MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NOBEL SCHOOL BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD REMOTELY VIA TEAMS ON MONDAY 1 JUNE 2026 AT 6.30PM

Governors Present: Matt Reah (Chair), Samuel Appiah, Sophie Cowan, Chris Crawley, Samuel Dwamena, Callum Green, Jamie Kellett, Mark Laws, Jackie Mordaunt, Rose Odudu, Rav Phagura (Headteacher).

Also in Attendance: Jacquie Watts (Clerk), plus Naomi Rose (Deputy Head), Nik Thomas (Business Manager).

(NB: Governor Challenge, Questions and Monitoring are highlighted in bold)

		Action By:
1.	**To receive any apologies for absence and decide whether to consent to the same** **NOTED:** the meeting was quorate. Apologies for absence were received from Richa Nair, Shannon Parr and Helen Sparks. **AGREED:** to accept apologies for absence as received.	
2.	**AOB** **NOTED:** no other business was identified at this stage.	
3.	**For governors to declare any potential conflicts of interest re. items on the agenda** **NOTED:** there were no declarations. *Samuel Dwamena joined the meeting at this point.*	
4.	**Action Tracker** **NOTED:** the current version of the Action Tracker as uploaded with the agenda. **NOTED:** updates in relation to the following items: 57. 25-26 The Head's PA had not been able to keep on top of governor visits. Next year it was hoped that visits could be arranged well in advance at the start of the year. This year she would try to arrange visits for those who needed them and chase up reports from visits undertaken. Reports and the visit summary record had not been provided for this meeting, but the excel spreadsheet was still being used and the Head expected to be able to provide them for the Board meeting at the end of June. 62. 25-26 The 25/26 Capital return was on the agenda. 64. 25-26 Available financial documents had been provided, but not all had been available in advance of the agenda. 65. 26-26 The action had been completed. 66. 25-26 The Financial Opportunities Register had been uploaded for this meeting. **The Chair thanked Nik Thomas for providing it.**	**RP**
5.	**Minutes of Previous Meetings - Foundation Committee and Governing Board.** **NOTED:** the provisional minutes of the Foundation Committee meeting held on 18 May 2026 as uploaded with the agenda. The meeting had focused on budget matters.	

	AGREED: by a majority of governors present, to receive the Foundation Committee minutes of 18 May 2026 and ratify actions taken. **NOTED:** the provisional minutes of the previous Governing Board meetings held on 23 March and 29 April 2026 as uploaded with the agenda. **AGREED**: by a majority of governors present, the minutes of the Governing Board meetings held on 23 March and 29 April as true and correct records. They would be signed by the Chair and passed to the school for safe keeping.	**Clerk**
6.	**Head's Update** **NOTED:** the year 11 data report uploaded with the agenda, and the Head's oral update on key issues at the school. **NOTED:** LA adviser visits to the school included briefing and preparation for the new OFSTED score card. Recent SEA visit reports would be provided with the Head's termly written report at the next Board meeting. OFSTED 'Expected Standard' was believed to be higher than the former 'Good ' grade, as all checklist criteria had to be met. The school was not due an OFSTED inspection until September 2027, but it was known that OFSTED was currently operating ahead of schedule. The school would therefore be preparing for April 2027 onwards. **NOTED:** the Head thanked governors for their involvement in the Deputy Head interviews. The post would be re-advertised in September 2026 in hope of a January 2027 start. **Governors asked if it was operationally viable for the school to operate without the Deputy post?** The Head had planned to increase the teaching load for SLT, but in the absence of the Deputy role, would leave SLT teaching commitments unchanged. Also some planned developments would have to be delayed. **A governor asked if it would be possible to know what would be delayed?** The Head would have a clearer idea of what would need to be deferred by the last Board meeting of the academic year. **NOTED:** the Head hoped to present a new Communications Policy and the new Behaviour Policy to the last Board meeting of the year. The aim was to set reasonable expectations and ensure clarity. This would also assist with the Complaints Policy. Governors who were happy to review the draft Communications Policy ahead of the meeting should email the Head. **A governor felt this would also assist with the issue of misinformation as per 36. 24-25 on the Action Tracker.** **NOTED:** the Head highlighted changes to be made to the Year 7 uniform from September 2026. Clip-on ties would replace traditional ties and skirts would display the school logo and be of a set length. The clip-on ties were being introduced for health and safety reasons, but the Head felt they would also result in a consistent and smarter appearance. **A governor queried if clip-on ties were a retrograde step as they did not prepare pupils for the future?** The Head stressed the health and safety aspect of the decision, and the smarter appearance created. Pupils wearing traditional ties would be required to wear them at a set length. **NOTED:** the school was intending to consult parents re. the introduction of phone pouches in September 2026. The current ban on phones not being used inside the school gate was difficult to enforce, especially when pupils could sneak a glance or spend time in the toilets using their phones. The use of lockable phone pouches that would only be unlocked on leaving the school would ensure the ban on phones was enforced. The Head explained how the pouches worked and which staff would be able to unlock them in an emergency. **A governor observed that it seemed like a lot of effort**	**All**

	and would it be worth it? Other governors asked if the pouches would block parental trackers? The school would lease the pouches and assess the success of the scheme at the end of the academic year. Schools who had introduced pouches had found them to be transformative. Tracker signals would be blocked by the pouches, but it was felt unlikely that a pupil would want to leave the school without first accessing their phone. **A governor queried the cost of the scheme?** The lease cost per annum at £5-6K was affordable and leasing would enable the school to terminate the arrangement at the end of the academic year if it did not provide the expected benefits. Maglock stations were being provided free of charge by the leasing company. **In response to a question from governors, Nobel was believed to be the first school in Stevenage using the pouches.** **NOTED:** the school was reviewing the way it delivered the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme. It intended to continue running the scheme, but needed to assess if a more cost effective method, in line with other Stevenage schools, could be developed.	
7.	**Safeguarding Report** **NOTED:** the report uploaded with the agenda. **Naomi Rose had met with Mark Laws, the Safeguarding Link Governor, and his comments had been added to the end of the report**. **He had found the mini-workshop event he had attended to be very informative and helpful.** The missing student protocol had been reviewed. **NOTED: the Chair commented that it was pleasing to see the school buying leavers' gifts for CLA students.** A number of CLA students would have work experience placements at Lodge Farm over the summer. It would be a valuable experience for them and a positive way for the school to keep in touch over a crucial period of transition. **NOTED: the Chair thanked Naomi Rose, Mark Laws and Helen Taylor for the report.**	
8.	**Staff Survey Feedback** **NOTED:** the staff survey would be carried out later in the term and there would be a further survey on the introduction of phone pouches. Feedback would be provided at the next Board meeting.	**NR/ Clerk**
9.	**School Development Plan** **NOTED**: Naomi Rose provided an oral update. She had recently produced a written review and would make it available to the Clerk. She felt the school was making steady progress in most areas, but was lacking credible data to evidence impact in some areas. She hoped some data would be available for the next Board meeting. **NOTED:** the school would be continuing to use Satchel One Software, as Arbor had proved to be less flexible. **NOTED:** the written review covered A Culture of Scholarship, Responsive Teaching, Achievement for All and Enriching Lives (which included diversity issues). **The Chair asked if there were any threats to the delivery of the SDP that governors should be aware of?** Naomi Rose felt that least progress had been made in terms of enriching lives, especially in terms of strengthening parental voice and engagement. Some progress had been made but, due to capacity issues, parental pitstops had not run during the year. However, there had been more information evenings with the introduction of a Year 10 curriculum evening, which would remain a fixture on the	

	calendar. There would also be two parent consultations this half term, one on RSHE and one on mobile phones. There were now three parental survey points each year. The final survey would go out shortly. **AGREED:** further review of the Development Plan would be carried over to the next Board meeting.	**NR/ Clerk**
10.	**School Finances** **NOTED:** the multiple reports uploaded with the agenda. **NOTED:** the Capital Return for 25/26 as considered by the Foundation Committee. There was a capital carry forward into 26/27 of £1,481. **AGREED:** the Capital Return for 2025/26. **NOTED:** The school began the 2026/27 financial year with an accrued revenue balance of £17,814. This was an improvement of £51,946 on the budget approved by Governors in May 2025. The funding allocation for 2026/7 consisted of an expected £10,564M of school funding, plus £555k of SEN & PP funding, £464k of lettings and catering income and £77k of assorted other grants and income, creating a total of £11.611M. This was significantly below expected funding levels. Moreover, the grant to cover the government NI increase was, year on year, £70k short of the actual cost to the school. A reduction in sixth form student numbers in 2025 had led to a funding reduction of £30k compared to the previous year. Capital income of £30,142 was unchanged on recent years, meaning that year on year the school was having to use revenue funds to support maintenance works. The picture was of significant financial challenge. **NOTED:** the proposed 2026/27 budget had been discussed at length by the Foundation Committee. A balanced revenue budget had been achieved, but urgent and unexpected capital requirements would mean an overall in-year deficit across capital and revenue budgets of -£246,392 and a deficit balance of -£228,528. The Foundation Committee had asked the SLT to review both capital requirements and budget scenario assumptions. The most prudent assumptions would see an in-year deficit of -£196,217, whilst the least prudent assumed an end of year surplus of £126,967. Nik Thomas went into the detail behind the various scenarios and outcomes. The school had approached HCC regarding the availability of capital funds to support the necessary works, and was awaiting a response. **Governors commented on the unexpected size of capital funds required and queried the cost of not doing all the identified capital works?** If not carried out, the Heating Pumps and Airconditioning repairs were likely to result in the closure of the school. The implications of not carrying out other works, such as fire alarm sensors, were discussed. **A governor commented that much thought and detail had gone into issues such as improving pupil appearance and felt that the same level of thought should go into improving the physical learning environment. He asked how the school planned to move forward?** The school would be able to bid for additional capital funds in September, but the budget would need to be approved before then. If expenditure was delayed until 2027/28 the school was unlikely to have sufficient reserves to cover what would probably be increased costs. **Governors asked why the required level of capital expenditure had come as a surprise to the school?** Known but contained issues, such as fire alarm sensors, had worsened considerably. The lockdown system was a new, statutory requirement, and the IT server system had unexpectedly been made obsolete by the vendor, when it had previously advised the system was okay. **A governor asked why some of the known works had not been built into planned maintenance work?** The school acknowledged it had been postponing some works for over two years because of lack of funds. The Head	

	commented that she had not previously been aware of the long standing issues, but that they were vital works. **Governors queried whether the school should be looking to establish a 'sinking fund' for capital repair and replacement?** **NOTED: a governor raised the issue of the £200k HCC cash advance, which the school would need to return at some stage. If a -£250k deficit was agreed for 26/27, the amount owed by the school might rise to -£450k if capital grants were not available.** **NOTED: governors praised the break-even revenue position, but commented that it was not enough, given the capital shortfall, to return the school to a sustainable financial position.** Nik Thomas highlighted the financial opportunities register as part of the school's recovery plan, but added there was a limit to savings obtainable from staff hours. **Governors stressed that a full, robust recovery plan was needed.** The school had other options it could consider, but it would need to discuss them with governors. **A governor expressed concern that the school and Governing Board was at risk of losing its financial autonomy to HCC. Another governor recommended that a 3-5 year capital recovery plan be drawn up, identifying capital need across that period and commensurate budget savings to pay for it.** Nik Thomas hoped to explore assumptions with the HCC School Funding Unit to support the proposed budget and have a clearer understanding of the position before a September Capital claim was submitted. **Governors asked for a clear, worse-case scenario for 26/27 and the next three years.** The school advised that the only significant expenditure not included was the classroom re-fresh of PCs. **Governors asked for a likely annual capital expenditure cost.** The school was hesitant to do this unprepared, but suggested the very rough figure of £120k per year, though this was not a figure it wanted quoted formally. **In response to a question from governors, it was confirmed that this would be in addition to the -£250k 26/27 deficit. If the school did not want its rough estimate used formally, governors asked how a forecast figure the school would be prepared to use could be obtained?** Nik Thomas felt he would need to work with the facilities team and take independent professional advice. **NOTED: a governor asked how the school could be made to run leaner and build reserves to pay back HCC and build up a capital fund? SLT would need to advise on how the school could be financially more efficient. Another governor pointed out that the school had not received adequate funds to cover capital costs for some years, or the government-created NI increases. Appropriate funding levels was an issue for HCC, not the school.** Further discussion took place. **If a capital deficit budget was submitted, a governor stressed the school needed to be very clear that the situation would not be repeated and demonstrate a clear plan to generate reserves to pay back HCC and build a capital development fund. Governors, recognised, however, that a break-even revenue budget was a major improvement compared to previous years.** Further discussion took place as to whether further improvement could be shown with regard to the revenue budget, **but governors were concerned that such changes might not be sufficiently robust or prudent, and there was a risk to presenting an unachievably positive financial situation.** **NOTED:** the Head and School Business Manager would meet to discuss a recovery and capital plan. The Head stressed there would be difficult decisions to be made to return the school to financial stability and that this would take time. The School Business Manager highlighted that a budget would need to be submitted to HCC during the week. **AGREED:** with considerable reluctance, to submit the proposed budget with a combined in-year capital deficit and revenue break-even of -£246,392 leading to a cumulative	

	deficit of -£228,578, along with a financial recovery plan and the financial opportunities register. **NOTED: the Chair thanked everyone for a robust but helpful discussion.**	
11.	**Approval of Policies** **NOTED:** the Relationships and Sex Policy had been deferred to the Autumn Term to allow required parental consultation. **AGREED:** the renewal of the previous year's Relationships and Sex Policy until the first Board meeting of the Autumn Term 2026. **NOTED:** the Policy Tracker uploaded with the agenda.	
12.	**Health and Safety Update** **NOTED:** the report uploaded with the agenda. There had been two accidents the previous term. Only one was a genuine accident beyond the control of the person concerned. The school had reviewed the circumstances surrounding the accidents and concluded there was nothing that could have been done to prevent them. **NOTED:** a periodic site inspection was planned towards the end of the term. Two unplanned practice evacuations had taken place, creating a risk of pupils becoming blasé about evacuations. Fire stopping protection in place since the building was designed and built was being investigated.	
13.	**School Business Plan** **NOTED:** the School Business Plan as considered by the Foundation Committee at its last meeting and presented for information.	
14.	**General Careers and PP Updates** **NOTED: Samuel Appiah, as PP Link Governor, had recently uploaded a visit report. He hoped to visit again later in the summer term.** **AGREED:** the Head would discuss with her PA how to address the backlog of visit reports for consideration by the Board. The Head said she would also consider ways in which governors might produce reports at school at the time of their visit. **NOTED: in terms of Careers, Jamie Kellett, as the link Governor, encouraged all governors to identify potential work experience placements for pupils, as there was a shortage.**	**RP**
15.	**Governance Effectiveness** **15.1 Governor Monitoring and Visits 25/26** **NOTED:** as previously discussed, the governor visit reports and visit record were not available. **15.2 Governor Training** **NOTED:** the current training record was not available and the Training Link Governor was not present. **The Chair encouraged all governors to continue to work through**	

	the training pathways set out in the training record. The school was reviewing how it provided safeguarding training for staff and governors. **15.3 Governor / School Communications** **NOTED:** as volunteers, governors often had to send emails outside of standard working hours. **The Chair stressed this should not put pressure on school staff to respond outside of their working hours. He asked the school to remind staff of this. A governor commented that it would also be helpful to remind parents and complainants of this fact and that it should be included in the Communications and Complaints Policies so that people did not have unreasonable expectations about responses to their emails.** **15.4 HTPM Panel** (was item 15.5) **AGREED:** the Chair and two co-Vice Chairs would form the HTPM panel. **15.5 Governor Complaint Panel Feedback** (was item 15.4) **NOTED: at the request of the Chair,** the Clerk explained that the old complaints Policy, which was still being used for complaints that had commenced before the new policy was approved at the end of April 2026, required panel findings to be reported to the Governing Board and the Board to confirm the findings and any actions taken. **Jamie Kellett, as Chair of a recent Complaints Panel, confirmed that a complaint in relation to bullying of a former pupil had been considered and partially upheld. The school could have handled aspects of the situation better. There were therefore lessons to be learnt and the school was already implementing changes.** **NOTED: governors wanted a clearer understanding of the number and nature of complaints so any trends or patterns could be identified. A way of checking that the school had carried out any remedial actions was also considered necessary. As part of its Communications Policy, the school also needed to consider how it might address hearsay and informal gossip.** **AGREED:** to support the decision of the panel. **15.6 Governor Re-Appointments** **NOTED:** the clerk advised that a number of governors would be coming to the end of their terms of office and the Board wished to get ahead of this by reappointing Governors willing to re-stand. The governors in question were: • Jamie Kellett (Co-opted Governor until 5/10/26) • Shannon Parr (Co-opted Governor until 5/10/26) • Chris Crawley (LA governor until 10/10/26) **AGREED:** to the following reappointments for a term of four years: • Jamie Kellett as Co-opted Governor from 6/10/26 - 5/10/30 • Shannon Parr as Co-opted Governor from 6/10/26 - 5/10/30 • Chris Crawley as LA governor from 11/10/26 - 10/10/30	
16.	**AOB** **NOTED:** no other business was raised	
17.	**Date of Next Meeting**	

	NOTED: the date of the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Governors was Monday, 29 June 2026 at 6.30pm in person at the school. The Clerk was still waiting on responses from several staff and governors in order to determine if the meeting could be moved back to Tuesday, 30 June 2026. Two governors present at the meeting confirmed their availability on 30 June 2026. One governor and one member of SLT had not confirmed either way. **AGREED:** the date of the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Governors as **Tuesday, 30 June 2026 at 6.30pm via TEAMS.** **NOTED: the Chair thanked everyone for their commitment and time.** *The meeting ended at approximately 20:50*	

Drafted by: Jacquie Watts
Clerk To The Governors
2/3 June 2026

Approved by The Board of Governors on:

Date: ....30 June 2026...........................

Signature (Chair): ……………………………………….. MReah