

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a Meeting of the STAFF & STUDENT MATTERS COMMITTEE **held remotely via Zoom at 4.00pm on Wednesday 3rd June 2020**

Present: Yvonne Wickers
Stephen Lawlor
Ros Cornish
Sarah De Souza-Ingle
Jenny Fowle
Jason Oster

Chair
Headteacher

In Attendance: Maria French
Fiona Harrison
Wendy Newton

Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)
Asst Headteacher (Pastoral) Designate
Clerk to Governors

1. The Chair opened by welcoming the Committee to their first remote meeting of the Coronavirus outbreak and stressed that the focus of the meeting was to be staff and student welfare. Fiona Harrison, Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) in September 2020, was also in attendance and was welcomed.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. There were no apologies for absence to receive, all members were present.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

3. There were no declarations of business interest further to those already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2019-20, conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality reported.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2019 were approved as a true record. In light of the ongoing Coronavirus situation, the minutes would be signed off electronically. Two typographic errors were advised to the Clerk post-meeting and were corrected.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

5. Item 9, Para 16 – Smoking Policy. It was confirmed that the Smoking Policy had been re-circulated to staff after the last meeting.

6. Item 10, Para 19 – SEND Governor. The meeting was advised that since the last meeting new Governor, Sarah de Souza-Ingle, had taken over as SEND Link Governor.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S ACTION

7. In conjunction with the Chair of Governors, Chair's action had been taken on the approval of a COVID-19 version of the Safeguarding Policy and a new Bereavement Policy. The Committee had now reviewed both policies and it was noted that a few administrative details were missing from the Bereavement Policy. It was stated that some items would vary depending on the situation in hand.

8. Decisions.

- a. The COVID Safeguarding Policy and Bereavement Policy were ratified with annual review.
- b. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) agreed to review the document and add additional details where possible.

ACTION

M French

9. 6.1 – Remote Schooling. The Headteacher gave a summary of schooling since the start of the Coronavirus outbreak with reduced schooling being followed by full remote schooling. The situation had worked well and staff were commended for their hard work and flexibility during the past few months. Some teachers were reported as being more IT literate than others and there had been much sharing of resources between staff. It was reported that very little educational guidance had been received from DfE. Following a survey of students, the initial remote timetable for KS3 had been reduced in order to ease student workload and give more flexibility and free time which had been very well received. Year Leaders had checked that all students had access to laptops and Wi-Fi, and daily messages were sent to students. Some issues of shared IT equipment within households had been reported and the reduced, more flexible timetable had assisted with the issue. One PPG had been issued with a School laptop with paid internet access to assist her studies.

10. Governors queried whether remote schooling was sustainable in the long term and were advised that whilst not ideal it was the best method possible. It was suggested that keeping learning momentum was likely to be an issue in the future. The Committee were advised that the current Government limitation on only allowing Year 10, Year 12 and other special category students to return to schooling from 15th June would make teaching harder for the KS3 students the longer the situation continued. New ideas were being put forward to assist re-connection with the younger students. Information was sought on how the School was assisting disadvantaged students apart from the issue of IT, and it was reported that some students lived in flats and had no access to gardens making exercise difficult. It was stated that year leaders were noting levels of student participation and suggested that there would be a need for some accelerated learning on return to normal schooling. The effect of differences in home and family situations was noted. The Chair thanked the School staff for all their recent efforts.

11. Wellbeing. It was reported that the recent surveys of both students and staff had focussed on wellbeing. Seven members of staff had reported issues with work-life balance, primarily as a result of their home situations, and SLT had been making regular contact with these members to assist. The Committee were advised of the bereavement of the husband of one teacher after a long-term illness, support had been offered and adjustments would be made to her future workload. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) reported that apart from the year leaders' daily messages, weekly links were sent to students for the School Nurse, counselling and mental health support. If required, students could contact their year leaders for any type of support through Teams calls and many had done so. Most students were coping well with remote schooling but there were some with difficulties, records of contact were kept of these students and everything was being done to help them. Weekly newsletters were being sent to Year 11 and Year 13 students as well as the new Year 7 students starting in September 2020. Students were known to be missing school and really wanted to return to normal education. Parents had also contacted the School for help and additional guidance had been given by staff. It was noted that student safeguarding concerns were harder to spot in the current situation and that staff continued to report any issues spotted via My Concern or to a relevant member of the pastoral team. The Deputy Headteacher also advised that two students with social workers, who according to DfE guidance should be in School, had been contacted and had chosen not to be in School at the current time; this was with the agreement of their social worker.

12. Limited re-opening of the School. The Government had now agreed for the limited re-opening of schools for students of Years 10 and 12 plus the children of critical workers from 15th June. Planning for a limited re-opening had already started and was now being revised to comply with the new DfE regulations. The re-opening was for face-to-face support aimed at supplementing remote learning which would continue and still be the dominant method of teaching for the foreseeable future. The School was planning to allow up to 40 students from Year 10 to come into School on one day per week, receiving a full day of lessons covering the core subjects, English, Maths and the three sciences, all other subjects would continue to be taught by remote learning. Details on how the administration of the re-opening would be administered were received. It was noted that the provisioning of education for Year 12 students was more complicated due to the greater diversity of subjects. It was planned to teach the students in faculty grouping along with additional one-to-one guidance for such things as exam support, Year 13 preparation and UCAS guidance etc.

13. It was stressed that it was essential to have meaningful teaching and learning for any students that came into School and that detailed plans of what was being offered would be sent to parents shortly. Surveys had suggested that 75% of Year 10 students would return on re-opening and 55% of Year 12 students. A new temporary Home-School Agreement had been produced which all parents and students would need to read and sign before returning to school. The meeting was advised that all Year 10 students would receive a one-to-one welfare check on their return. Governors commended the support that was being given to all the students. A query was raised as to how the School would be working in September and it was noted that much depended on future Government announcements. It was suggested that normal schooling was unlikely and that some form of blended schooling would be required in September with priority being given to Years 11 and 13 plus the new Year 7 students.

14. Governors queried the staffing situation in relation to the re-opening and it was confirmed that enough staff had volunteered to be able to cover the needs of the Year 10 core teaching and most of the Year 12 teaching. The personal situations of some staff were noted and the Headteacher stressed that all guidance was being closely followed to ensure the safety of both staff and students. A query was raised over further student questionnaires but it was suggested that with the revised timetabling it was not felt necessary at this time but would be considered if the situation changed. The meeting was advised that there had only been one 'critical worker' student in school for one day at the start of the closure. There had been a few other 'critical worker' enquiries but none had been taken up, it was possible that there may be increased uptake after 15th June once the School re-opened. It was stated that students were to be discouraged from travelling to School by public transport and the private coach companies were not operating. It was hoped that most students would travel to School by car and the possible effect on disadvantaged students was noted.

ITEM 7 – ENTRANCE TEST UPDATE

15. There had been meetings with CEM and GSHA to discuss the grammar school entrance test situation, DfE guidance on the issue had been delayed and was due the following week. There was little the School could do until this guidance was received. It was reported that it was highly unlikely that the CCHS entrance test planned for 12th September would go ahead and that it would not be possible to test the candidates remotely. The negative effect on results of children who had not been in school for so long was noted. The Deputy Headteacher commended the work of the Main School Admissions Officer.

ITEM 8 – POLICIES

16. The following documents had come up for Committee review since the last meeting:

- a. General Equality Policy – statutory, 2-year review
- b. Newly Qualified Teacher Policy – statutory, new policy
- c. Attendance Policy 2020-21 - statutory, annual review
- d. Whole School Food Policy - statutory, 2-year review
- e. Staff Sabbatical Leave Policy – non-statutory, 3-year review
- f. E-Safety & Data Security Policy - non-statutory, annual review
- g. SEND Policy & SEND Report - statutory, 2-year review
- h. Risk Register – Committee Extract only, termly review

17. **Decisions.** The Clerk agreed to send the policies listed above to all Committee members to review and comment or approve. Responses were requested by Monday 22nd June 2020. The Clerk would collate all comments and the policies would then be reviewed by the Chair and Headteacher to ascertain if a further meeting was required before the end of the Summer Term.

**Clerk
All
Chair
S Lawlor**

ITEM 9 – DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE CHECKS

18. A summary of DBS and Barred List checks from November 2019 to June 2020 was received for information. The Clerk advised that as a result of the Coronavirus situation the ECC eDBS checking system was not currently processing any Barred List checks, however all future staff currently held a transferrable DBS certificate and the Barred List check would be undertaken as soon as possible.

ITEM 10 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ACTION

19. Governor Commendation. Governors noted the incredible work that had been undertaken by the School staff in relation to the School closure, and special mention was made of the high quality of the communications sent to students and parents. It was suggested that teachers would hopefully be more appreciated in the future and thanks were sent to all the School staff.

20. Finance Team. The Deputy Headteacher put on record her thanks to the Finance Team who had worked hard to arrange Tesco vouchers for Free School Meal students as a replacement for their usual school meals since the closure. The vouchers had also been provided throughout the school holiday.

21. Farewells. It was noted that this was likely to be the final meeting for both Maria French, Deputy Headteacher, who was leaving to take up a headship at a new school, and also the Chair, Yvonne Wickers, who was stepping down as a Governor at the end of the Summer Term. Both were thanked for all their hard work for the School.

ITEM 11 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22. Decision. The date of the next meeting was yet to be planned.

All

The meeting closed at 5.12pm.

Agreed as a true record.

Ros Cornish
Chair

25th November 2020