



## STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

### Minutes of Meeting on Monday 21 November 2016

<b>Present:</b>	John Turner ( <i>Chair</i> )	Chair of Governors
	Ms A Arhipova	Student Representative
	Ms S Gannon	Staff Governor
	Ms S Kacha	Student Governor
	Ms J Kaur	Student Representative
	Ms C Kumalo	Student Representative
	Mr R Ladwa	Student Representative
	Mr M Mistry	Student Representative
	Ms S Overton-Edwards	Principal
	Ms E Pabari	Student Representative
	Ms H Shah	Student Representative
	Mr K Siniara	Student Representative
	Mr H Solanki	Parent Governor
	Ms A Touseef	Student Governor
Ms E Ward	Student Executive Team Lead	
Ms E Wardle-Foottit	Student Representative	
<b>In attendance:</b>	Mr R Mansfield	Clerk

Ref.		Action
L/16/13	<p><b>Item 1 – Apologies for Absence:</b></p> <p>There were no apologies for absence. Liz Ward was greatly delayed by other duties. The meeting was declared quorate. In welcoming all present to the meeting John Turner stressed the importance of the Student Affairs Committee. The College attached great importance to the views of students who voice was relayed to the Board via the minutes of the meetings of the Committee and via the Student Governors in person.</p>	
L/16/14	<p><b>Item 2 – Declaration of Interests in Agenda Items:</b></p> <p>Robert Mansfield explained the nature of declarable interests and the importance of avoiding conflicts or the appearance of them. There were no declarations of interest in agenda items.</p>	
L/16/15	<p><b>Item 3 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising:</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 18 April 2016 were accepted as an accurate record and were duly signed by John Turner. The actions listed in the minutes were then reviewed. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that she understood that Jade Walsh had met the Student Executive Team to discuss the TV</p>	

broadcasts on the Street.

Suzanne Overton-Edwards reported that increased emphasis had been provided at induction to the proactive use by students of *Moodle*.

There had been no further discussion, though offered, on the unavailability of study rooms.

Arrangements for the Reflection Rooms had been operated as agreed for a short period, but had proved impractical. The intention was that these rooms should be available for responsible use by students of all faiths and of no faith at all times. The rooms were temporarily closed while repairs to washing facilities were completed. She asked those present to spread the word that inappropriate and disrespectful use of the space would not be tolerated.

**L/16/16 Item 4 – Committee's Terms of Reference:**

Robert Mansfield presented the Committee's terms of reference. These gave the Committee an extensive remit to raise matters on interest or concern to students. The main exception related to the treatment of individuals. He advised the Committee that he was aware of no current need to amend the terms of reference and therefore invited the Committee to request that they should remain unchanged for the current academic year.

***The Committee requested that its terms of reference should remain unchanged.***

**L/16/17 Item 5 – Issues of Current Interest or Concern:**

*OfSTED Report*

Student representatives reported that they had considered the OfSTED report just published at a recent meeting of the Student Executive Team (SET), and had been shocked at the conclusions reached by the inspectors. The report described a college that they did not recognise. All present spoke highly of the individual support and care that they received and praised the way in which teachers set targets. Some who had experience of other local colleges said that their experience at Gateway College had been far superior and was providing what they needed in order to succeed. It was confirmed that some of those present had been interviewed by inspectors and had made their views clear. John Turner said that governors had been equally shocked, as they all believed that Gateway College was the most caring in Leicestershire. Nevertheless there was no doubt about the fact that the College had to respond to the issues raised. Students' performance in the current academic year would be critical to the future of the College.

*Punctuality and Attendance*

Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that the only way to remove the label 'Inadequate' was to meet the expectations of OfSTED, among other things in respect of students' punctuality and attendance. She invited students to let her have their

ideas on how to improve these aspects. Agnese Arhipova asked whether Progress Coaches should not take more action. Suzanne Overton-Edwards agreed that Progress Coaches had an important role. There was also a contract system to help to improve attendance, punctuality and behaviour. Sarah Gannon reported that recently Progress Coaches had had to give priority to the completion of UCAS forms and would therefore have had less time to devote to other matters. She felt that there was a need to focus on first-year students especially. Reece Ladwa said that he had found early contact with a Progress Coach of great value on entering the unfamiliar environment of the College. There was a temptation to go home rather than staying on, perhaps for several hours, to attend the last class in the day. He had noted that on Monday afternoons the discipline over attendance was very lax on one of his courses. Alishah Touseef said that effective management of students' timetables could help. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that timetables had to work for staff as well as students. Savannah Kacha said that coming in to College for a single lesson was unattractive, especially where a long journey was involved. Agnese Arhipova felt that some students were allowed too many chances, and that more maturity was needed. Harshad Solanki said that he believed an early warning system was required to trigger action as soon as attendance began to drop. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that students needed to be aware of the links between behaviour now and future opportunities, because such opportunities were influenced by students' results and attendance records. Students who were poor attenders should also reflect on the frustration that they caused to staff and the adverse impact of their behaviour on the group dynamics of their cohort. Agnese Arhipova said that some students' attendances were adversely affected by conflicts between study programmes and enrichments. Suzanne Overton-Edwards asked that instances of such difficulties could be reported to her outside the meeting so that they could be addressed. She asked that students should let her have any future ideas on these matters. Agnese Arhipova asked about the treatment of students with medical problems. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that the first point was to keep the College informed so that special arrangements could be made where feasible. Alishah Touseef said that her Progress Coach had been very helpful in such circumstances, though many students who fell behind seemed to have little idea of how to catch up. She suggested that every student should have a meeting with a Progress Coach every fortnight. John Turner said that students had the best knowledge of their own problems and it was important that they took steps to let these problems be known.

#### *Computers*

Harshad Solanki said that there never seemed to be enough computers for students. Suzanne Overton-Edwards referred to

action taken during the programme of summer works. All computer equipment had been checked and extra study space created on the mezzanine floor above the canteen – though this had contributed to the removal of some of the learning pods. Teachers had again been asked to allow students to use spare computers in their classrooms during lessons, on the basis that the students concerned would make no demands for assistance. Alishah Touseef said that the IT Technicians did not treat requests from students seriously, unless a teacher intervened. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that the IT Technicians logged all complaints so that they could be addressed in order, and that the Technicians sometimes also prioritised their efforts in favour of what appeared most urgent. She believed this was the fairest arrangement. It was suggested that more use should be made of iPADs, especially for research, and that the computers in the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) should be reserved for independent study and not commandeered for lessons.

#### *Study Space*

Savannah Kacha said that students were generally unaware that they might use the classrooms that were formerly pods. Suzanne Overton-Edwards suggested that she should email all students about this. This suggestion led to a discussion about students not all checking their emails. Suzanne Overton-Edwards reminded the meeting that the College had gone to the trouble of giving all students a College email account. Email was a major way of communicating and students should acquire the habit of using it. It was then suggested that signs or room timetables should be displayed on all pods to show whether / when they were available. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that the difficulty lay in the fact that a minority of students chose to behave irresponsibly when unsupervised and had in the past caused costly damage to equipment. For this reason students would not be allowed into classrooms unsupervised. It was then stated that spaces on the mezzanine floor were being blocked by students who logged on to a computer, left their possessions and then disappeared, sometimes to obtain a meal in the canteen. The practice was caused by the competition for seats.

#### *Queuing in the Canteen*

It was claimed that there was confusion at busy times in the canteen, and it was suggested that clearer signage might be introduced to improve queue discipline.

#### *Misbehaviour in Connection with Buses*

It was reported that a minority of students misbehaved outside the College while waiting for buses. This resulted in frequent attendance by the police and was damaging to the reputation of the College. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that she was very aware of the problem and had spent a most embarrassing hour at First Bus watching CCTV and hearing first-hand accounts of students' misbehaviour. As a result she would shortly be interviewing a number of students with their

parents. Mohil Mistry asked whether a teacher could not be on duty outside after College hours. Suzanne Overton-Edwards said that she agreed though it might not always be feasible to arrange this.

**SOE**

**L/16/18 Item 5 – Date and Time of Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for Monday 6 March 2017 at 16.15. Robert Mansfield said that he would see whether this date might be brought forward.

**L/16/19 Item 6 – Any Other Business:**

John Turner closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their contributions to a lively first meeting.