

THE GOVERNING BOARD OF SOUTHGATE SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Board held at 5.30 pm at the school on Wednesday 25 March 2026.

PRESENT

Mr R Baines (Chair), Ms R Cranmer (Head Teacher), Mr M Cleve, Mrs L Drye, (Vice-Chair), Ms L Jackson, Ms W May, Ms A Morris and Ms J Wittrick.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs J Ashcroft (Minute Clerk)
Ms K Emptage (Deputy Head Teacher)
Ms J Hallas (School Business and HR Manager until 6.06 pm)

The meeting started at 5.38 pm.

	Item	Minutes	Action						
51.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Mr M Holland, Mr C McCombe and Mrs S Norman, all with consent.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>							
52.	NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UP UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS	<p>The following matter would be raised under Any Other Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible participation in consultation. 							
53.	REPRESENTATION	<p>(a) <u>End of Term of Office</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Name</u></th> <th><u>Category</u></th> <th><u>With Effect From</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Richard Baines</td> <td>LA</td> <td>30.6.36</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>With Effect From</u>	Richard Baines	LA	30.6.36	
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		<p>Mr R Baines reported that he intended to continue as a governor. The Head Teacher explained that the plan was to appoint Mr Baines to one of the co-opted vacancies which would then leave a vacancy for a LA governor.</p> <p>The Chair reported that he spoken to Mrs Wittrick who had confirmed that she would like to serve another term of office.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Mrs J Wittrick be appointed for a further term of office following the end of her current term on 21 May 2026.</p> <p>Action: The School Business and HR Manager to submit the information regarding the re-appointment of governors to the Governor Clerking Service.</p> <p>(b) <u>Appointment of Co-opted Governors (2 vacancies)</u></p> <p>The Head Teacher reported that following the re-appointment of the Chair there would then be 1 LA vacancy and 1 co-opted vacancy. She reported that there was a potential new governor to fill the co-opted vacancy who may observe the next meeting and that she would liaise with the LA regarding the LA vacancy.</p>	Ms J Hallas
54.	MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2026	RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2026 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.	
55.	MATTERS ARISING	<p>(a) <u>Representation (Minute 41 (a) refers)</u></p> <p>This matter regarding the term of office of Mrs J Wittrick has been discussed under Minute 53 (a) and was now complete.</p> <p>(b) <u>Declaration of Business Interest (Minute 42 (a) refers)</u></p> <p>The School Business and HR Manager reported that all forms had been completed except one.</p> <p>Action: Mr C McCombe to complete the Declaration of Interest form.</p> <p>(c) <u>SharePoint Access (Minute 28 refers)</u></p> <p>The school had begun to include links to the SharePoint site in emails to Governors which had resolved the access issues.</p>	C McCombe

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		<p>(d) <u>Financial Report (Minute 43 (a) refers)</u></p> <p>The financial report had been added to SharePoint including the Period 11 reports. This item was now complete.</p> <p>(e) <u>SFVS (Minute 43 (c) refers)</u></p> <p>The SFVS was on the agenda for this meeting.</p> <p>(f) <u>Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting (Minute 44 (b) refers)</u></p> <p>Governors confirmed that the minutes had been shared.</p> <p>(g) <u>Friends of Southgate (Minute 45 (f) refers)</u></p> <p>The Head Teacher confirmed that the AGM would take place on 10 June 2026, where the constitution would be adopted. This was likely to follow the Parentkind model.</p> <p>(h) <u>ALP meeting with Governors (Minute 45 (h) refers)</u></p> <p>The Head Teacher reported that the date of this meeting was still to be confirmed.</p> <p>Action: The Head Teacher to confirm the date of the meeting between governors and the ALP.</p>	<p>Head Teacher</p>
56.	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING	<p>(a) <u>Financial Report</u></p> <p>The Chair reported that the Finance and Resources Committee had met earlier that day.</p> <p>The School Business Manager reported that the key items discussed had been as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They had looked at the Year-end position and Period 11 and then projected the Year end position and added any accruals; they expected to be within budget • The forecast and projection were where the school hoped to be and the contingency was protected 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would be looking at items that had not been invoiced for and trying to close down by the end of the financial year • Monitoring key areas regularly during the year had helped and they were aware of the reasons for areas of overspend such as mileage where alternative options had now been implemented and agency costs, some of which could be offset against a reduction in staffing • During the next year agency costs would be split to show cover for vacancies as a reduction in the staffing costs, enrichment and sickness with sickness costs being covered by insurance • There was a slight overspend on IT due to a replacement whiteboard • The spend on Personalised curriculum was where they had anticipated, which is a significant improvement on last year's position. • Training was now all tracked to show what was needed and the benefits • A plan was in place for First Aid training • The Business Support Team had been good at ensuring income came in and getting the required information at the consultation stage • There had been some EHCP banding changes leading to disparity between the EHCP team and Kirklees finance and the Head Teacher now had a process in place to ensure the information was correct to avoid a delay in funding • The cost of the 31 leavers would be £272,000 - however there would be approximately £400,000 for those joining the school due to the increasing complexity of need • Science and Transport grants had been received during the year and they would like to focus on other grants in the following year • They had set a balanced budget for the next year with £40,000 contingency • Priority areas had been identified for when the position was known, and these included the car park, Beech class and IT • There was a Devolved Capital budget to access for works to the building • The school no longer had the big blue bus, and a new lease vehicle was on order • The Scheme of Delegation for BACs had been shared with the Chair, and the Chair had signed it off, it would be sent to Kirklees Finance to ensure they were happy with the process. <p>The School Business Manager reported that the following key areas for budget oversight in the following year had been agreed:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency staff • IT • Training costs • Building and priorities costs. <p>Q: What percentage is the carry forward? A: Approximately 3%, there is no danger of claw back.</p> <p>Q: Will an increase in staffing be needed due to the increasing high need? A: This is something we are keeping an eye on. An increase is not needed at the moment but we are looking at whether an additional class will be needed in 2027/28. We are strategic with recruitment and are likely to have the same staffing structure next year. The lunchtime staff provide additional cover when required as a first step to becoming an ETA.</p> <p>Governors commented it was a strength of the school to grow their own staff.</p> <p>The Chair reported that the School Business Manager would now have a new job description due to increased responsibilities and budget to oversee as the school has grown.</p> <p>Governors commented that she was doing a brilliant job.</p> <p>(b) <u>SFVS</u></p> <p>The SFVS had been shared with all governors who confirmed they were happy with the content.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the SFVS be approved and signed by the Chair.</p> <p><i>The School Business & HR Manager left the meeting at 6.06 pm.</i></p>	
57.	REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES	The Finance and Resources Committee meeting had been discussed at Minute 56. There had been no other committee meetings.	

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58.	HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT / DATA REPORT AND GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS	<p>The Head Teacher's report that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Paper copies of the report, the SEF and SDP were circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>The Head Teacher explained that, as agreed earlier in the year, she would focus on 3 key points from the report. She reported as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Pupils continued to flourish, attendance was strong and students were making academic progress. Safeguarding was robust and the behaviour data showed that improvements continued. (b) The school was in a strong position next year with pupil admissions already at capacity including a large number of Year 7 children. There were a number of Year 11 leavers with all but 2 with a named post-16 destination (c) The budget was in a good position, and in relation to recruitment and retention, 2 staff had left for career progression reasons and a couple had left through processes but overall retention was good and there was progression within the staffing team. Recruitment was taking place for ETAs and a Physical and Sensory Lead; there had been some good applications. <p>The Head Teacher reported that the SEF and SDP had been updated with the mid-year reviews and the team were now working through the national changes, including the White Paper, and the new Ofsted framework. The team were confident that all was going well in school which gave them the time to do this alongside strategic work to support the wider SEND system.</p> <p>Governors discussed the government SEND consultation which was due to on 18 May 2026. The Head Teacher and the Deputy Head were working on a response on behalf of the school. Governors noted they were able to provide their own individual responses.</p> <p>Action: The Head Teacher and Deputy Head to work on the response to the consultation and share an overview with governors.</p> <p>Q: Is there any post-16 news? A: No, but the Head Teacher reports that she advocates for it in meetings and will continue to do so. The Head Teacher gave an overview of recent meeting she had attended and those planned.</p> <p>Governors discussed the shortage of post-16 provision.</p>	<p>Head Teacher/ Deputy Head</p>

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	<p>Governors referred to the SDP and the incredible amount of work and fantastic progress that it reflected, noting that the buy-in of so many across the school was really good.</p> <p>Q: The paragraph in the report has been noted about the anonymous Ofsted complaint. Is everyone ok?</p> <p>A: Yes, it was not a phone call I wanted but it was resolved within a day. We were able to confirm the actions that had already been undertaken. It was a courtesy call as they had all the information they needed from the LA. The information has been saved for the next Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>Governors discussed the rise in complaints nationally and the reasons behind this.</p> <p>The Head Teacher referred to a parental complaint where the complainant had taken the complaint straight to individual governors. She reminded governors to speak to the Head Teacher if they received any complaints as the school had a Complaints Policy and process to follow; governors should only become involved at an Appeal Committee stage.</p> <p>The Head Teacher reported they currently had a Subject Access Request to deal with.</p> <p>She reported there had been 2 Riddor reportable incidents and 78 accidents between October and December. The Head Teacher explained the circumstances around the 2 Riddor incidents. She acknowledged that the amount of accidents reported was high but explained this was due to rigorous reporting procedures and any injury to staff was included within the figures.</p> <p>Q: Are there any patterns from the analysis of the incidents?</p> <p>A: Where we identify any patterns, we reflect on this. We have internal reporting and look at patterns each week in Pupil Focus meetings. The vast majority are related to pupil behaviours. We look at any slips, trips or falls with the property team. The Head Teacher gave an example of a trip in the foyer and the investigation regarding the flooring that had taken place.</p> <p>Q: Is this significant in terms of workload?</p> <p>A: We have delegated some of the work and have a system for inputting. The line manager completes the IR22 and admin inputs the details onto the LA system.</p>	

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59.	SAFEGUARDING	<p>The Deputy Head Teacher presented information to Governors which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One pupil on a Child Protection Order • Three pupils on a Child in Need Plan • Three pupils with a Child in Need respite package • Two pupils with a TAF • Four strategy meetings had been held • Five Encompass calls had been received • 28 duty and advice calls had been made or received. <p>The Head Teacher explained that there was currently one child with an unmet medical need. She reported there was a lot of multi-agency work taking place and the DSL had joined the Safe local authority network and was part of a subgroup which was an interesting piece of work.</p> <p>A lot of training had taken place including Prevent, and ASO knowledge checks were a regular part of CPD.</p> <p>Q: Have the child protection numbers reduced? A: Yes.</p> <p>Governors discussed the emotional pressure of staff when dealing with child protection cases and working with other services</p> <p>Q: Is the response from other services adequate? Do you feel supported? A: Yes, for challenging cases and the immediate response is good, but the cases are often complex and difficult.</p> <p>The Chair suggested that case studies would be useful to demonstrate the complex work.</p> <p>Governors noted that the Safeguarding meeting for governors had been arranged for 16 April 2026.</p> <p>The Head Teacher gave an update on the review of the Behaviour Policy and incorporating the new guidance on restrictive interventions. She explained that the government's definitions were open to interpretation and they were finding it difficult to write a compliant</p>	

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		policy. They were currently doing a lot of work around this and working with other settings. She reported that the intention was to bring the policy to the next meeting of the FGB.	
60.	POLICIES	<p>The following policies had been circulated to governors for review prior to the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absconding • Education of Pupils at School with Medical Needs • First Aid • Online Safety (new). <p>RESOLVED: That the above policies be approved.</p>	
61.	GOVERNOR TRAINING, GOVERNOR ACTION PLAN AND GOVERNOR VISITS	<p>(a) <u>Action Plan</u></p> <p>Printed copies of the governor action plan were circulated, and the plan was shared on screen. Governors discussed and updated the plan as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governor induction plan would be available for the next meeting • The template for governor visits would be trialed at planned governor visits • Governors obtaining the pupil voice would be discussed on the governor visit • The training plan action was not due yet but would be put together shortly • The succession plan would be looked at in July 2026. <p>(b) <u>Visits</u></p> <p>The Chair was attending Careers day at the school on the following day to talk about being a governor.</p> <p>The Enrichment and Outdoor Celebration evening was being held on 19 May 2026 and everyone was invited.</p> <p>Other planned events included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and Carers Zones of Regulation coffee morning - 23 April 2026 • Disco - 30 April 2026 • Parent and Carers meeting - 10 June 2026 • Year 11 leavers' barbeque - 16 June 2026 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports day - 24 June 2026 • Leavers' Assembly - 25 June 2026. <p>Action: Parent and carer events and community events to be added to the governor calendar.</p> <p>Ms W May reported she was attending the Curriculum Review on 14 May 2026.</p> <p>Ms J Wittrick reported she had been involved in shortlisting and recruitment interviews during the last week. 2 ETAs had been appointed and a further person was considering the offer of employment.</p> <p>Governors commented that the open evening during the previous week had been very well attended.</p>	Head Teacher
62.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	<p><u>Potential Participation in Consultation</u></p> <p>Mr M Cleve reported that he had been approached by a work colleague regarding a possible consultation about improving the environment for children with learning difficulties in schools and residential homes. He reported that he may have more details at the next meeting.</p> <p>Action: Mr M Cleve to ask his colleague to email the Head Teacher so she could assess who in school may be best placed to help.</p>	Mr M Cleve/ Head Teacher
63.	DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS	<p>RESOLVED: That future Governors' meetings be held at the school at 5.30 pm on:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday 20 May 2026 Wednesday 1 July 2026</p>	
64.	AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY	<p>RESOLVED: That no part of these minutes, agenda or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the school, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.</p>	

Meeting closed at 7:26 pm.