

## Audit & Compliance Committee

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021

### Minutes

**Present:** Heidi Dixon  
Angela Hille  
Matthew Konneh  
John Rubinstein  
Zubair Shaikh (Chair)  
Ellie Smith

**In Attendance:** Claire Mugridge  
Beth Yap

1.	Governance
2.	Confidential Item
3.	Funding Audit Report
4.	Audit Action Plan
5.	Risk Management Plan
6.	Fraud Report
7.	Health & Safety Report
8.	GDPR
9.	Any Other Business
10.	Dates of Next Meetings

Minute	Decision /Action	D/A
1.3	The appointment of the Vice Chair to be deferred to the next meeting.	A
1.4	The annual review of the finance policy to be included in the Audit & Compliance Committee's Terms of Reference.	A
1.4	Clerk to forward information on the composition of the Board, including terms of office and committee membership.	A
2	Confidential Decision.	D
2.	Confidential Decision.	D
5	Clerk to discuss how the specific risks relating to the maths school and Steering Group are being managed with the Chair of Trustees.	A

#### 1. Governance

##### 1.1. Apologies

Funmi Esuola and Linda Horbye.

##### 1.2 Declaration of Interest

None declared.

##### 1.3 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

It was agreed to appoint Zubair Shaikh as Chair of the Audit & Compliance Committee. As a number of members had sent their apologies, it was agreed that the appointment of the Vice Chair should be deferred to the next meeting.

Action

##### 1.4 Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the Audit & Compliance Committee were

considered. It was agreed that the approval of the finance policy should also be included in the Terms of Reference.

Action

**In response to a question from the members**, the Clerk confirmed that the minutes of the Audit & Compliance Committee are considered at each meeting of the Board of Trustees. In addition to this, an annual report of the Audit & Compliance Committee is presented to the Board and uploaded to the Trust's website.

The Committee requested that the Clerk forwards information on the composition of the Board, including terms of office and committee membership.

Action

**2. Confidential Item**  
Confidential Item.

**3. Funding Audit Report**

Heidi Dixon informed the Committee that the College had received a funding audit by the ESFA, explaining that this is not a regular audit and institutions are chosen to be inspected at random. The Committee then considered the audit report noting that the ESFA was unable to clawback any funding, meaning that the College has not claimed any funding that it was not entitled to.

However, Heidi explained that, as a result of the funding audit, the ESFA made a couple of recommendations. Noting that funding is not received for students who stay at the College for less than 42 days, it was recommended that the accuracy of a student's start date is spot checked.

**In response to a question from the Committee**, Heidi confirmed that the start date is set automatically but now needs to be manually changed to the first day of attendance, rather than the enrolment date. Heidi explained that there was previously a grace period of 7 days, but this is no longer the case and this recommendation only applies to a handful of records.

The Committee also noted that, during the first lockdown, the College marked its registers as 'closed' and did not take any formal attendance information, as the government issued no advice on this subject. However, this is no longer the case and attendance records have been maintained for online and blended lessons. **In response to a follow up question from the Committee**, John Rubinstein explained that, from next week, all students are expected to be back in College unless they are self-isolating.

**4. Audit Action Plan**

Beth Yap drew attention to the audit action plan, explaining that an update on this is provided at every meeting of the Audit & Compliance Committee.

The Committee noted that the majority of these actions had been completed since the last meeting including all trustees and governors being issued with a

Frontier Learning Trust email account, a 'lessons learnt' section being included in the annual safeguarding report and safeguarding responsibilities being included in all person specifications.

Beth then drew attention to the outstanding action 'to formally review the MyConcern system'. Beth explained that a formal review has not yet taken place, as a result of the College's closure but this should be conducted during the summer term. However, the MyConcern system is working well and ensures that all safeguarding information is stored in a central location

## 5. Risk Management Plan

John Rubinstein presented the risk management plan, outlining each risk in turn.

John explained that the safeguarding team has done a great job during lockdown, ensuring that students know where they can go for additional support. The Committee noted that all staff recently received Prevent training.

Under premises, John explained that the new Estates Manager is having a positive impact on the College. **In response to a question from the Committee**, Claire Mugridge confirmed that the leak in the staff kitchen has now been repaired but the leak in the sports hall has not yet been fixed, despite a number of attempts.

Regarding IT, the College has appointed a Head of IT services, to strengthen the number of staff who have a sound understanding of the network. Some IT equipment will soon be out of its warranty and needs replacing. Therefore, this is now a good time to consider alternatives, such as what information is stored on the cloud and on site.

The maths school project continues to progress and plans for a boarding house are now being considered, in order to be able to reach further pockets of deprivation.

**The Committee questioned** how the specific risks relating to the maths school and Steering Group are being managed. The Clerk agreed to discuss this with the Chair of Trustees.

Action

John reminded the Committee that the College has not received an Ofsted inspection since 2007. However, this outstanding exemption has now been removed and it is likely that the College will receive an inspection in the next 15 months. John explained that the results from 2020 will not be considered as part of the inspection.

The Committee noted that both year groups continue to work hard, despite not being in College, and attendance is strong. Nevertheless, there are a few students who have found this change tough and the College will work with these ones to ensure they are back on track.

Information pertaining to the 2021 A Levels is still unknown but guidance is expected to be issued next week.

Under staff morale, the Committee noted that many staff are anxious given the change in principal, the recent academisation and returning to College following the lockdown. Despite this uncertainty, staff have been flexible and continue to have faith and trust in the Senior Leadership Team.

**The Committee questioned** what the College is doing to support its staff during this difficult time, particularly around Covid. John explained that the College has been thorough in its health & safety procedures and seeks to reassure staff where it can. There have been no instances of a member of staff catching Covid from a student.

The Committee congratulated staff on the hard work that has taken place to minimise the infection rates in the College, such as wearing masks from early on and implemented a comprehensive track and trace system. Claire informed the Committee that 27 students tested positive during the autumn term.

The Committee noted that mass testing has now begun at the College, with every student being tested three times in the first two weeks. After this, students will be issued with tests to conduct from home. If a student tests positive, they are required to self-isolate but the College is mindful that students may refuse to test or not disclose their results.

Finally the Committee discussed the financial impact of the pandemic, as a result of additional health and safety expenditure, as well as the loss of lettings income.

**6. Fraud Report**

None.

**7. Health & Safety Report**

The Committee considered the health & safety report, noting that new fire alarms have now been installed. The Condition Improvement Funding is also being used to conduct an audit of all the fire doors.

Covid remains the main focus in terms of health & safety, with the College continuing to conduct risk assessments for testing and analysing the ventilation and airflow around the campus.

**8. GDPR**

Beth Yap informed the Committee that since the last meeting there have been two subject access requests (both from third parties) and no breaches. The Committee noted that mass testing and the upcoming A Level results are the priorities this term.

**9. AOB**

**In response to a question from the Committee**, Claire confirmed that an audit of the Woodhouse accounts (prior to academisation) would take place in

spring 2021 and be presented to the Committee at its June meeting.

**10. Dates of Next Meetings**

17<sup>th</sup> May 2021

28<sup>th</sup> June 2021

The meeting concluded at 7:30pm