AQUINAS COLLEGE
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Date: 14 October 2025
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Mr L Byrne, Mr G Hynes, Mr T McGee and Dr A Smith.

Mr G Hynes in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms J Dommett Principal Mr A Bailey Vice Principal

1. OPENING PRAYER/REFLEECTION

The meeting began with a prayer led by Mr G Hynes.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Governors and Staff were asked to declare any interest, which they may have in any of the items on the Agenda for this meeting. No interests were declared.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) Accountability Statement – Minute 8

The Accountability Agreement had been updated and was sent to the DfE by the 30 June 2025. It had also been an agenda item at the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting on 7 October 2025.

6. ADMISSIONS 2025/2026

Ms Dommett introduced a paper that showed that the college had 2562 students on roll at this moment in time, which is a growth of 22 students. The anticipated growth in student numbers did not materialise and it is only by going to the waiting list that this number has been reached.

For September 2025 the college received the highest number of applications and made the highest number of offers, so the drop in enrolment numbers of those originally offered a place was unexpected. There has also been a significant drop in Category 2

conversions. Category 1 conversion rate is stable but the number of applications from Category 1 schools has dropped. This may be linked, in part, to the lower outcomes of the cohorts at two Catholic feeder schools.

A summary of the Applications and Admissions for September 2025 is shown below:

Applications	2882	Number Enrolled	1343	Conversion Rate 59.5%
Category 1 applications	1103	Number Enrolled	712	Conversion Rate 64.6
Category 2 applications	1779	Number Enrolled	631	Conversion Rate 54.11%
		Number Offered	1166	

A discussion took place on the enrolment pattern for September 2025 from schools within Stockport and those from outside who send students to the college and the implications this may have for the future. Ms Dommett added that the SLT will analyse and investigate the reasons why this has happened. She also added that the college needs to improve its marketing strategy and be smarter in the decisions it makes. The college is the only local sixth form college that does not offer face to face interviews with prospective students.

Governors noted that it was a long time since the waiting list had been used. Mr Hynes asked if those students who joined the college late from the waiting list were identified vulnerable. Ms Dommett replied that the college will look at how these students are coping and an item will be included on the agenda for the next Teaching and Learning Committee.

Governors noted that both Loreto and Xaverian had planned to increase their numbers for September 2025 and planned to further grow next year. The number of students attending Manchester schools in general has grown.

Mr McGee informed Governors that there has been an influx of young families into the Heatons area of Stockport from Didsbury. He added that from 2029/2030 there is a downward demographic change in Stockport.

7. ADMISSIONS POLICY

Ms Dommett advised Governors that the college needed to review its admissions policy in light of events that occurred during the 2024/2025 admissions process. There had only been two complaints and they related to the use of the waiting list. In addition there are some inconsistencies in the admission policy that need to be addressed including on how to apply for a place at the college and how SEND applications are processed. The college prospectus is on the website and gives some of these details but it is not in the policy.

The Chair, Principal and Clerk will meet to look at the policy and a revised policy will be presented to the Governing Body at its meeting on 25 November 2025. Once approved there will need to be a consultation period, probably in January 2026 for the policy to be in place for the 2027/2028 admissions.

8. ADMISSIONS 2026/2027

Ms Dommett advised Governors that one Open Day had been held on Saturday 20 September 2025 another Open Day was planned for Saturday 18 October 2025. In addition, the college is also scheduled to attend school events and year 10/11 assemblies at secondary schools.

The closing date for applications (which are online) for 2026/2027 is 30 November 2025.

All category 1 students will have a telephone interview before Christmas 2025. Applications from category 2 students who have submitted their application forms by 30 November 2025 will then be assessed. All applicants will be notified whether or not they are being considered for interview. Students who are to receive further consideration will receive a letter before Christmas 2025 inviting them to an interview in January/February 2026. Offers to be made by February half term.

Further information on the number of applications for 2026/2027 would be available at the Governing Body meeting on 25 November 2025 and a further report would be given to the next General Purposes Committee.

9. GOVERNOR VISIT FORM

Ms Dommett advised Governors that one of the recommendations for the Governance Review undertaken by Rob Peacock was that the college introduce a Governor Visit Form. A discussion took place on the Governor Visit Form that had been circulated to Governors before the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Governor Visit Form be recommended for approval by the Governing Body.

Mr Hynes reported that he had found the meeting with Mr Bailey, Mrs Greenidge and Sonia Smith (Head of Upper Sixth) very helpful.

10. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

A copy of the current General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting.

After a full discussion it was agreed to defer this item until such time as the revised Instrument and Articles of Government had been finalised.

11. PUBLICITY

Ms Dommett advised Governors that the college's marketing strategy lacked rigour and did not have any timelines within the policy. A Creative Services team has been established to enable staff to share experiences and to publicise the achievements of students. The SLT are looking at contacts with the various free newspapers and the use of social media to celebrate the successes of the college and its students.

Dr Smith expressed the view that the college is good as what it does. Ms Dommett agreed but felt that the college could be better at celebrating its successes. Mr Bailey added that the college is ethnically diverse. Mr Hynes expressed the view that the college is a really good college and that message needs to get out to the wider public.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Student Governors

Mr Mcgee advised Governors that due to a change in legislation concerning Student Governors voting rights the Instrument and Articles of Government for the college were being reviewed by the Catholic Education Service (CES) along with all other Catholic Sixth Form Colleges. This review is unlikely to be completed until towards the end of the academic year.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

19 January 2026 at 4.30pm

Signed _____ Date _____