

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a Meeting of the STAFF & STUDENT MATTERS COMMITTEE held at the School at 5.00pm on Wednesday 13th March 2024

Present:	Sarah de Souza-Ingle Stephen Lawlor Funmi Osilaja Jason Oster Aisha Sohail Svetlana Warhurst	Chair Headteacher (from 5.07pm)
In Attendance:	Fiona Harrison Michael Palmer Katelyn Hornagold Ciara Ni Bhraonain Wendy Newton	Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) Assistant Headteacher (Community, Enrichment & Opportunity) Chair of the Sixth Form Council Chair of the Student Voice Clerk to Governors

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. There were no apologies for absence, all Committee members were present or expected to join the meeting.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2. There were no declarations of business interest further to those already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2023-24, or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality reported.

ITEM 3 – STUDENT ISSUES

3. Item 3.1 - Student Voice Minutes. The minutes of Student Voice meeting held on 14th February 2024 were summarised by the Chair of the Student Voice. Issues raised included homework deadline concerns and overrunning PE lessons. It was reported that a new lunch pre-ordering system was working very well and was appreciated by students. A comment on homework conflicting with extracurricular activity was clarified. The Headteacher advised that the School's Homework Policy had been recently revised through the Curriculum Committee to give additional guidance and recently re-approved by the Curriculum Committee. Further information was received on the SIMS points system and the level of Art Room resources.

5.05pm – Funmi Osilaja joined the meeting.

4. Item 3.2 – Sixth Form Council Minutes. The minutes of Sixth Form Council meeting held on 1st February 2024 were received and summarised by the Chair of the Sixth Form Council. Several items related to teaching and learning. The uploading of resources onto the Teams platform by teachers was appreciated by students but greater consistency was needed across subjects. It was stated that putting more information about future lessons and tests on Teams helped students and was appreciated. There had been concerns about supervised study periods in the School Library but the issue had now improved following a re-location to the larger Sixth Form Study area which had more computers. Trustees queried a few minor points within the minutes and received further clarification.

5. Item 3.3 – Other Student Issues. No other items were raised for discussion.

5.10pm – The Student Representatives left the meeting.

ITEM 4 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

6. The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2023 were approved as a true record.

ITEM 5 - MATTERS ARISING

7. There were no matters arising, all actions within the minutes had been completed.

ACTION

ITEM 6 – CHAIR’S ACTION

ACTION

8. It was reported that during the recent Ofsted inspection the Chair had approved the removal of one annex from the School’s Attendance Policy and amendments to the Anti-Bullying Policy at the request of Ofsted. The latter policy was to be received for re-approval later in the meeting.

ITEM 7 – GENERAL SCHOOL UPDATE

9. The Headteacher advised that in line with the CCHS Achievement Strategy, the School was focussing particular work with Years 11 & 13 students as they entered the revision phase prior to public examinations next term. Last year’s system of having two sets of mock examinations had been scaled back and a second set of more rigorous and targeted classroom assessments had been re-introduced by way of a reformed pre-Covid approach. There had been a small number of issues with attendance, mostly relating to anxiety, and the Pastoral Team were working with parents to address every situation. Experience was developing within the School to address the new issues and the Pastoral Team had been given increased hours to help with their work. The School was returning to a greater sense of normality following the pandemic to the extent that the School was currently launching a major overseas trip to Mexico in Summer 2025. A query was raised on the rationale for the new testing systems and the Headteacher gave additional clarification.

10. It was reported that the varying long-term effects of the pandemic on the students in different cohorts had to be addressed and would continue for several years. It was reported that maturity and socialisation issues were evident in Years 7 & 8 which had not been seen at the School before the pandemic. Trustees queried if the attendance and anxiety issues that had been reported were evident in all year groups and were advised that Year 10 was most effected with these issues, including one student who was in alternative provision for education. It was reported that the School was working hard with parents and outside agencies to address the situation and make sure that everything was available for the students.

ITEM 8 – OFSTED

11. The Headteacher advised that following the Ofsted inspection in January, SLT had produced a reflections document to collate ideas and information which would be used to assist and streamline future inspections. It was stated that additional support staff for SLT would have been beneficial. The inspection had been very successful, and the Ofsted team had been happy with what they saw. Details were received on the Ofsted inspection process and how the team undertook their task. It was stated that three members of the Ofsted Team had experience of selective schools, and they were therefore knowledgeable about a grammar school context. The final judgements were directly based on the Ofsted Handbook. Trustees queried the how the staff were affected by the inspection, and it was stated that both staff and students were very positive and supportive during the visit. It was confirmed that everything in School had continued as normal, except for one off-site prefect event which had to be postponed. Members of SLT summarised the activities of the Ofsted Team and their views of the inspection process; all comments made about the School had been very positive. The Headteacher stated that the inspection was a very technical exercise which revolved around the Ofsted judgement descriptors and the Ofsted Handbook. The Committee thanked the Headteacher, SLT and staff members for their hard work and extra hours in relation to the Ofsted inspection and congratulated the School on achieving the ‘Outstanding’ grading.

ITEM 9 – STAFFING

12. A summary of staff changes since the last meeting was received for information. The Headteacher advised that it was currently the period when teachers were required to inform the School if they were intending to leave in July. It was also reported that at the start of the next Autumn Term, the School would have four staff members away on maternity leave and that maternity cover was now being organised for their roles. The minutes of the Staff Voice meeting held on 15th February 2024 were received for information and noted. The Headteacher reported that prior to this meeting the previous NEU Representative had presented an NEU workload audit for consideration. The audit had been undertaken by NEU staff members and their feedback had been received. Three action points relating to workload and wellbeing had been agreed as a response to the feedback received.

ITEM 10 – STAFF DEVELOPMENT

ACTION

13. A Staff Development Report dated February 2024, prepared by the Assistant Headteacher (Teaching & Learning and Staff Development), was received for information. The Headteacher highlighted the large amount of CPD undertaken by School staff and advised that much of the training was now conducted online or in a hybrid manner. The Chair queried whether any requests for CPD training were ever refused. It was reported that this would usually only happen for monetary reasons if requested late in the financial year, and that postponement of the training to the next financial year would generally be offered. Training requests were assessed by priority, the need of the School and the circumstances of the person requesting the training. It was very rare to not to meet a development need. Trustees suggested that the CPD training could be an aid to recruitment and retention of staff and that CPD was an important part of the performance management process. It was noted that networking could be an important part of undertaking training courses in person rather than online.

ITEM 11 – ENRICHMENT & STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

14. An Enrichment & Student Development Report dated November 2023 was summarised by the Assistant Headteacher (CEO). A large amount of enrichment was being undertaken and the School was working hard on the preparation for the Mexico 2025 trip with 19 interested students to date. The meeting discussed the benefits of undertaking such a major trip and noted that it could aid student retention for the Sixth Form. The meeting was advised that the Pupil Premium Grant could not be used to assist with the cost of the trip as it was for Sixth Form students, but that the School was investigating other ways to help participating students financially. A list of future trips and visits was highlighted, and the great variety of trips was noted by the Committee. Details were received on various academic enrichment events including the CCHS Institute Lectures and the CCHS Institute Essay Competition which had been devised by the AHT (CEO) and launched by the School in Autumn 2023 following the reduction of similar university essay competitions. The Assistant Headteacher (CEO) advised that the CCHS Parents' Association had agreed to fund the prizes for the essay competition on an ongoing annual basis. It was reported that SLT and the Extended SLT were working on further academic enrichment for 2024-25 designed at stretching and challenging the most able students. It was noted that 11 students had received Oxbridge offers which was an increase on 2023. Further details were received on the mock interview process undertaken by Oxbridge applicants.

ITEM 12 – CARE & GUIDANCE REPORT

15. The Care & Guidance Report dated March 2024 was received and the contents of the report were noted. Many good things were happening within the year groups and Year Leaders were working hard. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) advised that the School was working on punctuality, five 'Lates' now resulted in a detention and the system was having good results with students across all year groups. It was reported that the School was working towards the Silver Wellbeing Award. The Chair noted the informative Year Leader reports and asked for the Year Leaders to be thanked for their input. Details were requested on the Year 11 mentoring scheme and additional details were received on the support given to students requiring extra support. It was stated that staff were happy to volunteer for the scheme.

6.05pm – Funmi Osilaja left the meeting.

ITEM 13 – SEND

16. A SEND Report dated March 2024 was received for information. It was noted that SEND numbers were increasing, there were now 47 students on the SEND Register (up from 42) including 3 students with an EHCP. It was confirmed that SEND staffing was currently sufficient but was always under review. The SENDCo was to start her formal SEND training next year. Svetlana Warhurst, SEND Link Trustee, gave a verbal report on her termly meeting with the SENDCo and summarised the findings of her visit. The meeting had focussed on Year 9 & 10 interventions, and it was noted that the support given by the School was above normal expectations, including external support. One student had been through Education Access and had been offered alternative provision at the town library but this had been refused by the student. The student remained at home receiving fortnightly wellbeing checks and was due to be reviewed by education access again in the near future. Close contact was being kept with the student's mother. Trustees noted the challenging situation for the

SEND and Pastoral Team. It was reported that the SENDCo had had a very good meeting with the Ofsted inspection team. The SEND Link Trustee stated that she valued her meetings with the SENDCo and found them very useful.

ITEM 14 – ADMISSIONS

17. An Admissions Update for Year 7 entry in September 2024 was received for information and the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) gave an update on the admissions situation following National Offers Day. Details had now been received on the 180 students who had been offered a place at CCHS, 166 had already accepted their place and one had rejected. There were 18 PPG students on the offer list, a good increase on the previous year, and 15 had already accepted. The remaining 3 PPG students were being chased by the School as the deadline for accepting the CCHS place was in two days. Trustees reviewed the data received and queried the impact of the new Year 7 Entrance Test. It was reported that a full analysis of the new test had not yet been completed but that the data suggested certain primary schools would seem to be teaching the KS2 curriculum very well in order to have achieved the high number of Year 7 places. Trustees were reminded of how the Partner Primary Schools were initially chosen and that following the change in Entrance Test the School would be reviewing the data to ensure the correct schools participated in the programme. The Headteacher reported that there was a high turnover of headteachers in some primary schools and that relationship building was essential to ensure success with the Partner Primary scheme. The Trustees commended the School on the increase in PPG numbers, and it was suggested that the PPG situation would continue to improve.

ITEM 15 – PUPIL PREMIUM

18. A summary of Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) spending for the year to date was received showing expenditure for the year to date totalling £47,602. The sum of £31,101 had been carried forward from 2022-23 and the anticipated income for 2023-24 was £38,295. The School continued to spend the PPG wisely and effectively to maintain the standard of support being given. The details of the PPG expenditure so far this academic year were reviewed. It was reported that students were now approaching the School for assistance with any items they may need, such as bus passes or uniform, and this was a new and welcomed concept.

ITEM 16 – SAFEGUARDING

19. Aisha Sohail, Safeguarding Link Trustee, had visited the School several times with the last meeting being in the previous week. The activities of this meeting were summarised, and everyone involved in the visit was thanked for their participation. The interaction of the students and their comments were highly commended. There had been discussions in the recent meeting on student attendance, non-participation by students and Level 3 & 4 referrals. It was noted that the severity of cases was increasing, and that external help was not readily available. A formal written safeguarding report would be received at the Board meeting on 22nd March. The Safeguarding Link Trustee formally thanked the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) and the entire Pastoral Team for their hard work and dedication to the students. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) thanked Aisha for her interest and support, especially before the Ofsted visit.

20. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) tabled a summary of safeguarding concerns since the last meeting. There had been 104 new concerns reported since the meeting in November, an increase from 72 from September to November. This spike was possibly due to increased anxiety around the holiday period. Staff were also very diligent at reporting their concerns. There were currently: 6 students on safety plans; there had been 2 new referrals to social care; 4 new CAMHS referrals, and one referral to IAPS (for students over 18 years old). Since the last meeting there had been 368 visits to the Pastoral Hub, these were closely monitored and regulated by staff. One student was being educated at alternative provision external to the School, and 3 students were on temporarily reduced timetables. The Chair thanked the Pastoral Team for their continuing support of the students.

ITEM 17 – POLICIES

ACTION

21. **Decision.** Five School policies required re-approval. The Committee discussed the policies and proposed amendments, and **approved** the policies with the review periods stated below:

Item 17.1 – Anti-Bullying Policy – CCHS model, non-statutory, 4-year review, previously approved by Chair’s Action during the Ofsted inspection.

Item 17.2 – Flexible Working Policy – Juniper model, statutory, 3-year review.

Item 17.3 - Smoking Policy – CCHS model, non-statutory, 4-year review.

Item 17.4 – Safeguarding Allegations Against Adults in School Policy – Juniper model, non-statutory, annual review.

Item 17.5 - Early Careers Teacher Policy – Juniper model, non-statutory, annual review.

ITEM 18 – RISK REGISTER

22. **Decision.** The Staff & Student Matters Committee section of the CCHS Risk Register was reviewed and **approved** as presented.

ITEM 19 – INFORMATION ITEMS

23. **Item 19.1 – DBS Checks.** A summary of DBS and Barred List checks undertaken from 23rd November 2023 to 26th February 2024 was received for information. Trustees noted the requirement for DBS checks on families involved in the German exchange and queried if similar checks were undertaken by the German school. It was confirmed that a different but similar check was undertaken.

24. **Item 19.2 - School Development Plan (SDP) 2023-24.** The SDP 2023-24 was received for information. The Mid Term Review of the SDP had now been completed and was available on the Goveron Portal. It would be formally received by Trustees at the Board meeting on 22nd March. The Headteacher confirmed that Ofsted had received the SDP but had not raised any questions on it.

ITEM 20 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25. No other items of business were raised.

ITEM 21 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

26. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting was agreed as 5.00pm on Wednesday 26th June 2024.

All

The meeting closed at 6.55pm.

Sarah de Souza-Ingle
Chair

Date: 26th June 2024