

At SCS we aim to enable our learners to have success for today and to be prepared for tomorrow.
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MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEMBERS MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER 2024 AT 08H30

PRESENT:	L. KHATIB	(CHAIRPERSON) (PROPRIETOR)	(LK)
	S. MERCHANT	(PROPRIETOR)	(SM)
	M. AL HAMRI	(PARENT) (ISLAMIC AND ARABIC)	(MH)
	T. GREGORY	(PARENT) (PARENT LIAISON)	(TRG)
	Z. HARRINGTON	(PRINCIPAL) (SBS)	(ZH)
	L. MCGEEVER	(HEADTEACHER PRIMARY) (SBS)	(LM)
	L. FRIDD	(PRINCIPAL) (SCS)	(SD)
	M. DAVIES	(HEADTEACHER SECONDARY) (SCS)	(MD)
	J. LUUKAS	(HEADTEACHER PRIMARY) (SCS)	(JL)
	M. ASHTON	(DEPUTY HEADTEACHER SECONDARY) (SCS)	(MA)
GUESTS:	A. JAGGI	(HEADBOY AT SCS SENIOR SCHOOL)	(AJ)
	H. AHMED	(DEPUTY HEADBOY AT SCS SENIOR SCHOOL)	(HA)
	D. LANDSBERG	(DEPUTY HEADGIRL AT SCS SENIOR SCHOOL)	(DL)
APOLOGIES:	T. GREGORY	(SUSTAINABILITY ADVISOR)	(TG)
	Z. STOJANOV	(HEADGIRL AT SCS SENIOR SCHOOL)	(ZS)
MINUTES:	L. LE GRANGE	(PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO PRINCIPAL)	(LLG)

LF opened the meeting at 16h28 and extended apologies for LK and SM.

1. Opening Remarks

The meeting was opened by LF at 08H30, all present were welcomed.
Apologies were noted for Ziza Stojanov.

2. Student Voice Report

LF welcomed the students present and explained that the executive student leadership team would be presenting their feedback and ideas. AJ started the presentation and was assisted by HA and DL.

• Highlights from the Student Voice:

- AJ discussed the successful handover and planning session that was held with the previous head prefects, which helped set the tone for the new academic year.
- Key initiatives that have been driven by students this year include a focus on cancer awareness with the Steps for Cancer 24 Hour event and the formal dress down day. DL mentioned that the students would like to have their prom and graduation on separate days and not on the same day as was done last year. HA mentioned that ZS was working on their Legacy Wall among other initiatives the team are pleased to leave behind.
- AJ stated that Mr. Nick Makin has been a positive addition to the team, facilitating better communication and regular meetings with Mrs. Fridd.

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- Leadership challenges were voiced and feedback was taken from the student body. Students felt that this year already presented more memorable moments and that they felt heard.
- The student team has helped set goals for their peers, with increased participation and support from larger cohorts.
- HA had requested an alumni application, LF has found it. He stated that they would like to come up with an alumni network. LF stated that we could do this as a school for each school (meaning SBS too) with one fee and register the students through LinkedIn and this formalises keeping in contact with SCS. SM suggested that we hold an Alumni Day and show current students how far past students have gone.

- **Uniform Discussion:**

- SM raised concerns about the current uniform policy and the impact of winter and summer variations on families.
- Students asked ZH how they handled the Sixth Form uniform topic. ZH stated that students researched different types of workwear and presented arguments for uniforms being a unitary symbol, though some students felt limited by the dress code.
- LK stated that putting on a uniform should make you feel happy and proud to wear it. He stated that he was anti-uniform whilst SM was pro-uniform.

- **Mentoring and Volunteering:**

- Students are eager to expand volunteering opportunities and engage in projects such as adopting a school in Nepal, aiming to raise 189,000 AED through Dubai Cares.
- AJ emphasised a desire to leave a meaningful legacy through this initiative.
- MA stated that the work the students do, middle school and primary head prefects could benefit from being mentored by the Sixth Form students. He stated that the middle school and lower do not get to see them much but that brainstorming with them for initiatives through the school would be highly advantageous.
- JL mentioned that there had been Sixth Form student lead assembly for Year 6 students which they found helpful, and that the older students could present some kind of courses to discuss with students getting them thinking about GCSE and A-levels.

LK stated that it was a welcomed opportunity to have the students join the board and discuss their ideas and feedback. He mentioned that both he and SM would welcome other meeting opportunities for mentoring sessions in terms of career advice and help to facilitate volunteering opportunities.

LK mentioned the great informal session held last year with the students that left and both he and SM felt this was a great discussion about how they look forward to the future, university and work experience. He said that they did not want a formal presentation but they needed feedback meetings and mentorship sessions.

SM asked the students if there was anything they would like and do not have now. The students stated that the staff were exceptionally helpful and caring and the new arrangement of frequent meetings etc made a big difference. HA stated that they would like to avail the opportunity to have mentoring sessions with LK and SM.

The board commended the students on their professional presentation and thanked them for their time and involvement in making the future even better for students coming through SCS.

Students concluded and left the meeting at 08h47.

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3. Principal's Report

Presented by LF.

- **School Development Plan (SDP):**
 - Slight adjustments to the SDP with increased focus on Arabic and Islamic education, as well as a refined approach to data, maintaining outstanding practices in T&L and effective use of technology in teaching.
- **Admissions:**
 - Significant challenges due to limited seats for next year. The school prioritises siblings of current students, with waiting lists forming in key year groups.
 - The team is exploring strategies for early applications (for 2026-2027) to manage demand.
 - Strangely it is more difficult managing expectations of parents with the waiting lists. MD managed this very well in terms of sending out the waitlisted and accepted places at the same time on the same day. This gave parents straightforward and honest feedback as to whether or not they would be able to secure a place for the year or not.
 - We received 340 applications for Year 7 and with 100% going through from Year 6 we only have seven seats available.
 - We are not able to open certain Year Groups for admissions for the next academic year.
- **Wellbeing Initiatives:**
 - LF praised the wellbeing team for their efforts, including staff surveys and positive feedback channels to ensure the staff feel supported. Linda Marmion is championing Komodo which we already use to focus on student wellbeing. This platform allows staff members to send each other positive messages. We have reached out to the platform provider as we have no idea who has and has not completed the surveys to build in a reminder to the staff that have not completed their staff surveys.
- **KHDA and BSO Inspections:**
 - The school is preparing for the BSO inspection on 20 January 2025 and a KHDA visit regarding Arabic and Islamic education. The BSO inspection report did not reflect how incredibly difficult and complete the previous inspection was. The pre-inspection is scheduled for 5th December 2024 with the same previous lead inspector who is exceptionally thorough. BSO will also review the financial update including a review of recent investments made in the school's infrastructure and staffing. The school will need to demonstrate their committed to reinvesting in its programmes and facilities to ensure ongoing development and growth.
 - The team is working with KHDA to provide feedback on educational frameworks and ensure that the school's needs are well-represented in future planning.
 - MAH stated that he had attended a KHDA talk and said it was very informative and that it was mentioned how good SCS was and there were talks about our three classes as opposed to two classes approach. KHDA are planning on visiting the schools to see Arabic and Islamic. MD and LF would be attending the framework discussion on Monday, 25th November 2024 about the new pathways. KHDA are reaching out to schools for feedback. Hopefully the new framework will be better fit for schools, and will assist raising standards.
- **Health and Safety Update:**
 - Fire drills were conducted, and a lockdown drill is planned. There would be an assembly held around this before it takes place.

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- The Dubai Health Authority's recent measles campaign was discussed, and ongoing recommendations for health measures are being implemented. Currently all sorts of webinars and training sessions are being sent out with very little notice provided. We are still awaiting our DHA inspection. This has been delayed due to the measles campaign. They have been out to check that we have added wash basins to our new therapy rooms. With us now having a "mixed" license to be able to employ speech and occupational therapists we needed to install wash basins. This has been done and checked in a very recent visit to check this update.
- DHA have stated that there is currently a large problem across Dubai with younger people vaping, becoming more prevalent in schools. LF stated that at SCS we have seen a decrease in vaping incidents. Students who usually try vaping are from Year 10 and Year 11, its experimental usually. We have a three-strike rule and you are out. We let parents know that students will not be welcome into the Sixth Form unless behaviour improves.

● **Mobile Phones and Student Devices**

- LF began by stating that we are looking at the use of mobile devices at school. Should these be banned or not. She mentioned that in primary there is no need for mobile phones and in secondary there is no need for their use in the day. She remarked that students use these for communicating with parents for pickup or booking taxis etc. It was also stated that there is no real problem in the day of students using their devices to do silly things, but that we wanted to formalise the policy and procedure.
- LF mentioned that we would be trialling a lockable cupboard where students place their mobile device in the lockable cupboard each morning and retrieve it at the end of the day. The cupboard has been ordered.
- ZH reported that SBS have phones locked away in a cabinet but that it is currently optional. Students can leave mobiles in their bags. They are looking at making this compulsory.
- LF stated that students would have to login on the school's Wi-Fi which we can then monitor what they are accessing. When they use their own data, we cannot track this or restrict their access.
- There is a strong push to limit social media access on school Wi-Fi, although social media platforms are blocked on our Wi-Fi, students have the temptation of using their phones and so do, while also acknowledging challenges with parental concerns over phone access, especially for students who use phones for communication with parents. Our problem is not social media so much but the use of mobile to call home and asking parents to collect them from school due to illness. They bypass the clinic and this is abused by regular student offenders.
- We do have a strike policy for mobile phones, first offence handed to reception collect at the end of the day, second offence email sent home to parents, third offence phone collected by parents, fourth offence, phone kept by the school for a week, fifth offence phone kept for the rest of the term.
- LK suggested a signal blocker which can be turned on during office hours, only staff are able to access signal. LF stated that we have students with diabetes that make use of their watches to track their insulin etc and so that may not work.
- MD stated that a recent visit from a Principal of a school in Kuala Lumpur stated that he was surprised that he had not seen any phones being used by students during the school. Their school lock away devices.
- LF stated that mobile devices would be locked away for students from Year 7 to Year 11. Sixth Form students need to learn to manage their time and their device usage as they would be off to university. Our problem is KS3 and KS4. Year 6 students do not need phones.

● **Facilities Update**

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- The new sports pitch will officially open next Monday, 25th November 2024 and students are excited about its completion. We are currently asking students for their ideas on naming the pitch. A big thank you to SM and LK for building this new space.
- **Extra-Curricular Activities**
 - ECA (Extra-Curricular Activities) participation remains high, with 80% of students engaging in at least one activity per week. The school is considering adjustments to manage traffic flow and staggered times for drop-offs and pick-ups.
 - LK enquired as to whether traffic is better when ECAs are running. LF stated that in fact the opposite was true.
- **Sport**
 - MD line managing PE and Sport department in terms of performance squads and sport for all.
- **Extreme Weight Loss in Staff and Students**
 - We have noticed with injectables being so easily available that there have been cases of extreme weight loss in students and staff alike. This is becoming a disorder on its own. Our counsellors are undergoing training to ensure they have the skills to deal with this new phenomenon.

4. Secondary Update

Presented by MD.

- **Staffing Update:**
 - Emmet Glackin has been promoted to Head of Secondary from September 2025. EG is assembling his team for the new year.
 - MD will move into the full-time Vice Principal role. MD will focus on the marketing of the upper school which is where we have spaces. Marketing photoshoot took place last week and the preliminary pictures look good.
 - New staff members have been well-received, and ongoing staff training and observations are reflecting positively on recruitment standards.
- **Curriculum:**
 - Year 7 Showcase evening took place and was well received by parents. It gave them a snapshot of what the students receive during the school day and many found it extremely informative. This changes the dynamic of the parent-teacher conference adding value to the experience and ensuring parents understand the school's perspective better. This kind of open evening helps students feel connected to their children.
 - Students are currently out at the World Scholars Cup in the US. They are performing extremely well, they have won many categories and are expected back on Sunday, 24th November 2024.
 - Year Options and Pathways evening went off extremely well. Year 12 and 13 students presented their subjects to Year 9 students and parents. Students were impressive and visiting families found it helpful to have the firsthand perspective from students. We have found that student-led open evenings are very well received. Year 9 students have also started to undertake the Morrisby Test helping them even further in selecting their subject choices. They are also meeting with the Careers Counsellor in a series of interviews ensuring they make informed choices. The numbers of students coming through are extremely high.

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- Mock examinations have been underway over the past few weeks. These are going off well and we are hoping students' results will translate.
- Adding LAMDA has been a very smart addition. Students can take part in Levels 1-3. More and more students taking part.
- HPQ and EPQ is seeing more numbers of students signing up.
- **Duke of Edinburgh:**
 - More interest has translated into more students signing up and taking part in this DofE programme. There is much interest among parents coming though.
- **Events:**
 - The Rock Concert at the Hard Rock Café, attended by 25 acts, was a major success, with significant parental support.
 - BTEC Hospitality students hosted a "Pop Up Street Kitchen" event. It was phenomenal, food was outstanding and students outdid themselves.
- **University and Career Pathways:**
 - There are 120 universities on the books for our Careers and Universities Fayre. Eleanor Nolan, our Careers Counsellor, is doing very well in preparing students for upcoming choices.
 - The school is also working on expanding its vocational education programmes.
- **Upcoming Events:**
 - The UAE National Day celebration is scheduled for next week, with discussions around increased costs for traditional events (e.g., camel rides).
 - The Back to the 80s school production will be staged in two nights and tickets will be distributed to the board members.
 - Secondary Sports Day coming up in the last week of school. We are ready for the event.
- **Highlights:**
 - Some of our Sixth Form students are applying to university such as Oxford, Yale, Harvard etc.
 - A homegrown student who was with us from SBS and then joined SCS before SBS had a secondary school, has already been accepted into the medical field in Hong Kong.
 - FS parents often ask on school tours about Russell Spiers universities and our students are being accepted into these and are performing well.
- **Staff Wellbeing:**
 - With the introduction of Small Wins, teachers are able to make suggestions of things which can be put in place to make their experience at work easier, Teacher of the Month and ways for staff to help others has brought a renewed sense of motivation.
 - PD's have become more bespoke and meaningful.

5. Primary Update

Presented by JL.

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- **Staff Updates:**

- New staff are doing well and ongoing staff training and observations are reflecting positively on recruitment standards.
- MAH asked how we are able to decide if the new staff will be good or not. JL stated that our recruitment process includes staff teaching a demonstration lesson. This ensures we are able to see whether or not they can be moulded to the SCS way or not.
- We run new staff check ins which have made longer-employed staff realise just how much of an offering they receive at SCS.
- With the appointment of two deputies in Primary, it has made a big difference. Both Linda Marmion and Dawn Wearing have had interchangeable roles and have taken over roles of two members of the leadership team who are out on maternity leave. Rebecca McNamara returns in December and Hannah Howard returns in January which will bolster the team.
- Most unfortunately, we have had a staff member lose her husband in a very unexpected way whilst he was out of Dubai on business. The staff members two children attend SCS and the pastoral team have stepped up massively to ensure the best for the children.
- Staffing pastoral concerns have been numerous already this year, the team are doing a great job ensuring all staff are assisted. The staff really step up to help each other out and this really does demonstrate our community ethos.

- **Data:**

- Year 2 to Year 6 students have completed their NGRT assessments. CAT4 done in Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 as well as for new students. Our Year 4 SAS students are higher than new students coming in from other schools.
- Existing students score higher than new students. Students with us for longer tend to attain better results. New students are therefore targeted and get caught up.
- The new students coming in have been returning students from abroad, ex SCS students are always welcomed back. Local schools tend to have lower scores than our students. UK-based are quite good, other than British curriculum challenges for these students but they get caught up.
- Baseline data for Emirati students is a focus for us. Dan Hatton is doing a great job to bring up their standards. Emirati students that have been with us for three years and more outperform others who have not.
- We have been running Emirati parent meeting to discuss what can be done to help in getting students in ECAs and getting parents to attend the parent meetings etc.
- Curriculum modifications have closed gaps in maths and writing between boys and girls.
- Ben Plant and the Teaching and Learning Team oversee MAGT and have KS3 doing work with Year 6, students have done maths competitions and poetry competitions and events for challenge.

- **Events:**

- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory will be the primary production for this year. We have had many more boys audition this year than ever before, this has been unexpected and welcomed. This will be a full cast of 80 members. Tickets will be made available to the members of the Board.
- A number of Hook Days are still coming up and are always good for students.
- We have large numbers of students signed up for the Ecoventure trips which are coming up.
- SCS will be heading over to SBS for learning walks in Arabic which we look forward to. The collaboration between the schools has been positively received.

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- **Wellbeing:**

- Komodo has been an instrumental platform in measuring student wellbeing.
- Using Komodo has revealed that digital wellbeing has come out very low and so this has been targeted for ensuring student confidence. Much work is being done in educating students and parents in dealing with digital awareness. We are also meeting with Screenwise to set up more workshops and gain more knowledge and tips for parents, students and even for staff.

- **Extra-Curricular Activities:**

- We have had a greater uptake than ever before. 86% of students take part in one ECA each week.
- There are 279 teacher-led ECA's.

- **PD for T & L:**

- Fionnuala Marriner and Louise Rolf have ensured action project plans are in use.
 - Links to the Safa 6 are further being embedded into the curriculum and lessons.
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6. Any Other Business

- SM asked if there were any specific actions or strategies the board would like to implement in the next term. LK mentioned that the option to meet with Sixth Form students would be hugely beneficial. LF mentioned that that are free every Tuesday morning in the first lesson for planning purposes.
 - ZH and LM offered support from SBS for the SCS BSO inspection. LF, MD and JL thanked them and would come back to them.
 - LF stated that a meeting with SM and LK to discuss the financial overview for resources ploughed back into SCS since 2021, staffing allocations etc will need to take place before the inspection.
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7. Meeting Conclusion

- LF thanked everyone for their contributions and time.
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The meeting concluded and adjourned at 09h48.