

## Minutes – Bristol Brunel Academy Council

**Version:** Draft

**Date** 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024

**Location:** Bristol Brunel Academy

**Time:** 5.30 pm

### Academy Councillors:

Nicky McAllister (Chair) - Sponsor Councillor  
 Nicola Pearce – Sponsor Councillor  
 Heather Milburn – Student Advocate  
 Rosie Hunt – Sponsor Councillor  
 Sharon Porter – LA Representative  
 Georgina Hopkins – Parent Councillor  
 Tim Sanday – Support Staff Councillor  
 Saima Ahktar – Sponsor Councillor

### Invitees:

Jen Cusack – Head of School  
 Kelly Jefferies – Vice Principal  
 Vic Boynton – Observer  
 Charlotte Seavill - Clerk

	Description	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Introductions</b>	
1.1	NM welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Welcome to VB who has applied to join the Council. Apologies were received from SA and RH.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
2.1	There were no verbal declarations. Councillors were reminded to complete the 24/25 written declaration of interest form on Governor Hub as soon as possible.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Academy Council Membership</b>	
3.1	<p>The Academy Council has the following vacancies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Sponsor Councillor</li> <li>1 Parent Councillor</li> <li>1 Teaching Councillor</li> </ul> <p>These vacancies are being advertised appropriately for each time of role and the appointment/election process.</p> <p>Councillors agreed link roles for the year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding – SA</li> <li>Careers – NP</li> <li>SEND – RH</li> <li>Disadvantage – GH</li> <li>T&amp;L - VB</li> </ul>	

	Description	Action
	In addition to these link roles, it was also agreed that the Academy Council would like to retain its focus on EDI and so SP would continue in this link role.	
4	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>	
4.1	The minutes of the meeting of 7 <sup>th</sup> October 2024 were agreed as accurate and approved.	
5	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
5.1	<b><u>ACTION: JC to bring the minutes late and actions to the next meeting.</u></b> 13/05/2024 - Data will be available at the next meeting – carry forward 01/07/2024 – carry forward 7/10/24 – gave an update on the number of students who are late to the academy and will review again in T3 agenda – <b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	JC
5.2	<b><u>ACTION: JC to consider with SLT how critical thinking skills/future citizens teaching/development can be developed.</u></b> 7/10/24 – CARRY FORWARD 2/12/2024 – CARRY FORWARD	JC
5.3	<b><u>ACTION: JC to ask HR for the Trust policy on inclusive recruitment</u></b> 7/10/24 – Councillors discussed the Academies subscription to Socially to ensure adverts are reaching as wide a group of potential candidates as possible. <b><u>ACTION – JC to email Mike Reynolds to understand what is included in the subscription.</u></b> <b><u>ACTION: NM to raise inclusive recruitment at COAC</u></b> <b><u>ACTION: JC to ensure this is included in the ARSA</u></b> 2/12/2024 – carry forward	JC
5.4	<b><u>ACTION: JC to invite the mental health lead to the next meeting.</u></b> 7/10/24 – Clerk to diarise in T3 agenda. 2/12/2024 – carry forward	JC
5.5	<b><u>ACTION: Clerk to diarise internal and external truancy in T2 to revisit this trail</u></b> 2/12/2024 - COMPLETE	CS
5.6	A: We could start to use iPads again during parents’ evening ( <b><u>ACTION: JC.</u></b> ) 2/12/2024 – carry forward	JC
5.7	<b><u>ACTION: JC to organise an AC learning walk (see point 8.16)</u></b> 2/12/2024 – carry forward	JC
5.8	Councillors discussed the Anti-Racist School Award (ARSA) and the need for a link Councillor for the award. <b><u>ACTION: CS to diarise discussion with new Councillors once appointed.</u></b> 2/12/2024 – carry forward	
5.9	<b><u>ACTION: Councillors requested that the Eco-Coordinator join the next meeting to provide an update – Clerk to diarise.</u></b> 2/12/2024 – carry forward	CS
6	<b>Eco Schools Award</b>	
6.1	The Eco Schools Award item was postponed until the next meeting. <b><u>ACTION: Clerk to diarise</u></b>	CS
7	<b>Principal’s Report</b>	
7.1	The Principal’s report was shared prior to the meeting for Councillors to review and submit questions ahead of the meeting via GovernorHub.	
7.2	<b>At the beginning of your report, you give a clear summary of the main priorities of your AIP. How best can the AC support you in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these priorities?</b>	
7.3	It would be really helpful to organise termly link visits to support these priorities so that you can triangulate information shared with you in meetings. Staff links and SLT can provide a framework of questions to guide as necessary. All visits should include a student voice activity as well. <b><u>ACTION: All link Councillors</u></b>	All

	Description	Action
7.4	<b>How are you tackling the problem of the increasing disruptive behaviour and verbal abuse?</b>	
7.5	It is a significant challenge. JC described the holistic approach of the culture and ethos team, the growth in the number of suspensions and trends in behaviour. It is harder than last year but continue to work with families as much as we can. It is not just an academy issue, there is a similar picture locally and nationally, with a lack of support and funding for public services and a recruitment and retention challenge in the education sector. This in turn has also impacted the number of complaints being received.	
7.6	<b>A5 codes: Internal truancy was mentioned as an issue previously. Is data now available? What are the next steps to implement A5 codes consistently?</b>	
7.7	The academy will revert back to a N code from Term 3 as there is a better understanding of this code, it represents an absence and is clear in the app for those who use it at home. N codes will be supported by a comment so that it's clear what has happened and trends or patterns can be identified.	
7.8	<b>Can you explain your graduated approach to suspensions?</b>	
7.9	When students are given suspensions for repeat behaviour, the suspension length is increased. Depending of the safeguarding circumstances, we wither internally suspend, suspend in another CLF school or suspend at home. All decisions to suspend are checked by JC or KJ and a safeguarding check carried out. Sometimes we offer a placement in another academy for a number of weeks, however Bristol City Council have recently changed their approach to this. There are also 12 week revolving door programmes with local PRUs where appropriate as well as placements at Engage. Councillors were reassured that no single person's suspensions are reaching the threshold for a panel meeting. Councillors discussed the staffing structures and behaviour trends for each year group in more detail.	
7.10	<b>Coffee Morning: For those who cannot attend due to work or other commitments, how can they access the shared resources? Is there a way of setting up an online group where parents can ask questions of year teams? Potentially linked to the work done by HM on social media?</b>	
7.11	Information is shared on our website. Social media platforms tend to need policing and there isn't capacity to do this currently. The academy is trying to grow its social media presence and provide information to parents through various platforms. We have a QR code for parents, the advent of celebration, a newsletter and a display for the winter festival.	
7.12	<b>What external safeguarding threats/issues have been identified and how are you responding to the survey regarding community safety and knife crime?</b>	
7.13	The survey was issued by BCC rather than the academy. There has been a focus on it through PSHE and what concerns students away from school. Knife crime isn't their primary concern at the moment. Councillors discussed the reintroduction of a one-way system in corridors to create safer stairwells in school.	
7.14	<b>The LIP looks very good. What do you already have in place to make it successful and what will be challenging? There is clearly a need for shorter more current texts and a budget has been agreed. Is there a way to circulate a set of texts with other academies in the Trust to save costs?</b>	
7.15	We felt the belonging agenda wasn't receiving the time it needed, so we removed the reading time to enable more time to focus on students sense of belonging and improve behaviour. There is no evidence to suggest that behaviour has changed a such, but tutors are now performing a very different role. We have allocated funding to providing books that students enjoy reading and will reintroduce tutor time reading shortly.	

	Description	Action
	We are also looking for a new Reading Tutor, but recruitment has been very challenging so we are considering a HLTA instead for the role. We could share texts with other schools but would have concerns around the quality and quantity of books returned to us once lent.	
7.16	<b>My understanding is the Anti-Racist School Award (ARSA) is not complete. Most schools complete this in 2 school years. BBA started this journey in 21/22, why is it taking so long and can we support in any way?</b>	
7.17	We have decided that we don't want to submit evidence as a box ticking exercise, we want it to be truly embedded and have meaning. It has to be genuine. We aren't worried about the timescales, we would rather ensure we get it right. <b><u>ACTION: SP to meet with Mark Saunders to understand the progress made so far.</u></b>	SP
7.18	<b>The Staff survey is an impressive and helpful piece of work. Is this translating to staff turnover? Do you see any responses as finalising the discussion or expect them to generate ongoing dialogue?</b>	
7.19	The survey was purposely anonymous, but staff who provided written feedback have been asked for a conversation, if they would like to, to talk about their feedback and look at what can be done to address it. Very few people have responded and it has been difficult to provide a response or look at next steps in all cases. <b><u>ACTION: VB and JC to discuss alternative survey approaches</u></b>	JC/VB
7.20	<b>The focus group for BGM staff: Is this just focussing on teaching staff or is it open to all BBA staff?</b>	
7.21	We need to clarify the rationale for the group because we want it to be inclusive and we need to understand if the purpose of the group is to bring together staff who don't feel heard or want to collective voice as we need to address the root of the problem if there is one. <b><u>ACTION: SA to provide more information at the next meeting.</u></b>	SA
7.22	<b>Are Academy Review Visits an opportunity for Acs to accompany AP's in learning walks?</b>	
7.23	Visits have changed completely. They are now twice a year and we get to choose the focus of the visit. This time we chose SEND, RE and T&L. It is a peer-to-peer arrangement rather than SLT and the Principal. Academy Councillors are welcome to join ARVs but it doesn't need to be a ARV to come in, come in for visits at other times too. Any link meetings or visits should be recorded and added to GovernorHub.	
7.24	<b>How have the KS4 revision sessions during tutor time gone?</b>	
7.25	There were concerns that sessions wouldn't be tiered enough but feedback so far has been positive and the sessions have extended into English and Science. The next step is to ensure that we are challenging our highest achievers enough in those sessions. Councillors discussed past year reactions to the tutor group changes for Y11 that will happen later in the year and how students will be supported. Councillors talked about the importance of good communication with parents about upcoming changes and brining existing tutor groups back together towards the end of the academic year. ARV feedback was really positive about our approach to morning mock exams, support from the department lead and the use of hall and studio space. Y11 students have been brilliant have approached their exams with a positive mindset.	
	JC gave an overview of the current financial, health and safety and estates position at the academy including the incomplete updates promised by Bristol City Council. Councillors congratulated the H&S team for their continued hard work and the recent outstanding report.	
8	<b>Safeguarding &amp; Student Voice</b>	
8.1	SA to provide an update at the next meeting.	

	Description	Action
8.2	The new student council is being announced this week with changes that include two Head Students and the re-election of student councillors.	
9	<b>Policies</b>	
9.1	Policies are currently up to date and the policy sub-committee will meet next week to review and approve the next set of policies.	
10	<b>Matters for COAC/Board</b>	
10.1	None.	
11	<b>AOB</b>	
11.1	Councillors are invited to the upcoming awards evening on 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2025.	

ACTIONS:

5.1	<b><u>ACTION: JC to bring the minutes late and actions to the next meeting.</u></b> 13/05/2024 - Data will be available at the next meeting – carry forward 01/07/2024 – carry forward 7/10/24 – gave an update on the number of students who are late to the academy and will review again in T3 agenda – <b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	JC
5.2	<b><u>ACTION: JC to consider with SLT how critical thinking skills/future citizens teaching/development can be developed.</u></b> 7/10/24 – <b>CARRY FORWARD</b> 2/12/2024 – <b>CARRY FORWARD</b>	JC
5.3	<b><u>ACTION: JC to ask HR for the Trust policy on inclusive recruitment</u></b> 7/10/24 – Councillors discussed the Academies subscription to Socially to ensure adverts are reaching as wide a group of potential candidates as possible. <b><u>ACTION – JC to email Mike Reynolds to understand what is included in the subscription.</u></b> <b><u>ACTION: NM to raise inclusive recruitment at COAC</u></b> <b><u>ACTION: JC to ensure this is included in the ARSA</u></b> 2/12/2024 – <b>carry forward</b>	JC
5.4	<b><u>ACTION: JC to invite the mental health lead to the next meeting.</u></b> 7/10/24 – Clerk to diarise in T3 agenda. 2/12/2024 – carry forward	JC
5.6	A: We could start to use iPads again during parents' evening ( <b><u>ACTION: JC</u></b> ). 2/12/2024 – carry forward	JC
5.7	<b><u>ACTION: JC to organise an AC learning walk (see point 8.16)</u></b> 2/12/2024 – carry forward	JC
5.8	Councillors discussed the Anti-Racist School Award (ARSA) and the need for a link Councillor for the award. <b><u>ACTION: CS to diarise discussion with new Councillors once appointed.</u></b> 2/12/2024 – carry forward	CS
5.9	<b><u>ACTION: Councillors requested that the Eco-Coordinator join the next meeting to provide an update – Clerk to diarise.</u></b> 2/12/2024 – carry forward	CS
6.1	The Eco Schools Award item was postponed until the next meeting. <b><u>ACTION: Clerk to diarise</u></b>	CS
7.3	It would be really helpful to organise termly link visits to support these priorities so that you can triangulate information shared with you in meetings. Staff links and SLT can provide a framework of questions to guide as necessary. <b><u>ACTION: All link Councillors</u></b>	All
7.17	We have decided that we don't want to submit evidence as a box ticking exercise, we want it to be truly embedded and have meaning. It has to be genuine. We aren't worried	SP

	about the timescales, we would rather ensure we get it right. <b><u>ACTION: SP to meet with Mark Saunders to understand the progress made so far.</u></b>	
7.19	The survey was purposely anonymous, but staff who provided written feedback have been asked for a conversation, if they would like to, to talk about their feedback and look at what can be done to address it. Very few people have responded and it has been difficult to provide a response or look at next steps in all cases. <b><u>ACTION: VB and JC to discuss alternative survey approaches</u></b>	JC/VB
7.21	We need to clarify the rationale for the group because we want it to be inclusive and we need to understand if the purpose of the group is to bring together staff who don't feel heard or want to collective voice as we need to address the root of the problem if there is one. <b><u>ACTION: SA to provide more information at the next meeting.</u></b>	SA