

**Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held at 6pm on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025 via Teams**

**Members Present:** Sarah Mason (Chair), John Boyle (Vice Chair), Tim Marshall

**Apologies:** Victoria Topham

**In Attendance:** Jenny Craig (Principal & CEO), John McGrath (Chief Operating Officer (COO)), Oliver Roth (Executive Director MIS & Digital Transformation (EDMDT)), Anna Smith (Director of Governance)

<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
A&R 14/25	<p><b>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted. There were no declarations of interest relevant to the business of the meeting. The meeting was quorate.</p>
A&R 15/25	<p><b>Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and Matters Arising</b></p> <p>The minutes were <b>Approved</b> as an accurate record of discussion. All actions had either been completed or were discussed in the meeting.</p>
A&R 16/25	<p><b>Health and Safety Assurance Review</b></p> <p>Notable improvements in health and safety management over the past 18 months were reported, crediting stronger leadership and collaboration. The need for consistent staffing and compliance was emphasized, particularly in Construction. Training was deemed effective but should be embedded in the curriculum, with accurate record-keeping to support it. Leadership training has helped distribute responsibility more broadly, and a proactive approach is encouraged to strengthen the safety culture.</p> <p>The Committee sought and received assurances on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most recommendations, especially those related to fire safety, are progressing well, with ongoing audits and a planned cleanup at the Amersham campus. Reporting on KPIs should provide the Committee with additional assurance.</li> <li>• Efforts are also underway to modernize contractor management and standardize health and safety practices across all campuses.</li> <li>• In terms of ISO certification, all agreed the importance of ensuring costs do not outweigh benefits but that this could be a realistic aim in terms of the new build transition.</li> <li>• While it may be challenging for Amersham and Flackwell Heath campuses to achieve excellence given campus conditions, good levels of compliance are expected to ensure a safe environment.</li> </ul>
A&R 17/25	<p><b>Cyber Security Assurance Review</b></p> <p>The EDMDT outlined the process and significance of achieving Cyber Essentials certification, which involved a lengthy assessment and led to a stronger cybersecurity posture and continued funding eligibility. Key improvements included implementing multi-factor authentication for remote desktop access. He emphasized the importance of ongoing compliance, regular hardware updates, and plans for the Digital Steering Group to oversee software procurement and ensure continued alignment with certification standards.</p> <p>Governors stressed the need for clear ownership of security operations and adequate resourcing of the internal team to manage cybersecurity demands. The EDMDT supported this, noting efforts to improve collaboration with Aztec and enhance day-to-day operational</p>

	<p>support. These steps aim to strengthen accountability, technical capacity, and the overall effectiveness of cybersecurity management.</p> <p>The Committee recorded its formal thanks to the EDMDT and Carl Phelps (Head of IT) for their work on the project.</p>
A&R 18/25	<p><b>2025/26 Future Assurance Reviews</b></p> <p>The COO briefed members on plans for 2025-26 as detailed in the report. Actions are recorded in Minute Ref A&amp;R 20/25.</p>
A&R 19/25	<p><b>Strategic Risk Register</b></p> <p>The Principal introduced the AI generated risk register, which now includes emerging risks such as AI and climate change as discussed at the last meeting. The Committee emphasized the importance of assigning clear risk owners and conducting regular reviews to ensure the register remains current and actionable. The Committee also discussed the impact of AI on the future workforce, stressing the need to prepare students for evolving job roles and to promote responsible use of AI in education to maintain academic integrity. The mature, realistic approach being adopted by the College was welcomed by the Committee.</p> <p>Additionally, the Committee discussed enhancing Critical Incident training by incorporating scenarios where senior leaders are unavailable, to improve organisational resilience. Governors highlighted the importance of clear ownership and adequate resourcing for security operations, while the EDMDT noted ongoing efforts to strengthen collaboration with Aztec and improve day-to-day operational support.</p>
A&R 20/25	<p><b>AGREED ACTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Internal Assurance Tracking:</b> Create a recommendations tracker document that includes all recommendations and their progress status on all reports that are presented to the Committee from this meeting and going forward. The tracker will be reported on at each meeting of the Committee as a standing agenda item. (COO)</li> <li>• <b>Health &amp; Safety Assurance:</b> Agree on the KPIs recommended in the health and safety audit report and ensure they are reported to the committee. (COO)</li> <li>• <b>ISO Certification Decision:</b> Evaluate the feasibility and benefits of pursuing ISO certification and decide whether to aim for it in alignment with the new build. (COO)</li> <li>• <b>Cyber Essentials:</b> Add a laymen’s term overview of the Cyber Essentials recommendations to the recommendations tracker to facilitate Committee oversight. (EDMDT/COO)</li> <li>• <b>Payroll Assurance Review:</b> Confirm the scheduling of the payroll assurance review and ensure it is completed before the next meeting. (COO)</li> <li>• <b>Assurance Reviews 2025-26:</b> Create a cycle plan showing the assurance reviews completed this year and those planned for next year for the next meeting. (COO)</li> <li>• <b>Risk Register:</b> Separate the columns for committee oversight and individual ownership in the risk register to clarify responsibilities. Invite risk owners to report on their respective risks to the audit committee on a cyclical basis. (COO)</li> </ul>
A&R 21/25	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025</p>

The Chair thanked all for attending. The meeting closed at 7pm.

**Approved as an accurate record of discussion: 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025**