



# WHINLESS DOWN ACADEMY TRUST

## Whinless Down Academy Trust Board Meeting

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025

CEO: Kelly Brown

**Public Minutes of the Trust Board Meeting Held at Trust Office at St Martin's School at 4pm on  
Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2025**

<b>Board Trustees Present</b>	Tricia Sherling (vice chair), Alison Mackintosh (arrived 4:40pm), Dean Jones, Kelly Brown	
<b>Others Present</b>	Michelle Noden (Trust Business Manager), Carol Rayfield (Member)	
<b>Governance Professional</b>	Claudia Sawyers	
<b>1</b>	<b><u>Welcome, Introduction and Apologies</u></b> Vice chair welcomed all to the meeting.	<b><u>Actions</u></b>
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Apologies</b> Apologies were received and accepted from Anne Siggins and Pam Brivio.	
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Resignations</b> None	
<b>2</b>	<b><u>Minutes from Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025</u></b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Approval of Minutes</b> The minutes of the meeting held on 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate reflection of the proceedings of the meeting. The minutes will be marked as signed on GovernorHub.  <b>Matters Arising</b> There were no matters arising.	
<b>3</b>	<b><u>Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests</u></b>	
<b>3.1</b>	All trustees were given the opportunity to update business interests or declare any interests against this agenda. There were no updates and no interests declared.	

<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>4.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Proposed Draft Staffing Structures</u></b></p> <p>Anonymised draft staff structures for each school were shared with trustees prior to the meeting. CEO explained they are still in draft stage due to upcoming resignation deadline where there are several potential resignations due to staff attending interviews elsewhere. It was noted that the Priory Fields structure features a reduction in classes from 14 to 13, with a mixed Year R/1 class. This has been a consideration for some time due to the falling roll. CEO confirmed that movement of teachers between schools, flexible working requests and end of year resignations has allowed for the reduction of classes to be achieved without compromise or redundancy. It is not proposed that PAN will be reduced.</p> <p>A trustee asked how the structures are impacted by the change in SEN funding allocation. CEO explained that it has been announced that schools will initially receive 75% of the December 2024 figures. The bursar has always been cautious and prudent with budgeting for staff, so the SEN has not been relied upon to formulate structures. It has undoubtedly caused an impact however in the ability to recruit with confidence and fixed term appointments are necessary. The first SEN group under the new model has been attended by SENCOs who were accompanied by Headteachers. Feedback from the group chair was that Headteachers should not attend. It is argued however that SENCOs do not (and have not been required to) have the financial understanding that Headteachers have which is needed when funding and support allocation is part of the group.</p> <p>A trustee asked how these structures compare to previous years. CEO noted the extreme reduction in support staff compared to just a few years ago, where there were two TAs per class at Priory Fields as well as HLTAs out of class. CEO explained the difficulty in managing with so few people, especially when the needs are just as high if not increasing.</p>	
<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>5.1</b></p>	<p><b><u>FSARC (Finance Strategy, Audit &amp; Risk Committee) Feedback -Indicative Budgets</u></b></p> <p>Verbal feedback was given by CEO in absence of FSARC chair.</p> <p>Budget monitoring took place in the meeting for March 2025. St Martin’s monitoring saw no major changes, while Priory Fields received an increase in pupil premium funding and Vale View’s budget has been reduced due to new toilets and windows due to be installed.</p> <p>An analysis of catering has been undertaken by TBM who has worked out a rough average cost per meal of £2.42, however this does not taken in to account some kitchen costs so the true figure is likely to be slightly higher. There was discussion at the meeting about ways to reduce costs, however a significant amount of time has been invested in reducing food waste, meeting nutritional standards and using quality local suppliers, as well as making meals appealing to children and this must be considered against costs.</p> <p>Benchmarking was discussed and viewed on the DFE website alongside the benchmarking produced by Kreston Reeves. There were not really any big findings to note, ‘Administrative Supplies’ looked unusually high at £137k but this is being looked in to, as sometimes it is down to coding of budgets and it is not fully known what this includes.</p> <p>The Investment and Reserves Policy was agreed by the committee which led to discussion about the need to consider investment opportunities and the idea of exploring options and gaining professional advice.</p>	

5.2	<p><b>GAG Funding – Indicative Budgets</b></p> <p>This was discussed at the meeting and has been provided to Trustees prior to this meeting to review. It was discussed that it would be more worthwhile to look at this when resignation deadline has passed because there are a number of potential changes, as discussed earlier in this meeting under staff structures. Final budgets will be produced for agreement at the next meeting.</p>	
6	<p><b><u>Safeguarding Audits (External)</u></b></p> <p>Written audit reports produced by ProActive Safeguarding (external agency) were provided to trustees prior to the meeting to review. The report includes RAG rated areas and actions. CEO highlighted the main points of the reports being that there is a strong safeguarding culture within the trust. Response to day to day safeguarding issues are very well dealt with. A trustee commented that considering the size of the report, the fact there is no 'red' areas is very positive. CEO talked through some of the whole-trust actions, such as improving supervision and the possibility of sourcing this from an external agency, including filtering and monitoring responsibilities in DSL job descriptions and safer recruitment for safeguarding governors.</p>	
7	<p><b><u>Health and Safety Audits (External)</u></b></p> <p>TBM gave presentation of initial feedback from the recent Health and Safety audits. A very extensive written report has been received which TBM has started to formulate into actions. CEO and TBM explained this is the first time an audit such as this has taken place so there were many learning points gained, the audit itself was extremely thorough. TBM talked through the main points of the audit, which is broken into three sections 'Management', 'Premises' and 'Personal Welfare' which are RAG rated. There were some areas graded in 'red' however it was noted that the majority of actions relate to recording, paperwork and ensuring procedures in place are correctly followed. A recommendations and improvement plan was provided which TBM is working through. A health and safety committee is going to be established within the trust which should aid in improving systems and procedures.</p>	
8 8.1  8.2  8.3	<p><b><u>Policies</u></b></p> <p><b>Privacy Notices</b></p> <p>The following privacy notices have been updated and were provided to trustees prior to the meeting to review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Privacy Notice – Pupils</li> <li>Privacy Notice – Parents</li> <li>Privacy Notice – Staff</li> <li>Privacy Notice – Trustees, Governors and Volunteers</li> <li>Privacy Notice – Job Applicants</li> </ul> <p>The privacy notices were agreed by the Trust Board.</p> <p><b>Recruitment of Ex Offenders Policy</b></p> <p>This policy has been updated based on latest HR Connect model policy. The policy was agreed by the Trust Board.</p> <p><b>Bullying and Harassment Policy</b></p>	Policy to be

	Following a conference attended by senior leaders yesterday, it has come to light that the bullying and harassment policy required an early review following government guidelines. The policy has been updated today based on HR Connect model and trustees agreed to receive it by email to read and agree by email response.	emailed out and agreed.
<b>9</b>	<b><u>Minutes from LGB meetings – Term 3</u></b>	
<b>9.1</b>	Minutes from LGB meetings in term 3 were shared with trustees prior to the meeting for information purposes.	
<b>10</b>	<b><u>GDPR Update</u></b>	
<b>10.1</b>	No breaches.	
<b>11</b>	<b><u>Any Other Business</u></b>	
<b>11.1</b>	<b>Permanent Exclusion Panel Outcome</b> Trustees were made aware that the outcome of the recent permanent exclusion panel was to uphold the decision of the school to exclude a pupil.	
<b>12</b>	<b><u>Dates</u></b> The next meeting is due to be on Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> July at 4pm.	
<b>13</b>	<b><u>Confidentiality of Proceedings</u></b> None.	

<b><u>Action Points</u></b>
8.3 – Bullying and Harassment policy to be emailed out and agreed.

Minutes taken by Governance Professional Claudia Sawyers

Signed by Chair of Whinless Down Academy Trust: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Alison Mackintosh