



# Swift Academies

*Success will inspire future triumphs*

**Board of Directors' Meeting**  
2pm, Friday 13 November 2020

**a virtual meeting, held via Microsoft Teams**

Present

- **Directors**

Derek Bell (Chair), Keith Bernstone, Stuart Hargrove, Tim Fisher, Julie Cornelius, Sam Hirst, Michael Garmston, Geoff Liddle, Dean Judson (Chief Executive Officer)

- **also**

John Armitage (Head Teacher, The Rydal Academy),  
Nichola Peaker (Head of School, Hurworth School),  
Nick Lindsay (Head of School, Longfield Academy),  
Glen Hart (Chief Finance Officer, Swift Academies)  
Sarah Jones (Trust Business Manager, Swift Academies)  
Katie Turnbull (Deputy Headteacher, The Rydal Academy)  
Rachel Kershaw (Senior Partner, Avec Partnership)  
Tracey Curtis (Governance Partner, Avec Partnership)

**Item:**  
1

**Description of discussion:**

**Welcome, introductions and confirmation quorum present**

A round of introductions took place for the benefit of all present and in particular Michael Garmston and Geoff Liddle, recently appointed Directors.

The Governance Partner confirmed that a quorum was present.

The Chief Executive Officer highlighted housekeeping arrangements to ensure the smooth flow of the meeting, including ensuring microphones

**action by:**

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remained on mute when not speaking, the use of the chat facility to ask questions and the raising of a hand to gain attention.

**2 Apologies for absence and their acceptance**

No apologies for absence had been received from Directors: all Directors were present.

Apologies were tendered for Andy Hutton.

Directors RESOLVED that the absence of Andy Hutton was noted.

**3 Notification of items of urgent other business**

- items that the Board of Directors of Swift Academies regard are of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the end of the agenda

No items of urgent other business were notified for consideration at the end of the agenda.

**4 Declaration of personal and pecuniary interests**

a) complete the Register of Interest

Directors and those present were reminded that they should complete the register of interest to declare any relevant business or pecuniary interest and close family relationship between Members, Directors or Governors and/or Members, Directors or Governors and employees. A register should be completed annually and updated during each academic year where circumstances change.

It was confirmed that all Members, Directors and Governors had completed the Register of Interest for the current academic year.

b) to declare any personal or pecuniary interests in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting

Directors and those present were reminded that they should declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting. No declarations of interest were made.

c) Code of Conduct

Directors were reminded that the Board of Directors of Swift Academies had approved a Code of Conduct for Directors in March 2018. The Code of Conduct had been signed by all Directors.

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**Approval of minutes / Record of Approvals / matters arising Friday 10 July 2020**

The draft Record of Approvals (July 2020) had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Directors RESOLVED that the circulated Record of Approvals (July 2020) was approved as an accurate record of the e-mail exchange between Directors. The Governance Partner would arrange for the Record of Approvals to be shared with the Chair for signature. The signed, approved minutes would be retained by the Trust Business Manager and shared on relevant area of the Swift website.

Governance  
Partner /  
Chair

**Thursday 22 October 2020**

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Swift Academies held on Thursday 22 October 2020 had been shared with the Chair of the meeting. It was explained that the meeting had considered the appraisal and pay determination arrangements across the Trust, therefore the minutes had not been circulated widely due to the personal information contained in them.

Directors RESOLVED that the minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting held on Thursday 22 October 2020 would be considered for approval by the Chair and Directors who attended this meeting, for approval.

Chair /  
Directors

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**Report of delegated duties**

**a) Finance & Resources Committee of Swift Academies**

Directors were reminded that the next meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee of Swift Academies would take place on Thursday 26 November 2020. Clive Owen LLP would present the audit report, annual report and financial statements for Swift Academies (to 31 August 2020) to the Finance & Resources Committee.

**b) Local Governing Bodies**

Draft minutes of the Local Governing Bodies held during Autumn Term 2020 had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting:

- Hurworth School: Tuesday 6 October 2020
- Longfield Academy: Monday 5 October 2020
- The Rydal Academy: Monday 5 October 2020

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated minutes of the Local Governing Body meetings were noted.

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## **Governance arrangements**

### **a) Approval of elected Chair and Vice Chair**

Directors RESOLVED that the elected chair and vice-chair of the respective Local Governing Bodies were approved with immediate effect as follows:

Hurworth School – Chair: Franco Sinaguglia, Vice-Chair: Louise Johnson

Longfield School – Chair: Bob Bell, Vice-Chair: Beverley Clifton

The Rydal Academy – Chair: Mark Gray, Vice-Chair: Michael Jeffries

### **b) Membership**

Governor appointment: Hurworth School Local Governing Body

Membership information had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Directors were informed that following the resignation of Jane Hodgson from the Local Governing Body of Hurworth School, it was necessary to identify a replacement governor. The Chief Executive Officer informed Directors that Elaine Colclough had been approached as a prospective Governor. Directors were reminded that Elaine had been employed at Hurworth School for many years as the School Business Manager and had recently retired.

Governors RESOLVED that Elaine Colclough was appointed as a 'General' Governor of the Local Governing Body of Hurworth School with immediate effect (Friday 13 November 2020).

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## **Chair's Report**

a) action taken including attendance at LGB's by Directors

b) correspondence received

The Chair reported on activities since 1 September 2020, as Chair of Swift Academies, including attendance at various meetings, as follows 11 September 2020, 18 September 2020, 5 October 2020, 12 October 2020, 21 October 2020.

In addition the Chair had attended the Local Governing Body meeting of The Rydal Academy on Monday 5 October 2020, the Standards Committee meeting on Wednesday 7 October 2020 and the Board of Directors' meeting on Thursday 22 October 2020 to consider appraisal and pay determination arrangements across the Trust.

The Chair reported that further meetings were planned to the end of Autumn Term in respect of his role as Chair of the Board of Directors of Swift Academies.

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The Chair reminded Directors that it had been decided previously that Directors would attend meetings, where possible, of Local Governing Bodies as it was believed that Director representation was beneficial.

Directors RESOLVED that the information was noted. The Governance Partner would share with Directors the meeting schedule and the agenda for each Local Governing Body meeting when they are circulated to respective Governors.

Governance  
Partner

The Chair and Chief Executive Officer reported that the Remote Education Policy had been approved by the Chair following information received from the Department for Education. Refer to item 23 j) of the circulated agenda for information.

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**Hurworth School update** including reference to the following documents that were presented to the Standards Committee on Wednesday 7 October 2020 – SEF/Action Plan; EDP report; Head of School Report; Recommendation to Board of Directors of Term Dates 2022-2023

The SEF/Action Plan, EDP Report, Head of School Report and information in respect of Term Dates 2022-2023 for Hurworth School had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Head of School (Hurworth School) provided Directors with an update in respect of Hurworth School, highlighting areas of the circulated documents, including bubble arrangements across Hurworth School, recovery curriculum and attendance. It was reported that 14 students had gone home yesterday (Thursday 12 November 2020) in respect of the Coronavirus pandemic. This was the first group of students to have been sent home from Hurworth School this term.

The Head of School reported that COVID Catch Up Funding was been utilised predominately on IT and that the COVID Catch-up Funding had been published.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated documents and information presented was noted.

**Hurworth School: Term Dates 2022-2023**

The Head of School reported the Local Governing Body approved term dates for 2022-2023.

Directors RESOLVED that the 2022-2023 term dates for Hurworth School were approved.

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**Longfield Academy update** including reference to the following documents that were presented to the Standards Committee on the 7 October 2020 – SEF/Action Plan; EDP report; Head of School Report; Recommendation to Board of Directors of Term Dates 2022-2023

The SEF/Action Plan, EDP Report, Head of School Report and information in respect of Term Dates 2022-2023 for Longfield Academy had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Head of School provided Directors with an update in respect of Longfield Academy, highlighting areas of the circulated documents including increased contact from parents/carers regarding their children's academic performance. Attendance continued to be tracked and was reported to be in excess of national expectations and the result of the fantastic work of the Attendance Manager and the wider welfare team across Longfield Academy.

Directors were informed that whilst there had been confirmed cases of Covid-19 at Longfield Academy, the support of Public Health had been excellent throughout the process.

The Chief Executive Officer commented that as the third year anniversary approached of Longfield Academy becoming part of Swift Academies, the reports of the Head of School demonstrated that significant improvement had been made in a wide range of areas during this period and that this had been underpinned by the implementation of a suite of rigorous and robust systems that had been complemented by the development quality assurance processes and procedures.

The Head of School agreed that systems and structures are now excellent and that leadership team were talented and motivated with a collective responsibility for the students attending Longfield Academy.

Directors noted that the academic profile of Longfield Academy had improved rapidly over the last 3 years from the Progress 8 figure that was "inherited" in 2017 of -0.64; to 0.51 (2018) and -0.08 (2019); the Head of School reported that it was extremely unfortunate that the 2020 public examinations could not take place for a considerable number of reasons, but in terms of for the school it meant that it could not demonstrate that this upward trajectory would have continued with the school's extremely accurate predictions indicating that the school would have achieved a Progress 8 score of circa +0.20.

Directors were also assured that Longfield Academy had submitted CAG's that accurately mirrored the schools predicted performance.

Directors commented on the development of self-belief in the students at Longfield Academy and how students had reacted to remote learning as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The Head of School drew Directors' attention to the EDP Report which had focussed on remote

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learning during the previous visit; he reported that student engagement was high, the remote working platform was developing rapidly and staff had embraced this way of working. The Head of School also acknowledged that whilst remote working was going extremely well, there was no substitute for students being in the classroom and working with the teachers in the classrooms.

Directors commented on the FTE rates standards of conduct within school. The Head of School commented on the fact that there are emerging signs of an increased aspiration and a learning culture and that the welfare systems continue to be highly sophisticated; the project for community cohesion and cultural capital are long term. In terms of quality of education and meeting need improvements re evident and this will help to engage pupils more, a small minority account for a disproportionate number of FTE and the school continues to do all it can to work with families including the introduction of an 'Intensive Conduct Support System and 'Behaviour Support Plan' system which improve the current readiness to learn offers and mean that Longfield no longer internally excludes children.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated documents and information presented was noted.

**Longfield Academy: Term Dates 2022-2023**

The Head of School reported the Local Governing Body approved term dates for 2022-2023;

Directors RESOLVED that the 2022-2023 term dates for Hurworth School were approved.

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**The Rydal Academy update** including reference to the following documents that were presented to the Standards Committee on the Wednesday 7 October 2020 – SEF/Action Plan; EDP report; Head Teacher Report; Recommendation to Board of Directors of Term Dates 2022-2023

The SEF/Action Plan, EDP Report, Head Teacher Report and information in respect of Term Dates 2022-2023 for The Rydal Academy had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

The Head Teacher provided Directors with an update in respect of The Rydal Academy. Directors were informed that a recovery curriculum had been in place from September 2020 alongside Rydal's 2020/21 curriculum offer. The school website had been updated to reflect the current curriculum arrangements. Personal Social Health and Relationships Education had now become part of the national curriculum following on from the school participating in the pilot year during 2019/20. The school has been selected to participate in the Early Adopter Scheme for the new Early Years and Foundation Stage Framework.

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Attendance was reported as 92.3% (year to date); attendance had been impacted negatively by Gypsy Roma traveller community. There were 581 pupils on roll at The Rydal Academy since the school opened in 2012. The school was oversubscribed in two year groups. Nursery pupil numbers were reported as 28 and were expected to grow across the academic year.

The Head of School informed Directors that there had been three positive cases of Covid-19 in the community and the first pupil case in the school in Year 5. Guidance and update sheets are shared with staff and information circulated regularly. Staff felt safe in school, with very few comments or queries raised. Regular reminders are sent to parents in respect of social distancing arrangements.

The Head of School shared with Directors information in respect of remote learning. Information is shared with parents and pupils via e-mail and paper copy where internet access is unavailable. Weekly activities are identified for completion by pupils at home. Staff are in regular contact with families where pupils are not attending school, either via the app or telephone contact. The Head of School reported that two thirds of pupils not attending school are engaged with their remote learning. As part of the Department for Education support for schools, 20 laptops had been received recently and these would be used to support pupils' remote learning.

The Head Teacher reported that three areas had been identified provisionally in respect of Catch Up Funding (1) develop the IT infrastructure, (2) increase teaching capacity and (3) reintegration support.

The Head Teacher drew Directors' attention to the circulated Education Development Partner (EDP) report which had focussed during the recent visit on subject leaders and deep dive conversations. It was reported that deep dive conversations with many staff was strong and work would take place to ensure that all staff had the same level of understanding.

The Chief Executive Officer commented on the content of the EDP Report and sought clarification from the Head Teacher of the next steps. The Head Teacher explained that external deep dives had been delayed until the Spring term due to current Covid Risk Assessment restrictions and that staff would have the following development activities to support the development of their deep dive conversation: complete their subject leader action plan document and subject deep dive questions preparation sheet; keep a conversation going with colleagues to measure how implementation is going and offer support, mentoring, model lessons or paired teaching (in person or IRIS) and drop-in Teams sessions as required; visit classes while lessons are taking place, talk to children about their views on the subject and sample books; subject leads informal conversation based on the types of questions they have

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on the deep dive questions preparation sheets; discussion with retrieval practices lead

Discussion with Early Years Phase Lead about updating their planning to link to the new EYFS framework; Book scrutiny (WB 16th November & WB 25<sup>th</sup> January & WB 7<sup>th</sup> June); Autumn, Spring and Summer term data collection; training day (4th January & 1<sup>st</sup> June)

Directors were informed that previously agreed changes to the staffing structure had paused as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, finances were now being reviewed and the staffing structure would continue to be developed to support the revised curriculum.

Directors commented that the government have this week published an update of the required documents to publish on Academy websites. COVID Catch-up funding is included. Were the Trust aware and have we taken action to publish this information? The Chief Executive reported that the website had been cross-referenced with the DFE list and was up-to-date and that all Trust schools had published their COVID Catch-up statements.

**The Rydal Academy: 2022-2023 Term Dates**

The Head Teacher reported the Local Governing Body approved term dates for 2022-2023.

Directors RESOLVED that the 2022-2023 term dates for The Rydal Academy were approved.

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**Proposal to lower the age range at The Rydal Academy**

Information had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting in respect of the proposal to lower the age range at The Rydal Academy. A copy would be retained on file.

The Deputy Head Teacher discussed with Directors the content of the circulated information in respect of the proposal to lower the age range at The Rydal Academy.

Directors' attention was drawn to the circulated information and the rationale behind the proposal to lower the age range at The Rydal Academy. Directors were assured that current staffing commitments and staff capacity were sufficient to extend provision to two year olds.

Directors sought clarification of the budget implications contained in the circulated document and additional funding of £2,964 per annum per two-year old child. Directors were advised that similar to current funding arrangements, funding for the two-year-old provision would be paid termly.

Directors sought clarification on the entitlement parents receive; is it 30 hours or 15 hours?

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It was feedback that pupils were entitled to 15 hours per week and it was noted that interest had also been expressed by some parents for paid sessions in addition to the 15 hours entitlement.

The Rydal Academy would manage the number of pupils admitted and are not compelled to go to the maximum, as with current nursery provision, which allows flexibility in the management of staffing and income across the year while increasing the capacity for possible income.

Directors were informed that the application process involved The Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFA) to make changes to their lower age limit subject to a decision by the Secretary of State, make changes to their Articles of Association and Funding Agreement.

Directors RESOLVED that the application to the Education and Skills Funding Agency to reduce the lower age limit of The Rydal Academy to include two year olds was approved.

**13 Chief Executive Officer's Report**

The Chief Executive Officer's Report had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

The Chief Executive Officer commented on the unusual circumstances of 2020 and the impact on schools across the Trust as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. The Chief Executive Officer commented that the lockdown had been difficult for all staff, particularly those where childcare arrangements were necessary as the result of the partial closure of schools. All staff across Swift Academies had worked tirelessly for the benefit of pupils and students.

Directors were informed that a significant number of Trust Groups were working collaboratively to raise standards across the Trust.

**MAT Development Session (Spring Term 2021)**

The Chief Executive Officer reported that a Trust Group had been formed to further develop and enhance the work from Gabrielle Reddington's OFSTED briefing session for Members, Directors & Governors in the Autumn Term 2020.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Chief Executive Officer's Report and information presented was noted.

**14 Trust ICT Manager Action Plan & Report**

The Trust ICT Manager Action Plan and Report had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. A copy of the Action Plan & Report would be retained on file.

The Trust Business Manager reported on the content of the circulated Trust ICT Manager Action Plan & Report. Directors were informed that the Trust ICT Team priorities currently include review of the Data

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Retention & Destruction Policy and deletion of data, transition to a 'live' ICT Action Plan, and to update the Trust Asset Registers.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated ICT Manager Action Plan, Report and information presented was noted.

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#### **Trust Business Manager Action Plan**

The Trust Business Manager Action Plan had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. A copy of the report would be retained on file.

The Trust Business Manager reported on the content of the circulated Trust Business Manager Action Plan. Directors were reminded that amendments to the Plan since it was previously circulated were highlighted yellow.

Health & Safety audits were conducted in September and October 2020 to ensure that all relevant checks and processes are in line with government guidance.

Five of six Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) applications were reported to have been successful, attracting a total of £1.3M funding across the Trust. Tenders for boiler and roofing projects had been issued to date.

Cleaning Services had been outsourced with Bullough's identified as the successful provider. Staff had been transferred across to Bulloughs as part of the TUPE process. Initial comments received from staff in the school settings were reported to be positive with improved cleanliness.

Directors sought clarification in respect of the successful CIF applications and whether the Trust contribution was affordable. The Trust Business Manager explained that the number of projects to be funded was exceptional and that the funding applications had identified a 10% contribution from revenue budgets. Directors were assured that the contribution was affordable as the contributions are a combination of Salix/CIF loans and school funds. Immediate savings will also be made from lack of repairs and energy efficiency measures.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Trust Business Manager Action Plan and information presented was noted.

16

#### **Trust Chief Finance Officer Report (Financial Handbook)**

The Trust Chief Finance Officer Report had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. A copy of the report would be retained on file.

The Chief Finance Officer reported that a meeting with the auditors had taken place recently and reflected the positive financial year of the Trust. Savings had been identified over the year, particularly in respect of supply staff costs. Further information would be shared with the Finance and Resources Committee at their next meeting on Thursday

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26 November 2020. However, the continued financial impact of Covid-19 continues to be a concern and needs to be closely monitored.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Chief Finance Officer Report (Financial Handbook) and information presented was noted.

*During this item Sam Hirst left the meeting.*

17 **Letter to accounting officers in academy trusts / copied to chairs of Directors**

- a) July 2020
- b) August 2020

The Education & Skills Funding Agency communication with academy trusts and copied to chairs of Directors had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Education & Skills Funding Agency communication was noted.

18 **Scheme of Delegation**

The Scheme of Delegation had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. A copy of the Scheme of Delegation would be retained on file.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Scheme of Delegation was noted.

19 **Trust Development Plan**

The Trust Development Plan had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. A copy would be retained on file.

Directors attention was drawn to the content of the circulated Trust Development Plan: changes to the plan were highlighted yellow for ease of reference.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the Trust Development Plan was noted.

20 **Risk Registers**

- a) Hurworth School
- b) Longfield School
- c) The Rydal Academy
- d) Swift Academies

The Risk Registers for Hurworth School, Longfield School, The Rydal Academy and Swift Academies had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting. Copies would be retained on file.

Directors were informed that the Risk Registers had been circulated as part of the Local Governing Body meetings during Autumn Term 2020.

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Directors were advised that the Swift Academies Risk Register contained those items on the respective schools Risk Registers identified as high risk. All the registers included references to Covid-19.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated Risk Registers were noted.

**21 Feedback from MAT Development Sessions / Chair and Vice Chair briefings**

The Directors reported back favourably on the MAT Development Session delivered by the Education Development Partner (Gabrielle Reddington) in Autumn Term 2020.

Directors were informed that the Chair and Vice Chair briefings had been well attended with representatives of the three Local Governing Bodies attending.

Directors RESOLVED that the information was noted.

**22 Policies for information**

- a) Pay Policy – approved by Pay Review Committee
- b) Health & Safety Trust Statement of Intent
- c) Disciplinary Policy
- d) Grievance Policy
- e) Complaints Policy
- f) Biometrics Policy
- g) Data Retention and Destruction Policy
- h) Online Safety Policy

Directors were informed that the policies listed a) to h) above, had been shared with Directors as part of the agenda for the Standards Committee meeting held on Wednesday 7 October 2020 and had been approved and adopted by the committee.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated policies a) to h) above and the information reported was noted.

**23 Policies for approval**

- a) Health & Safety Policies
- b) Equality Information
- c) Risk Management Policy & Procedure
- d) Staff Health & Well Being Policy
- e) Redundancy, Restructure & Redeployment Policy
- f) Remote Education Policy

Policies listed above a) to f) had been shared with Directors prior to this meeting of the Board of Directors. Copies would be retained on file.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of the circulated policies was noted and that the Health & Safety Policies, Equality Information, Risk

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Management Policy & Procedure, Staff Health & Well Being Policy, Redundancy, Restructure & Redeployment Policy and Remote Education Policy were approved and adopted with immediate effect.

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**Concluding items**

**Any urgent other business raised under item 5**

No items of urgent other business had been notified.

25

**Approval of documents for inspection**

Directors RESOLVED that the agenda, approved minutes and supporting documents be made available for public inspection with the exception of information concerning identifiable pupils and/or teachers.

26

**Time, date and venue of future meetings (all from 2pm)**

- Friday, 11 December 2020
- Friday, 26 March 2021
- Friday, 9 July 2021

These minutes were approved by the Board of Directors of Swift Academies as follows:

11<sup>th</sup> December 2020

signature (chair):



**Derek Bell**  
**Chair of Board of Directors**

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approved

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