

NKS GOVERNORS' UPDATE

Summer term 2022

Message from the Chair of Governors

Simon Hallam

After eight and a half years as Governor I have decided to step down at the end of this academic year. It has been a privilege to serve the school during this time.

Much has changed since I became Chair of the Governing Body in April 2020 both at the school and across the world. Little did I imagine that we would witness the largest disruptive and life-changing pandemic in generations. I am proud how everyone in the school community adapted, including learning and teaching in virtual environments, and the provision of life saving PPE equipment. I should like to thank Mr. Greene, the staff, students, parents and carers for your efforts and support over the past two years in ensuring the school continued to function.

September 2021 saw the culmination of years of endeavour with the opening of the Digital Learning Centre. This crucial addition to the school estate will provide state of the art facilities in the teaching of science and computing for many years to come. I would like to thank everyone involved.

This year we are trying a new way of working. Instead of one Chair of Governors we are introducing co-Chairing. I would like to introduce Mr. Andrew Judd and Mrs. Jane Burnett as my successors as co-Chairs.

Andrew, Jane and the Governing Body will continue to support everyone in the school community in the next stage of the school's journey.

I shall continue to serve as a Trustee of the School and as Secretary of the Old Ashfordians; Association, the Alumni body of the school, and look forward to supporting you in your endeavours.

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Farewell from the Headboy

By Tom Staddon

Being appointed as Head Boy at The Norton Knatchbull School was a great honour and privilege - it is an opportunity I shall be forever grateful for. From day one I wanted to be as active as possible in the position, providing a countless number of guided tours for prospective pupils and staff

I have a fond memory of a tour which lasted just shy of two hours in which I had the opportunity to speak to a former student of the school and his son, his experience of the school in the early 1990's was fascinating.

I was keen to see a greater development of the school community so chairing the Student Council meetings - and finally establishing a structure for appointments and the meeting of the council - was fantastic. Within the meetings we created the Foodie Group, to provide student representation for the food served at the school and we also changed the House Captain role, so that it would be filled by year 12 students rather than year 13 students. Notably, I was proud of being able to channel non-uniform money towards providing aid for Ukrainians.

Being invited to give a toast to the Old Ashfordians Association at the Army and Navy Club - particularly after it had not met since 2019 - was a standout moment during my tenure as Head Boy. Being able to involve myself so directly with the greater Norton Knatchbull community is something I found incredibly enriching, and I am looking forward to joining the OAA and maintaining my link with a school that has provided me with so much over the 7 years I have been a pupil.

I am pleased to have the prospect of returning to the NKS in the next school year to provide a talk as part of the 6th form UCAS day which centres on university applications.

It has been an honour to be a part of the history of The Norton Knatchbull School and I am incredibly excited to continue to support the school and its community.

Governor Appointment

Simon Hallam's departure leaves vacant the Old Ashfordian Governor post which will be filled by Philip Sibbald.



Phil joins the team of 12 governors from a variety of background and will be the 5th new governor this year.

Phil was a pupil at the school from 1988 – 1993 and spent 10.5 years as a Senior Business Analyst with Dow Jones and The Wall Street Journal and still works in the city now.

Phil also has prior governance experience and served on the Board of Education for the Canterbury Diocese for 9 years. Phil will sit on the Finance & General Purposes Committee but is also looking forward to engaging with music & RE in the school.



Student Behaviour post Covid

By Tom Saville

Extract from Governor monitoring report:

The initial “delight” of schooling from home disappeared within a few weeks replaced with boredom, decreasing motivation (due to the repetition and monotony of their new daily routines) and missing their friends.

Students confirmed the school continually supported them throughout lockdowns, each knowing who to contact at the school should they need guidance and support.

Some students (year 10’s) established daily goals for themselves, including schoolwork and exercise. Students adapted to their environment and seemed more able to manage their stress levels. Some decided to make the most of their time at home and actually increased their private studying. Commendable.

Upon returning to school students found their work ethic had increased, physical fitness improved as a result of walking / cycling to school and the structured sports activities timetabled.

The students commented that Covid and the associated lockdowns had actually brought them closer together, appreciating what they had once taken for granted.



Wellbeing Committee

By Natalie Pearce

Wellbeing Link Governor

We are delighted to announce that we were awarded a Bronze Award via the Kent and Medway Healthy Workplaces Programme in May 2022.

The programme supports organisations of all sizes and sectors in addressing their workplace health needs. The school decided to sign up to ensure that we do all that we can to make sure our teachers and support staff are supported in the right way.

The Bronze level indicates that we have steps in place to be a healthy workplace. To achieve this level we have had to submit documentation including risk assessments and our health and safety policy, etc. Support and training are available to us to build on our work so far, including offering workplace health checks for individuals and staff training sessions on topics such as healthy choices, stress and mental health.

There is a certificate that we are proudly displaying in the staff room but it's important to note that our commitment to health and wellbeing extends beyond the certificate and that we genuinely care that our workforce feels looked after and valued. There are three further levels of the award that can be achieved; Silver, Gold and Platinum. Next term we will be looking at working towards the Silver award. To help achieve this, the Senior Leadership Team and Governors will be working with staff, including utilising the Staff Forum, to develop their health and wellbeing priorities.



<https://www.medway.gov.uk/healthyworkplace>

Looking Ahead

By Jane Burnett & Andrew Judd
Co-Chairs

Next Academic year we will be adopting a co-chair arrangement where we will share the role.

This, we hope, will prove a pragmatic, useful and effective solution to what can be a demanding position for one individual.

Amongst our priorities for the year we intend to raise the profile of the School Governors both in accessibility and visibility. This idea in part came about as a result of hearing what staff had to say in exit interviews. One of the new initiatives will be a series of school lunches where Governors meet with a selection of pupils over lunch to discuss issues which are important to them and to give them the opportunity to discover who their governors are and what they do within the school.

We will also be writing to staff and parents every other term in order to inform them of the work of the Governing Body in the form of this newsletter.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank the retiring Chair of the Board of Governors – Mr. Simon Hallam for the time he has given to The Norton Knatchbull School both as Governor and later his contribution as Chair of Governors.

We wish him well.