Officer *(until 7:16pm)*

Apologies:

Freddie Simpson	FS	Student Governor
Jock Downie	JD	Governor
Joe McNeill	JMc	Governor
Lucy Sydney	LSy	Governor
Phil Gormley	PG	Vice-Chair

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1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and noted as above.

2. Declaration of Conflicts

No declarations were made.

3. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Board Meeting Held on 24 March 2026

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2026 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

4. Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 24 March 2026

4.1 Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 24 March 2026 (Set 1)

The unconfirmed confidential minutes (set 1) of the meeting held on 24 March 2026 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity

4.2 Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 24 March 2026 (Set 2)

The unconfirmed confidential minutes (set 2) of the meeting held on 24 March 2026 were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity

5. Matters Arising

Board 6 Action 3: Link Strategic Targets with the budget for Governors when producing for 2026/27 (MC/JW). *Due date updated to June.* ACTION ONGOING (Due: June 2026)

Board 3 Action 3: Link in with SU President when preparing transport proposals (JW). *Due date updated to June.* ACTION ONGOING (Due: June 2026)

Board 4 Action 1: ACTION COMPLETE

Board 4 Action 2: Circulate the College's response to the Curriculum and Assessment Review (JW). *The College have not responded specifically to all consultations but has been feeding into AoC consultations. The Strategic Transition Planning Statement, which will summarise how the College will respond to and implement the Curriculum Planning Review, will be shared with Governors in the next round of meetings ready for submission in July. It was agreed that this will be passed to the Curriculum and Quality Committee to monitor and the action would be closed.* ACTION CLOSED

ACTION 1: Add Strategic Transition Planning Statement monitoring to the Curriculum and Quality Committee Schedule of Business (JM/CH).

SG joined the meeting at 4:06pm.

Board 4 Action 3: ACTION COMPLETE
Board 4 Action 4: ACTION COMPLETE

Board 4 Action 5: Include an update on behavioural risk in future Risk Review papers (JW). *The update on the Action List was noted. The Board expressed agreed to seek PG's comments before closing the action. Due date updated to June during the discussion under item 8.* ACTION ONGOING (Due: June 2026)

Board 4 Action 6: Present a report summarising the annual strategic conversation at the next Board (JW). *The Board were informed that the College is yet to receive final feedback. Due date updated to June.* ACTION ONGOING (Due: June 2026)

The Chair requested that, by default, three months be given between meetings and action due dates.

Board 4 Action 7: ACTION COMPLETE
Board 4 Action 8: ACTION COMPLETE
Board 4 Action 9: ACTION COMPLETE

Board 4 Action 10: Work with the Transformation PMO in relation to relevant CEFSS actions (JW). ACTION ONGOING (Due: May 2026)

Board 4 Action 11: Consider how to amalgamate the various active action plans (JW). *This will be considered for discussion at Strategy Day.* ACTION ONGOING (Due: May 2026)

Board 4 Action 12: Arrange CEFSS follow-up visit (JW). *The CEFSS follow-up visit has been arranged for 15 September 2026.* ACTION COMPLETE

Board 4 Action 13: ACTION COMPLETE
Board 4 Action 14: ACTION COMPLETE
Board 4 Action 15: ACTION COMPLETE
Board 4 Action 16: ACTION COMPLETE

Board 4 Action 17: Provide anonymous breakdown of pay in management roles by gender (MC/JE). *It was noted that the data has been put together but it is difficult to break down senior roles by gender without identifying individual roles. It was agreed that JM would share the data with MB and JWa only to enable them carry out trend analysis confidentially and provide a verbal update at the next Board meeting.* ACTION ONGOING (Due: June 2026)

Board 4 Action 18: When drafting the Fees Policy for 2026/27, ensure that reasons for fee increases are clearly demonstrated (JW). *Action not yet due.* ACTION ONGOING (Due: February 2027)

Board 4 Action 19: Arrange testing for Business Continuity Plans (JE). *It was confirmed that testing arrangements are in progress and a date has been agreed. PG will be asked to assist with the exercise.* ACTION ONGOING (Due: May 2026)

5.1 CONFIDENTIAL – Confidential Matters Arising

The discussion was confidential and is recorded in the confidential minutes (set 2).

6. Chairman's Remarks

The Chair thanked everyone for their input and flexibility during the current busy period.

The Chair informed the Board that Jock Downie, Governor, is taking a sabbatical and will be away for the next 12 months; LSy will be stepping up to Chair the Curriculum and Quality Committee, so the Vice Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee position will be vacant.

It was noted that strength is being built up in the Audit and Risk and Curriculum and Quality Committees and focus will now be on the Business Committee.

7. Principal and CEO Report

The Principal and CEO Report was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- The Apprenticeship Awards evening last week, hosted by Debut, was a successful evening. Governor attendance was appreciated.
- The senior team are keeping abreast of developments in relation to devolution and political changes.
- A number of colleges, including CCN, have collectively written to the Prime Minister to stress the need for continued support for further education.
- Emerging areas for focus include SEND and curriculum reforms; the College are engaging regionally and nationally where possible.
- The College will be completing a Strategic Transition Planning Statement for Government; most changes are required to be effective from September 2027.

7.1 Annual Strategic Conversation

It was confirmed that the Annual Strategic Conversation has taken place. The draft feedback letter has been received today. Once finalised, it will be circulated to Governors along with a short summary at the next Board meeting.

ACTION 3: Prepare a summary of the Annual Strategic Conversation feedback for the June Board (JW).

ACTION 4: Add 'Annual Strategic Conversation Feedback' to the June Board agenda (CH/JM/JW)

8. Risk Register Review

The Risk Register Review was circulated prior to the meeting. It was confirmed that relevant strategic risks have been reviewed by the Curriculum and Quality and Business Committees and are presented to the Board in totality. It was confirmed that all operational and strategic risks will be analysed at the Senior Management Team's termly risk meeting in June at which there will be focus on student behavioural risks.

The Board asked whether a proposal on the College's approach to risk tolerance and risk appetite will be ready for the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 5 June. It was confirmed that a proposal on the 'how' will be presented to the Committee, and it was agreed that an example of mapping to at least one risk would be provided alongside that proposal. The Board asked that all strategic risks be mapped ready for the June Board meeting, with a review by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee prior to the meeting.

ACTION 5: Provide a draft of risk tolerance/appetite approach mapped to strategic risks to the Chair of Audit and Risk Committee for review ahead of the next Board meeting (JW).

It was noted that risk appetite and tolerance is an evolving process which will not necessarily be fully approved at the next Board meeting. It was further noted that risk is on the list for possible topics to be discussed at the Strategy Day in July.

The Board asked whether there is adequate risk experience internally or whether a specialist Risk Manager is required on a temporary basis to assist in putting a proposal together. It was noted that any framework devised would need to be workable with the skill set available internally. A comment was made that it would be ideal to identify someone with relevant skills within the Senior Management Team or who can be a risk point of contact. It was agreed that a workable framework will ideally in place ready for 1 August.

ACTION 6: Consider whether a Risk Manager is required on a temporary basis to assist in preparing a framework for risk appetite and risk tolerance (JW).

The maturing level of conversation on risk was noted.

9. Strategic Target Monitoring

The Strategic Target Monitoring paper and Data Dashboard was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- The College is currently in a good financial position.
- There are challenges in learning and performance and pressures in support.
- Attendance and achievement are below target but actions are being taken to address this.
- Systems work is on track and there has been progress on cyber security.
- People-related targets, e.g. sickness, recruitment, engagement and agency costs, are a concern and a priority area of focus.

A conversation ensured on sickness rates and concern around why interventions to reduce sickness have not translated into measurable improvements. It was confirmed that:

- Departments with high levels of sickness absence have been identified and each has a sickness action plan.
- Workload pressures, particularly in curriculum areas, contribute to staff sickness, so a workload working group has been set up.
- Poor mental health is a key driver, and mental health instances are higher at the College compared to national comparators.
- There has been work to improve mental health in the College and mental health will be a topic of focus for the development week in July.
- Compared to other organisations, the College has higher average days sickness absences and higher sickness costs.

The Board commented that managers need to be responsible for sickness absence in their departments and that senior leaders should be held accountable for sickness rates.

It was noted that the College is inclusive and employs people with all kinds of needs which can affect sickness rates. It was confirmed that the College works with staff members to identify the best way to have them at work, but sometimes individuals are unwilling to discuss issues.

In response to a question from the Board, it was confirmed that the sickness policy is six months, three months at half pay, then statutory sick pay, which is in line with the sector. A comment was made that the College should stay in line with the sector to avoid recruitment issues.

Governors requested an analysis on the point at which people return to work after a longer period of sickness absence to help identify triggers and whether pay might be a factor. It was noted that short term absences are the biggest problem. The use of collective periods was suggested.

ACTION 7: Provide analysis on when people return to work after sickness absence to identify triggers and whether pay might be a factor (JE).

It was agreed that sickness absences should be closely monitored.

In response to a question from the Board, it was confirmed that the systems roadmap rationalisation work is expected to complete in around two months.

10. Proposed Accountability Agreement Strategic Targets 2026/27

A proposal for the framework to be used for the Accountability Agreement and Strategic Targets 2026/27 was circulated prior to the meeting.

It was explained to the Board that the College have historically aligned the strategic targets with guidance for the Accountability Agreement issued by the DfE, but the committees challenged this approach and suggested that the College devise strategic targets important to the institution that could be tracked through the performance dashboard.

It was agreed that targets should continue to be tracked via the performance dashboard for 2026/27 and the more strategically important KPIs would be reported on in more depth at each meeting. Further, the Accountability Agreement objectives in relation to how the College will meet regional and local needs should be included in the Accountability Agreement but not necessarily be labelled ‘strategic targets’. Governors asked that where the Accountability Agreement does not align with the DfE guidance, to provide an explanation.

It was agreed that 6-8 Accountability Agreement objectives and a proposal on the metrics within the performance dashboard which are to become priority targets would be presented to the Board for approval at the next meeting.

It was agreed that further discussion on how Committees work together would be added to the agenda for the July Strategy Day.

ACTION 8: Add Inter-Committee Collaboration to the agenda for Strategy Day (JM).

11. CONFIDENTIAL – Transformation Programme

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 1).

12. Student Voice

The Students' Union and Student Voice Update was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- The Sustainability Festival was a success and Level 2 Dance students won the creative competition.
- The election for the post of Students' Union President for next year has taken place and the winner has been announced as Lillian Rackham. There were slightly more votes this year than last year.
- Summer events are being planned and include Refugee Week and Pastonbury (which Governors are welcome to attend).
- Wellbeing Awareness Week was successful and had the involvement of HE students.
- LRo is meeting with SU Officers this week to raise awareness of the work of Governors.
- There were 200 responses to a survey about AI and social media which was discussed at the recent Student Voice Strategic Governor Group meeting. There is some reluctance amongst students to use AI, and young people are concerned about its use impacting career prospects.
- A Young Carers Group is meeting twice a month.

The Board congratulated Lillian Rackham for being elected SU President for next year and thanked Lacey Ross for her work as SU President.

Further points were added as follows:

- SG and PP have student walks planned for tomorrow
- The student survey closes on Friday; there have been 2,074 responses so far.

The meeting took a break at 5:25pm and reconvened at 5:40pm.

13. Annual Environmental Sustainability Report

The Annual Environmental Sustainability Report was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- An Environment and Sustainability Board is now in place with an action plan and workstreams.
- Plans are underway to install electric vehicle charging points.
- The Sustainability Festival was successful.
- Work is ongoing to embed sustainability into the curriculum.
- A termly Sustainability Newsletter is distributed throughout the College.

14. Key Updates and Approvals from Committee Meetings

14.1 Business Committee

The Business Committee Chair's Report was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. The following points were highlighted:

- The Health and Safety Report flagged an increase in reports of student violence and aggression, particularly in the gender-neutral toilets area of the Norwich Building - the Business Committee are looking into this increase.
- The Committee received the draft Estates Strategy - positive progress was noted, but it was recognised that it will evolve as it is informed by the Curriculum Strategy.
- The Committee approved a £5k investment into a solar panel project at Easton.
- The Committee agreed delegated authority to the Chair of the Business Committee and Chair of the Corporation to agree the utilities contract and update to the finance system.
- The Committee considered the draft Employer Engagement Strategy and noted its interplay with the Curriculum Strategy.

14.1.1 CONFIDENTIAL – Finance Update

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 1).

14.1.2 CONFIDENTIAL - Procurement Update

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 1).

14.2 Curriculum and Quality Committee

The Curriculum and Quality Committee Chair's Report was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- Discussions at the Committee meeting included the Quality Improvement Plan, SU President election, risk monitoring, staff absence, Accountability Agreement and student behaviour concerns. These points have been covered elsewhere in this meeting.
- Achievement in apprenticeships is high, and the College is a top performer.
- The Curriculum Strategy was considered, and it was agreed that financial contributions, local needs and employer requirement themes required development.
- It was noted that the student survey did not show that students feel any less safe at College than in previous years.

The Board were informed that Lucy Sydney has agreed to step up from Vice Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee to Chair of the Committee and that Phillip Belden has been nominated as replacement Vice Chair of the Committee. PB was asked to leave the room whilst the Board discussed the proposed appointment.

PB left the meeting at 6:08pm.

The Board approved Phillip Belden's appointment as Vice Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

PB returned to the meeting at 6:09pm.

14.2.1 Student Behaviour Analysis

An analysis of Student Behaviour was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- The College seeks to be welcoming and to offer second chances to those who have had previous issues and students are at various stages of 'readiness' for the College experience.

- The College works with students to address behaviours. Safeguarding colleagues are often involved, particularly where behaviours are linked to safeguarding concerns.
- Colleagues are often 'too' understanding when better behaviour should be expected and there is concern that Heads of Area sometimes avoid escalating incidents from stage 3 to stage 4.
- The College encourage the professional behaviour that would be expected in the area of work students aspire to.
- New Student Engagement and Disciplinary Policies have been introduced.
- High level incidents are dealt with vigorously.
- Cases are reviewed to extract lessons learned.
- A significant proportion of incidents take place outside the College but still affect the College (there is usually multi-agency input in such cases).
- A recent peer review found that the personal development programme at the College is strong.
- Systems are being developed to enable extraction of measurable data in relation to student behaviour.

It was noted that there is a parallel conversation on the risk of escalating student behaviour issues and whether behaviour might become a strategic risk. Governors asked for quarterly trend analysis on Student Behaviour.

ACTION 10: Provide quarterly trend analysis on Student Behaviour (SG).

It was suggested that questions around student behaviours and site safety be included in the Staff Survey, as well as ensuring that staff know when there is a behavioural incident who they need to contact.

ACTION 11: Include questions around student behaviour and site safety in the staff survey (JE).

ACTION 12: Ensure staff know who to contact when there is a student behavioural incident (JW).

Governors stressed the importance of consistency of application and outcome to provide assurance and manage expectations and suggested that it be considered how things escalate from minor to major incidents. The Board also stressed that benchmarking would provide context. It was noted that behaviour benchmarking data is not readily available, but it was agreed that the AoC and sector networks would be contacted to draw a sector picture.

ACTION 13: Seek intelligence from the sector in relation to behavioural issues (JW/SG).

14.3 Remuneration and Governance Committee

The Remuneration and Governance Committee Chair's Report was circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

- The Committee stressed the importance of Governor training, attendance, expectations and engagement.
- Interviews for new Governors are underway.
- It was agreed that policy approval levels should align with Evershed's guidance. Due to the number of policies suggested, further work will need to be carried out, and a proposal will be presented to Board at a later date.

14.3.1 Draft Schedule of Business and Committee Structure for 2026/27

The draft Schedule of Business and Committee Structure for 2026/27 was circulated prior to the meeting.

The Board were informed that there is a proposal for the creation of a People Committee for the following reasons:

- To allow the Business Committee (which is currently responsible for people matters) to absorb the business of the Transformation and Commercial Growth Committee and focus on financial and other business matters.
- Staff sickness is a strategic risk that requires close monitoring.

During the discussion, the following comments were made:

- It is unusual in the sector to have a separate People Committee.
- Having a People Committee would reduce the burden on the Business Committee.
- People matters currently get lost in busy Business Committee agendas.
- The College could set up a Governor Strategic Group or task group to address specific people issues without having another committee.
- A People Committee could be called 'People and Culture Committee' to emphasise culture and values.
- People committees can affect accountability and become too operational.
- Having a People Committee could slow decision making.
- People matters are one of the College's biggest risks both operationally and strategically and require focus.
- It could be set up as a temporary committee.

LRa left the meeting at 6:45pm.

ACTION 14: Arrange for JWa to attend a Business Committee meeting (CH).

The Board did not make a decision on the committee structure but agreed that Terms of Reference for a People Committee should be drafted and that examples should be found of institutions were a People Committee has worked well in order to further the discussion.

14.3.2 Staff Governor Recruitment Process

The draft Staff Governor Recruitment Procedure and recruitment timeline proposal was circulated prior to the meeting.

It was agreed that email approval would be sought for this item.

14.3.3 Student Governor Recruitment Process

The draft Student Governor Recruitment Procedure and recruitment timeline proposal was circulated prior to the meeting.

It was agreed that email approval would be sought for this item.

15. Other Urgent Business

The Board were informed that the current interim arrangement for Vice Chair of the Corporation is coming to an end. An email will be circulated to eligible Governors to invite Expressions of Interest for the position of Vice Chair of the Corporation. Governors were asked to respond before 30 June 2026.

16. Meeting Review and Summary

This item was not taken.

CC, JE, JM, JW, MC and SG left the meeting at 6:55pm.

17. CONFIDENTIAL – Annual Review of SPHs within the College

The discussion was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 3).

18. CONFIDENTIAL – Governor Feedback on Performance of the Principal/CEO and Director of Governance and Legal

The discussion in relation to Governor feedback on performance of the Director of Governance and Legal was confidential and is included in the confidential minutes (set 3).

CH left the meeting at 7:16pm.
JM returned to the meeting at 7:16pm.

The discussion in relation to the feedback on the Performance of the Principal/CEO was unminuted.

19. Date of Next Meeting

The next Corporation Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on 30 June 2026 at 4:00pm.

All formal business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 7:35pm

Signed …….. Date ……
(Chair)