

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a Meeting of the STAFF & STUDENT MATTERS COMMITTEE **held via Zoom at 5.00pm on Wednesday 17th March 2021**

Present:	Ros Cornish Stephen Lawlor Jenny Fowle Funmi Osilaja Sarah de Souza-Ingle	Chair Headteacher
In Attendance:	Fiona Harrison Jo Cross Wendy Newton	Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) Assistant Headteacher (T&L) Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Jason Oster	

1. The Chair opened by welcoming Funmi Osilaja, new Parent Governor, to the Committee. The Committee members then introduced themselves.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. Apologies for absence were received from Jason Oster due to ill-health. The student representatives had not been invited to attend the meeting on this occasion.

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 2020-21, or conflicts of interest, receipts of gifts or hospitality reported.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th November 2020 were approved.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

5. It was confirmed that all actions in the previous minutes had been completed. There were no other matters arising.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR’S ACTION

6. The meeting was advised that the Chair had approved a revision to the ‘Child Protection Policy during Covid Closure’ in February 2021 but that this policy was obsolete as it had been superseded by the standard Child Protection Policy which was now back in use.

ITEM 6 – GENERAL SCHOOL UPDATE

7. The Headteacher reported that the School was now fully re-opened after a phased return of students starting on Monday 8th March. The phased return had been governed by a DfE requirement for students to undertake three lateral flow tests; one was undertaken in the community and two within the School itself. Details of how the tests were undertaken were summarised and it was reported that all tests to date had been negative. Students were now asked to undertake lateral flow tests at home. The Committee was advised that only 80% of students had received parental consent for the test and as testing was voluntary there was nothing further the School could do about it, some schools had take-up as low as 40%. Governors queried the take-up figure and additional information was received. Overall the re-opening had gone very well with all staff and the majority of students back in School. There were a few students who were still self-isolating for various reasons and who would continue to receive remote schooling.

ACTION

8. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) gave a summary of student welfare and advised that year leaders had worked hard during lockdown to ensure that student contact had been maintained with welfare chats and attendance checks when needed. Student welfare surveys had also been undertaken. Since the return to School there had been a rise in MyConcern safeguarding reports including two significant issues. It was reported that a few safeguarding issues had arisen during lockdown but that it had not been possible to action immediately and would now be taken up within School. A general concern on death had been noted amongst students and would be addressed. The mental health drop-ins and pastoral email system had both re-started and the School Nurse was due to return the following week. It was also reported that the recent Sarah Everard case had raised a heightened awareness of student safety particularly after some recent local safeguarding alerts, details of which had been passed on to students and parents. The meeting was advised that there was a small number of students currently stuck overseas as their parents had chosen to go abroad during Covid, these students would receive remote schooling until their return to the England.

9. The issue of staffing was raised and it was confirmed that all staff were back working in school except one teacher who was shielding until the end of March. A query was also raised as to how the effectiveness of School initiatives to assist students were measured. It was reported that TA data would provide an indication of the impact of both pastoral and curriculum interventions. There was pressure on the DfE to look at student mental health and wellbeing and possible national programmes for celebration in the Summer Term, a theme already being considered by CCHS, with a Creative Week and the CCHS Community Curriculum.

10. The Assistant Headteacher (T&L) gave an update on the public examination situation for this academic year. No formal public examinations were taking place and all GCSE and A level grades would be assessed by teachers within the School based on the students' own evidence. Details of the proposed assessment system for Year 11 and 13 students were summarised. It was stated that students would undertake work and assessment tests in order for them to show their ability on which their final grades would be based. Formal teaching was currently due to end at May half term after which each student's grades would be assessed and moderated before Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) were formally uploaded on 18th June. The CAG results were to be announced to students during the week of the 9th August in order to allow for a school-based student grade appeal process to run. Governors queried whether staff had the capacity to undertake the additional CAG-related work on top of their normal workload and it was confirmed that adjustments would be made in order to allow it and that concerns could be raised if workload became an issue. The breakdown of how student work was to be apportioned to the CAG was queried in relation to it being a possible issue for concern in appeals and the weighting process was explained further.

ITEM 7 – STAFFING

11. The Headteacher advised that some changes in staffing were happening and being addressed as they arose. Two new Maths teachers had already been appointed for September 2021 as well as an Art teacher for a maternity cover. New teachers were also to be sought for French and Physics for the next academic year. The Committee were advised that there were to be a few movements within the current support staff which allowed for role progression within the support staff structure. One member of support staff will train to teach the TES Institute Scheme and intended to remain at the School after she had qualified. The Headteacher informed the Committee that a forthcoming INSET Day included a wellbeing talk from an external expert speaker and stressed that the School was committed to the wellbeing of staff and Governors commended the initiative.

ITEM 8 – CARE & GUIDANCE REPORT

12. The Care & Guidance Report dated March 2021 was received and noted. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) confirmed that wellbeing calls had been undertaken during lockdown and were available to all students, some calls had been initiated by year leaders and others had been requested by students themselves. The meeting was advised that all issues relating to access to remote schooling during lockdown had been addressed by the School by such things as distributing laptops or data cards to permit internet connection to ensure that there were no barriers to learning. One Parent Governor commended the work of the Covid-related work of CCHS in comparison to other schools and in particular the online parents' evenings, and queried whether the system may

continue in the future. It was suggested that the informal chats which happen with parents' evenings held in school were often very useful but the issue would be discussed by SLT. The efforts of all the staff were commended for their additional work during the lockdown and it was noted that the expanded use of technology over the past year and new systems would be reviewed and considered for continued use in the future.

ITEM 9 – ADMISSIONS

13. A summary of the participants for the entrance test for Year 7 in September 2021 was received for information and discussed. It was noted that four students sitting the test had been home-educated and the effect of integration into a school environment was queried. The background of these students would not be known until the successful students have their welcome meetings. It was stated that previous home-educated students had not been a problem for the School in the past. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) advised that Redbridge School had recently decided to move out of the group of schools which share their entrance test results and that parents would now need to choose which test they wished to sit. It was noted that this may have an effect on the number of students sitting the CCHS entrance test in the future and the meeting discussed the issue.

ITEM 10– SEN

14. An SEN Report dated March 2021 prepared by the SENCO was received for information. There were currently 21 students on the SEN register, 9 of whom were in the Sixth Form, and included one student with a formal Education, Health & Care Plan. The Headteacher commended the work of the SENCO, Katharine Adams, in assisting the SEN students as well as staff during the lockdown. The effect of mask-wearing for students with hearing impairments and who lip-read was explained and the provision of clear-fronted masks for teachers noted.

ITEM 11 – PUPIL PREMIUM

15. A summary of Pupil Premium (PP) spending was received for the academic year to date, expenditure totalling £9,942.75 included: music tuition, additional staff costs, extracurricular activities and revision materials. The provision of IT equipment to PP students was highlighted in addition to the additional provision of free school meals vouchers. The uniform suppliers were being contacted in relation to the provision of uniform for the new Year 7 PP students. The lack of usual expenditure on trips and counselling was noted and it was confirmed that any remaining PP funding could be carried forward to the next academic year and would not be lost.

ITEM 12 – SAFEGUARDING

16. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) gave a safeguarding update and advised that there had been two major concerns which had been taken up by the School since the end of lockdown and were being addressed. There had been no new referrals to Social Services but 11 new concerns registered on MyConcern since the re-opening and 12 tasks set for school action. It was stressed that all concerns were followed up.

ITEM 13 – POLICIES

17. Item 13.1 – Staff Code of Conduct - Decision. The Staff Code of Conduct was received for re-approval unamended, and was approved as presented with a two-year review.

18. Item 13.2 – Child Protection Policy - Decision. The full Child Protection Policy was received with minor Covid-related amendments and approved as presented with a one-year review.

ITEM 14 – RISK REGISTER

19. Decision. The Staff & Student Matters Committee section of the CCHS Risk Register was received and approved as presented.

ITEM 15– SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

ACTION

20. The Mid Term Review of the School Development Plan for 2020-21 was received for information and the content of the document was noted. The Headteacher advised that due to the Covid situation it had not been able to progress some items as much as had been hoped but that all issues would continue to be addressed. The Assistant Headteachers gave updates on academic resilience, including the work undertaken with the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE), and the 'Stand up, Speak Out' initiative, which is planned to evolve our current 'Find Your Voice!' work.

ITEM 16 – INFORMATION ITEMS

21. Item 16.1 – Staff Development Report. A Staff Development Report dated March 2021 produced by the Assistant Headteacher (T&L) was received for information and the training of additional mental health first aiders for both students and staff noted and commended. The commitment of staff continuing to undertake CPD during lockdown was also noted.

22. Item 16.2 – DBS Checks. A summary of DBS and Barred List checks from November 2020 to March 2021 was received for information. There were no outstanding checks.

23. Item 16.3 - Sixth Form Council Minutes. The minutes of the Sixth Form Council meetings held on 11th November 2020 and 27th January 2021 were received for information. Comments concerning poor internet reception within the School were noted. It was reported that there were a few areas within the School with weaker Wi-Fi connection and the problem may have been exacerbated by the necessity for students to work in non-standard areas due to the Covid 'bubble' segregation. It was also confirmed that a faulty toaster had been immediately removed. The general issue of student face masks was discussed.

24. Item 16.4 - Student Voice Minutes. The minutes of the Student Voice meetings held on 18th November 2020 and 10th February 2021 were received for information. A Governor query was raised on whether there was a sense of lost learning amongst the students. It was stated that the quality and commitment of CCHS students and staff was such that there was generally considered to be no lost learning within the School, most students were at the point of learning they should be. A few students had been identified as needing additional catch-up support and would be receiving appropriate additional assistance.

ITEM 17 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25. No other items of business were raised.

ITEM 18 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

26. Decision. The date of the next meeting was agreed as 5.00pm on Wednesday 30th June 2021. (Clerk's Note: Changed to 16th June 2021 post meeting)

All

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.

Ros Cornish
Chair

16th June 2021