

Approved Minutes of the meeting of the Auriga Academy Trust Board held on Wednesday 21 May at 6.00pm at School Clarendon Secondary (RTS Conference Room) and via Teams

[Link to Teams Meeting](#)

[Link to Papers Board-24-5 210525](#)

Key:- ➤ Note; ⦿ Discussion; ☑ Discussion and Decision; **XX** Sponsor/Lead; **X mins** allotted time.

Items in square brackets are references to documents related to this agenda found in the folder Board-24-5 210525.

Trustees of the Auriga Academy Trust in attendance: Sarah Baker, Chris Euden, Paul Giuffredi, Jonathan Pallas (Chair), Paul Roberts and Andy Whiteside.

Trustees of the Auriga Academy Trust in attendance virtually: Lucinda Christian-Lim, Rebecca Gonyora and Lorna Goodwin.

Also in attendance: Ivan Pryce (Chief Executive Officer), Esther Brooks, (CEO, Coombe Academy Trust (Item 1 only),

Also in attendance virtually: Susie Connor (Chief Operating Officer), Jane Curzon (Trustee Elect and Chair of Strathmore School LGB), Simon Gordon (Chair of Capella House School LGB - from Item 2 only) and Niall Brady Gordon (Chair of Clarendon School LGB - from Item 2 only)

Clerk in attendance: Julie Adams

1 Confidential Item

The Board of Trustees **discussed** a confidential item.

See also Confidential Appendix A to these minutes.

Supporting papers: [CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS](#)

Simon Gordon and Niall Brady joined the meeting.

2 Welcome, apologies, declarations of interest and items from the Clerk.

2.A The Board of Trustees **noted** that no apologies for absence had been received.

2.B The Chair **reminded** all members of the Board that they must abide by the Auriga Academy Trust Declarations of Interest Policy and should declare if they have an interest in any matter that comes before them. There were no other declarations made.

3 Minutes, Resolutions and Correspondence

3.A The Board of Trustees **received** the draft minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2025 [[Board-24-5-03A Previous Draft Minutes 120325.pdf](#)] and [[Board-24-5-03A Previous Draft Minutes 120325-CONF.pdf](#)] and **approved** them as an accurate record of the meeting.

3.B The Board of Trustees **noted** the completed actions from the previous meeting.

Number	Extract	Owner	Due Date
2	All Trustees invited to respond to the consultations on Curriculum and Ofsted individually if they wished	all	Complete

3.C The Board of Trustees **noted** consider actions arising from the previous meeting that are incomplete.

Number	Extract	Owner	Due Date
1	All Trustees to share contact information for potential users of Therapy Service with the Director of Therapies	all	asap
3	Strategic objectives and associated KPI's to be refined following suggestion from Members	IP / all	Strategy Session (10 July)
4	Proposal on Member engagement with Trust Board to be proposed to Members	JA / JP	next Member meeting
5	Governance Development Plan to be drafted for AY 25-26 following Strategy Session	JP	01/09/25

ACTION #1 Trustees **agreed** that this action was now complete.

ACTIONS #3, 4 and 5 These actions will roll forward to the appropriate meetings.

3.D The Board of Trustees **received** and **noted** a Members Resolution for the approval of the External Audit Tender [Board-24-5-03D Mem-Res-24-05 Appointment of Auditors.pdf](#)

3.E The Board of Trustees **received** the ESFA Letter dated 19 March 2025 [Board-24-5-03E Letter to accounting officers - 19 March 2025.pdf](#)

3.F There were no other matters arising that are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4 CEO Report

The Board of Trustees **received** a report from the CEO [[Board-24-5-04 CEO report.pdf](#)] which included Items 4A-4I.

- 4.A General Update
- 4.B Quality of Education
- 4.C Tangley Park
- 4.D Risk Register and commentary
- 4.E Pupil Numbers
- 4.F Safeguarding Update
- 4.G Staffing summary
- 4.H Director of Therapies Report
- 4.I Trust Strategic Objectives

The CEO **presented** his report and highlighted some items. He **commented** on the strong leadership appointments at Strathmore School for both Headteacher and assistant

Headteacher. He **advised** that he met with the Integrated Care Board, which resulted in further information being provided and a further meeting to be scheduled involving colleagues at Achieving for Children (AfC) to resolve outstanding issues.

A key issue which he wished to bring to the Board's attention related to the building project at Clarendon School. A project meeting, attended by the Headteacher advised that the handover date would be the 28 August 2026 for opening in September 2026. The CEO has **advised** the Headteacher that he must not accept any consultations for any pupil where we cannot guarantee a physical space. The CEO is meeting with AfC and will reiterate this position to them. Any risk must rest with AfC.

The Board of Trustees **noted** the concerns of the Clarendon School LGB in their report in relation to the building project and its impact on the Headteacher's workload and asked if they delayed opening would add further to this. The CEO **advised** that the Headteacher would need to identify a 'waiting list' of twenty-five students whose needs could be met at the new site. The Headteacher would not offer places until there was a guarantee that the physical space would be ready. Following a question the CEO **acknowledged** that the Local Authority would have to guarantee the funding as well, which has not yet been confirmed, to ensure it is staffed and equipped. The Chair of the Clarendon School Local Governing Body (LGB) **asked** what the timeline for recruitment would be. The CEO **advised** that recruitment for a new Head of Centre would be started in January 2026, but **reiterated** that this would be subject to confirmation of funding. The Chair of the Clarendon School LGB **asked** if confirmation of student offers normally in October for the following academic year would also be affected. The CEO **advised** that due to the number of consultations received in year, places would not be hard to fill but acknowledged that if the campus had to open after September, parental appetite for moving the pupil from an alternative school may limit uptake.

The CEO **advised** that AfC have confirmed the go ahead for the demountables for Capella House School from September 2025. The CEO and Finance Director are in **discussions** to make sure they can function fully, (i.e. have plumbing). The Board of Trustees **asked** if pupil numbers for these had been clarified as there had been some confusion whether it was for 7 or 14 places. The CEO has reshared communications with AfC confirming the willingness for one class (7 pupils).

The CEO **advised** that the DSL's had completed enquiry visits, and one similar school improvement enquiry visit had taken place. At present he only has received verbal feedback, but colleagues have been positive about the experience. The impact of these will feed into the host school's self-review documents.

The Board of Trustees **asked** if planned meetings with colleagues from Health had taken place. The CEO **reported** he had a positive meeting in which they had shown interest in the expansion projects and therapy offer. There had also been a commitment to work together, however, it was acknowledged that contractual issues are complex.

The Board of Trustees **noted** the increasing trend related to sexualised behaviours across the Trust and **asked** if anything more could be done to support in this area. The CEO **agreed** that this appeared concerning but that it was due to one or two individuals

demonstrating that behaviour. Clarendon School and Capella House School were addressing by using an external agency to support (Spectra). He is confident that the issue is limited to a small number of individuals and not more broadly across the school.

The Board of Trustees **asked** if the pupils at Tangle Park would definitely be moving off the Capella House School roll in September 2025. The CEO **advised** that there has been a firm commitment and confirmation for the students to come off roll. He is unsure where the incoming Y7 pupils will be physically housed. The Board of Trustees **wished** to note their formal thanks to Capella House School and all involved with this project which had happened at very short notice and had been the right thing to do for the pupils, even if other schools had rejected it because it may affect their Ofsted outcomes.

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee **presented** the briefing paper [Board-24-5-04B Briefing Paper – Review of Trust Risk Appetite](#) and advised that this would inform the CEO's review of the key risks for the Trust in academic year 2025-26 which would be discussed at the Strategy Session. The Board of Trustees **agreed** that they approved the proposed appetite statements without amendment attached to each category.

The Board of Trustees **noted** the safeguarding information provided in the CEO report.

The Safeguarding Link Trustee, Sarah Baker, **presented** her visit report [Board-24-5-04E LT SB Safeguarding Strathmore visit 280325.pdf](#) and **updated** Trustees on her activities to date. She **advised** that she had met with Safeguarding Link Governors, led their Forum meetings and joined some of their meetings with the schools designated Safeguarding Leads. Within the Forum, they have discussed the consistency of governors' oversight of the area, DSL workload and arranging specific safeguarding training. One of the key issues affecting link governors is the lack of completion of the mandatory safeguarding training courses by governors. She **requested** that all Trustees who have not yet undertaken the 90-minute NGA course do so promptly. The Board of Trustees **agreed** that all Trustees would complete the safeguarding course by the Strategy Session (10 July)(**ACTION**). This will help to set the standard for local governors.

The Board of Trustees **asked** if there was anything further that could be done to raise the profile of safeguarding at both Board and Governing Body meetings. The Safeguarding Link Trustee **suggested** that an annual report is received from the DSL / Safeguarding Link, with updates added as a standing item at every other meeting. The Board **agreed** (**ACTION**). The CEO as Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead added that these could be focussed on specific areas of activity of the DSL's Network.

The CEO **advised** that the instances of staff absence had reduced and specifically, there had been none related to mental health in the Spring term.

The Board of Trustees **noted** the progress data at both Clarendon and Capella House Schools and **asked** if the high achievement was a result of targets which were set too low. The CEO **explained** that targets are routinely revised once achieved. He will meet with the Headteachers to ensure they are encouraging their teachers to maximise the potential of the pupils. This can be challenging when individual targets may not be

measured in 'data'. Clarendon Secondary Campus is more data led, but he is confident that all targets are suitably challenging.

Supporting Papers

5 Finance

The Board of Trustees **received** the [P8 Management Accounts](#). The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee **highlighted** that the medical retirement has made the trading deficit higher than originally budgeted. He **confirmed** that the COO had reviewed the capital expenditure to reduce some of the costs. The COO **added** that there may be some staff savings and additional income from pupil numbers. She **reported** that there are additional pressures from the co-located mainstream schools to increase their costs for their Service Level Agreements and negotiations are challenging.

The Board of Trustees **asked** if there was another point of feedback from the benchmarking discussions other than the production of the draft budget proposals for 25-26. The COO **advised** that she was working with the Finance Manager to draft the budgets in line with the Headteacher's proposals who have had to make difficult decisions. The Link Trustee for Stakeholder Engagement, Andrew Whiteside, **reported** that the Headteacher at Clarendon School had presented a cogent plan, developed with his senior leaders, to the local governing body. Governors had recognised their ownership and responsibility to monitor the impact of those decisions and had been very aware that this was not a 'Trust' exercise.

Supporting Papers: [5. Questions from the Finance and Resources Committee P7 2024.pdf](#)

6 Governance

The Board of Trustees **noted** that the Chair of Trustees would liaise with the Governance Professional and circulate a draft agenda and timings for the Strategy Session **(ACTION)**.

7 Committee Summary Reports

7.A The Board of Trustees **received** the summary reports from Clarendon and Strathmore Schools LGB's [Board-24-5-07A Committee Chairs Summary Reports](#) and **noted** there had been no other Board committees since the last meeting.

The Chair of the Capella House School LGB **reported** that they had a lengthy discussion about Tribunals (also noted in discussions at the Strathmore School LGB) and the effects on the school including Headteacher workload and provision for pupils with spaces being held. The CEO **acknowledged** that this can be challenging but this is a legal framework which Trusts cannot influence the timescales involved and reflects parental right to 'name' a school. He **added** that there is no appeal mechanism for schools. He recognised that this may influence workload and that if this affects the overall education being provided it would be picked up by the CEO in his regular meetings and well-being checks with heads. The

The Chair of Trustees **noted** that the two other points relating to any potential impact of the loss of staff and delays with SEND panels would be picked up by the CEO in his next report to the Board. **(ACTION)**

7.B There were no other matters arising from the summary reports that had not previously been covered on the agenda.

8 Approval of Policies / Statements

The Board **approved** the [AAT Complaints Procedure Policy May 25](#) and **noted** the CEO's approval of the [AAT CCTV Policy](#).

The CEO and Board of Trustees **thanked** the COO for her continued work in policy revision and amendment.

9 Review impact, planned actions and agree feedback to the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees **noted** the extensive discussions and focus and reminded them of the confidentiality surrounding the first item.

The Board of Trustees **noted** the actions arising from the meeting, which include three items within the Confidential Minutes.

Number	Extract	Owner	Due Date
1	Strategic objectives and associated KPI's to be refined following suggestion from Members	IP / all	Strategy Session (10 July)
2	Proposal on Member engagement with Trust Board to be proposed to Members	JA / JP	next Member meeting
3	All Trustees to complete the NGA Safeguarding Training by 10 July 2025	All Trustees	10/07/25
4	Safeguarding Report to be presented annually to the Board and LGB's and a standalone agenda item to be added to every other Board / LGB agenda with particular focus as arranged by DSL's	JA / SB / SLG's	ongoing
5	Draft agenda to be circulated for the Strategy Session	JP	11/06/25
6	CEO to include information on impact of staff reductions and effects of delays in SEND Panels in his future reports (Clarendon).	IP	16/07/25

10 Confidentiality

The Board of Trustees **agreed** that the discussion at the meeting the background papers , and the reports identified as confidential above, {and the minutes contained in the confidential appendix to the minutes relating to item 1,) should remain confidential and excluded from the published minutes and papers.

The date of the Strategy Session is **10 July 2025**
The date of the next Board meeting is **16 July 2025**

Jonathan Pallas

Jonathan Pallas (Aug 8, 2025 14:31:48 GMT+1)

Jonathan Pallas

Chair of the Board of Trustees

08/08/25






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Final Audit Report

2025-08-08

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