



Ruskin Community High School

Student, Development & Welfare Committee 19th November 2025 at 3:15pm Venue - School

MINUTES – PART ONE

Present:	Dean Postlethwaite (HT) Don Higgs (Chair) Denise McCumskey (DK) William Ollier (WO) Margo Veitch (MV) Peter Thorpe (PT) Peter Storey (PS) Emma Szymura (ES) Neha Shahi (NS)	Headteacher Co-opted - Chair of Committee Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Parent Governor
Apologies:	Debbie Jones (DJ) Duncan Burrows (DB) Marion McKenzie (MM) Milena Kwaczynska (MK)	Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Staff Governor Parent Governor
Students: (for item 1)	David Simona Millie Ellie	Head Prefect Senior Prefect Head Prefect Senior Prefect
In attendance:	Sarah Robson (SR) Natalie Burke (NB) Natalie Cross (NC) Claire Harrison (CH) Jacqui Managh (JM) Su Garbutt (Clerk)	Assistant Head Assistant Head Assistant Head and SENDCO Assistant Head (until 4pm) Senior Governance Officer

AGENDA ITEM 1	STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
Discussion:	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made to the Prefects who were attending the meeting.</p> <p><i>Governor question: What would you say are your biggest achievements whilst being a prefect at the school?</i></p> <p><i>Responses:</i></p> <p><i>The Remembrance Day assembly</i></p> <p><i>Completing the Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award</i></p>



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	<p><i>Taking part in the Great Debate</i></p> <p><i>The charity work we do, and getting to the final of the Great Debate at Windsor Castle</i></p> <p><i>Getting to be a Head Prefect, and giving a speech in front of the whole year as I am not that confident</i></p> <p><i>Doing the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver Awards, it has taught me a lot.</i></p> <p>Governor question: Has being a prefect lived up to your expectations of a leadership role?</p> <p><i>Responses:</i></p> <p><i>There are still many things to come this year, but for now it has lived up to my expectations</i></p> <p><i>We have already come up with lots of ideas – assemblies and PowerPoint presentations; the anti-bullying campaign; the human rights work we have done</i></p> <p><i>Yes, we have also lead on attendance challenges and come up with ideas for Christmas celebrations for students</i></p> <p>Governor question: How do other student voice their opinions? Do you canvas for their ideas or do they come and talk to you spontaneously?</p> <p><i>Response: Both, students do come and talk to us, mainly from our year because they know us, but others will come up as well.</i></p> <p>Governor question: Are there any issues which you would like to draw our attention to?</p> <p><i>Response: No, none at the moment.</i></p> <p><i>A prefect stated they had really enjoyed being a Reading Ambassador and working with the Year 7 students who were below their expected level. "It is nice to be able to help someone improve, and the Year 7s seem to like it too."</i></p> <p>Governor question: What other work do you do?</p> <p><i>Responses:</i></p> <p><i>We have taken part in staff interviews and student panels.</i></p> <p><i>We have met with Mark Bayley, the School Improvement Partner</i></p> <p><i>We will be leading the celebration evening in December.</i></p> <p>Governor question: Have you heard about the government plans regarding locking down mobile phones whilst students are in school. Do you have any thoughts on that?</p> <p><i>Response: The majority of students follow the rules so I don't think it will make much difference to students if it is introduced. It isn't really necessary. Rarely do students have phones taken off them.</i></p>
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	<p>The Headteacher stated that this recommendation had come from the Police and Crime Commissioner, a role which was not being abolished. No schools had been consulted prior to the recommendation.</p> <p>Governors thanked the Prefects for attending. The Committee agreed they were a fantastic asset to the school.</p> <p><i>The Prefects left the meeting at 3.25pm</i></p>
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AGENDA ITEM 2	ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR
Decision:	Governors elected Don Higgs as Chair of Committee for a period of 1 year or until the first SDW meeting of the 2026/27 academic year.

AGENDA ITEM 3	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
Discussion:	Governors noted and accepted the apologies received from Debbie Jones, Duncan Burrows. Marion McKenzie and Milena Kwaczynska.

AGENDA ITEM 4	CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, (PECUNIARY OR OTHERWISE)
Discussion:	The Headteacher informed the meeting that he was a HT representative on the LA Schools Forum.

AGENDA ITEM 5	AOB
Discussion:	There were no items of AOB to be discussed under item 13 of this agenda.

AGENDA ITEM 6	APPROVAL OF THE PART 1 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING
Discussion:	<p>Governors approved the minutes from the meeting on 18.06.25 as a correct record and the Clerk was asked to send the minutes to be signed virtually by the Chair.</p> <p>There were no actions from the previous minutes for review.</p>
Decision:	Governors resolved to approve the minutes of the above meeting.



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Action:	The Chair to sign a copy of the minutes and provide for school for retention.
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AGENDA ITEM 7	ATTENDANCE UPDATE
Discussion:	<p>The following reports had been uploaded to Governor Hub prior to the meeting for all governors to review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance initiative log • DfE National Comparison Report, Autumn 1 2025 • Jayne Lowe Attendance Visit Report 04.11.25 • DfE Ruskin Community High School - Similar schools comparison report Autumn Term <p>Governor question: Do we use unauthorised U codes? <i>Response: Yes, if a student arrives after 9.15am they only get half a day attendance.</i></p> <p>Governor question: Are there some sessions which are worse then others? <i>Response: Yes, Mondays and Fridays as these tend to be days when parents who work part time are not working. For some if a student has been ill on a Thursday, they frequently won't come in on a Friday.</i></p> <p><i>We have done quite a lot in terms of interventions. For example, we run Full House Friday which has a prize draw every Friday at 2.50pm. This has been very well received. We have also identified some trends and worked to reverse these. For example, we knew we would have 2 weeks where there would be a dip and so we targeted the end of half term with attendance challenges and daily prize draws. If we had 96% attendance on any one day during the 2 weeks then the school would run a "soak the teacher" event on the last day of term! Students really enjoyed the event!</i></p> <p>Governors noted that Andrew Gregory who was a YAM had moved to a different role to work with students whose attendance is challenging. He works with 26 students, and their attendance has increased by 8%. For Year 11 students working with him, it has improved by 20%. This shows significant improvement as these students are the hardest to reach. Most are disadvantaged in more than one area and vulnerable students.</p> <p>Governors were informed that all targeted intervention areas were showing an improvement:</p> <p>Kindness and Empathy was showing a 1.5% increase in attendance. Group mentoring was showing a 5.5% increase in attendance. Abby Lander had been working with students regarding anger management and these students had also shown a 10% improvement in attendance.</p>



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The school targeting students and of the 76 identified last week, 72 had moved up an attendance stage. The school had a Waffle Wagon which came in on a Friday and students were allowed different toppings depending on where they were in the stages. Stage 1 students were allowed the “full works”, ie all the toppings.

Governor question: How many students are at 100%?

Response: Currently around 60% which is on target. If we get 75% of students to stage 1 then we will do a whole school reward. However, the gaps between the stages are getting bigger but we can see movements in the middle.

Governors were informed the school tracked patterns on attendance and would communicate these to parents. Home visits were also taking place from day 1 of absence. Last week the school undertook 130 home visits and had completed over 800 so far this term. Some parents had stated they appreciated the school coming and conducting a home visit and this is helping build relationships with some families.

Governor question: Is there a gap between boys and girls attendance?

Response: Boys attendance is better. For some girls it can be cyclical, but we do our best to support these issues in school.

Governor question: Are there any other reasons the school is aware of?

Response: We are able to monitor more, and we are closing the gap between us and the national figures. We have highlighted the persistent absence pupils and met with them before the summer holidays. We also met with the parents of the new Year 7s who had attendance issues identified. The notice to improve and fines have also increased through the LA.

Governor question: Do tutors and students see the attendance figures?

Response: Yes, a PowerPoint is shared in assemblies, and the year-to-date figure is given out. Weekly attendance is part of form tutor conversations with students and there is a real sense of peer competition between the classes.

Governors reviewed the report from Jane Lowe, DfE Ambassador for behaviour and attendance. The report was thorough and fair and had been rated. There were lots of green areas, but the school did have some areas to look at around assurance and communication with students.

Governors thanked JM for the work being done by the attendance team.

JM left the meeting at 4.00pm.



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AGENDA ITEM 8	BEHAVIOUR UPDATE
Discussion:	<p>The following reports had been uploaded to Governor Hub prior to the meeting for all governors to review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative Provision Policy • Ant-bullying Policy • Behaviour Report Data <p>Governors noted the report and the changes to the pastoral team.</p> <p>The internal alternative provision building had now been opened, and this gave more capacity to run interventions. More students were using the AP provision and this meant there had not been an increase in suspensions. Governors were informed that two students were responsible for 60% of suspensions within the school.</p> <p>The number of students receiving 1 or more suspensions had reduced significantly. The behaviour within the school seemed more settled and calmer.</p> <p>The committee was informed that years 8 and 9 were the most challenging. The Senior Prefects were having a positive impact.</p> <p>Structure and support were in place and parents were invited in for coffee mornings to celebrate personal development achievements with students. The school was ensuring to recognise non-academic achievements and these coffee mornings were very well attended.</p> <p>Governor question: Is the alternative provision at capacity? <i>Response: It is at capacity in terms of staff but there are combinations of students using the facility. The alternative provision is based at the inclusion centre. Two students were in the centre and received a bespoke timetable. This worked for one student and the second student was initially reluctant but then responded well. The outcome is to reintegrate these students back into some lessons. They have the same breaks and lunchtimes as other students so still get to see their friends.</i></p>
Decision:	Governors agreed to invite two Year Achievement Managers (YAM) to the spring term committee meeting.
Action:	HT/ES to invite YAMs to present to the spring term committee meeting.



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AGENDA ITEM 9	SAFEGUARDING UPDATE
Discussion:	<p>There had been no changes to staffing for safeguarding. Mr Vitalis ensured all staff received safeguarding training. 3 teachers currently needed refresher training and this had been scheduled.</p> <p>Half termly training scenarios were shared with staff and the vulnerable students list was consistently updated.</p> <p>The Single Central Record was checked fortnightly by Claire Harrison and a governor conducted termly checks.</p> <p>The S175 audit had been completed and uploaded to Governor Hub.</p> <p>Governors noted the vulnerable childrens list was shared with all staff and that some students had 8 or more vulnerabilities. These were highlighted to staff. Staff had an awareness of the issues but as students dealt with things in different ways, there could not be a “one size fits all” approach.</p> <p>The committee was informed that during an inspection, Ofsted would just pick some students from the list and interview them. This may prove challenging if the students picked did not choose to engage with the process.</p>

AGENDA ITEM 10	POLICIES
Decision:	<p>Governors approved the policies listed below:</p> <p>a) NEW Alternative Provision and Off-Site Direction Policy</p> <p>Governors noted the following policies have been updated:</p> <p>b) School Uniform</p> <p>c) Anti Bullying Policy</p>

AGENDA ITEM 11	DIRECTORS REPORT
Discussion:	<p>All present had attended the LME meeting on 18th November where the Directors Report had been discussed. There were no further updates to be presented.</p>



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AGENDA ITEM 12	MEETINGS
Discussion:	The next meeting would take place at 3.15pm on 11 th March 2026 at the school.

AGENDA ITEM 13	AOB
	There were no items of AOB for discussion

AGENDA ITEM 14	STATEMENT OF IMPACT
Discussion:	Governors helped to move the school forward in this meeting by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noting the work being undertaken regarding attendance and the impact this was having.• Understanding the improvements in students behaviour.• Noting there were fewer exclusions due to the work being undertaken and the newly opened alternative provision.

The meeting ended at 4.20 pm

There were no Part 2 items for discussion.

Chair.....

Date.....