

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the CURRICULUM COMMITTEE held remotely via Zoom at 5.00pm on Wednesday 12th May 2021

Present: Andrew Bonwick
Stephen Lawlor
Sarah Clements
Priya Rangaswamy
Lauren Smith
Aisha Sohail

Chair
Headteacher

In Attendance: Emma Ledwidge
Michael Palmer
Mary Argent
Wendy Newton

Deputy Headteacher
Assistant Headteacher (Head of Sixth Form)
Associate Member
Clerk

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

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

ITEM 4 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th March 2021 were approved as presented.

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 11, Para 15 – Subject Choices. As tasked at the last meeting Priya Rangaswamy had obtained further information from parents on the issue of subjects not offered for study by the School. The Headteacher summarised the reasons why the subjects raised could not be offered, most related to the cost of the course or poor student uptake. The loss of Design & Technology (DT) had been unavoidable due to high costs and small student numbers, and the Committee were advised of the alternative ways by which technology continued to be taught within other subjects and outside the formal curriculum. The Committee was reminded that certain subjects, e.g. A level Psychology and Government & Politics did not need to be studied at GCSE level in order to be studied in the Sixth Form. The Headteacher also summarised the extra-curricular subjects available outside the formal curriculum and stated that subject offerings were kept under constant review. The School was responsive to student demand whenever possible as seen by the introduction of A level Computer Science in September 2020. Governors noted that there were also opportunities for DT to be brought into all levels of the EPQ programme. The Deputy Headteacher advised that Further Maths and the EPQ were within the same Sixth Form timetable block and could therefore not be taken together.

ITEM 5 – CHAIR’S ACTION

5. There was no Chair’s action since the last meeting to report.

ITEM 6 – SCHOOLING

6. The Headteacher gave an update on the current schooling situation. Normal lessons were running across the School, although still in year group bubbles, and student attendance was very good. Years 11 and 13 students were undertaking formal assessments which would be used to

ACTION

determine the students' Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs), now officially known as Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). Years 10 and 12 examinations would be taking place shortly and it was suggested that there may be DfE modifications for Years 10 and 12 public examinations next year in light of the disruption to their education due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The forthcoming changes to the Government's Covid protection guidance for schools was summarised and noted. The Headteacher confirmed that there had been no recent positive cases of Covid within the School although a very small number of students and staff members had been required to self-isolate for short periods due to family contact with Covid. The general situation of Covid in local schools was good overall with very few cases.

ITEM 7 – CAG PROCESS

7. The actions of the School in relation to the production of CAGs for Years 11 and 13 were summarised. Students were currently undertaking a series of mini tests with ongoing feedback which was deemed preferable to having one single large test. All CAGs would be assessed by teachers alone and final grades had to be uploaded by 18th June. The Deputy Headteacher advised that the School was required to have sufficient data to justify the final grade issued which was demanding for both students and staff. The adverse and limiting effect of the CAG assessments on the teaching syllabus was explained. As the Years 11 and 13 assessments were being undertaken in classrooms, the School Hall was available for Year 12 School examinations, this was considered good practice for their public examinations next year as this cohort had missed the GCSE experience last summer.

8. The Chair noted the extra effort required of School staff by the CAG 2.0 process and commended their dedication and additional hard work. The Committee were advised that the examination boards had invoiced the School for their full annual fees despite there being no examinations but only 50% had been authorised for payment. Governors queried whether the usual School examinations were being held for KS3 and were advised that due to time constraints they were not being held for Years 7, 8 or 9. It was hoped that the overall School examination situation would return to more normal state of affairs next year.

ITEM 8 – SUBJECT OPTIONS

9. Details of the current subject options numbers for Years 10 and 12 in September 2021 were received for information and the Governors discussed the information presented. The viability of A level Latin and Spanish was queried in relation to low numbers and it was confirmed that the courses would still run. Further investigation was to be undertaken in order to ascertain the reason for low take-up. It was suggested that the reduction in the number of GCSEs taken from 11 to 10 may have had an effect. The past changes in student cohort numbers were noted. It was confirmed that the figures presented only came from the current Year 11 students. The meeting discussed group sizes against the current option figures. For the benefit of the new Governors, the Committee were reminded of the effect of different annual cohort sizes on the subject numbers and the School confirmed that projections had already been made for subject group sizes and staffing for the next three years.

ITEM 9 – PHSE / RSE

10. The importance of PHSE within the curriculum was noted and a summary of how the School covered the provision was received. The recent 'Everyone's Invited' issue was recognised as an area which needed to be covered within the curriculum and discussion had already been held with KEGS on future PHSE collaboration on this issue. The Chair advised that most of the events behind the 'Everyone's Invited' testimonies had not been reported by the students to the schools involved. It was stated that CCHS had to be sure that students were aware of all available channels through which abuse could be reported and support found, both within the School and outside, and also have the confidence to report any such issues. The general issue was discussed and the important role of parents noted. The importance of being able to talk to parents in person at School events was stressed by the Headteacher.

ITEM 10 – CAREERS

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11. The Head of Sixth Form advised that there had been major Government changes to schools' careers provision and that the CCHS Careers Policy had been re-written accordingly. The Committee reviewed and discussed the new document. The Clerk confirmed that the Chair of Governors was currently the Careers Link Governor which related back to the time when he was on the Committee.

12. Decisions.

- a. The Careers Policy was approved as presented with a 3-year review period.
- b. Any Committee member wishing to volunteer for the role of Careers Link Governor should contact the Clerk for further details.

All

ITEM 11 – ENRICHMENT, TRIPS & VISITS

13. The Deputy Headteacher summarised School activity in relation to recent changes to Covid guidance. PE fixtures were to return after the Summer Half Term and lunchtime sports enrichment had already re-started. Some School clubs had also re-started but were still limited to year group bubbles. School day trips had become permissible from mid-April and a Year 7 trip to Stubbers activity centre had been arranged for July. Duke of Edinburgh expeditions had also recommenced. Residential trips were allowed from 17th May and the School was exploring the issue of overseas trips in the next academic year mindful of the financial effect Covid had had on some parents. If costs were considered too high the School would not be offering overseas trips in order not to put pressure on parents. It was suggested that UK residential trips may be considered instead. Curriculum-based day trips were now being arranged for the next academic year if it related to coursework. Concern was raised about committing to any overseas trips in relation to insurance cover and the high risk of travel company insolvency in the current Covid-situation. It was suggested that travel insurance may be invalid but the School confirmed that all travel firms being considered had assured full insurance cover in the event of cancellation.

14. **Decision.** The Chair requested that the Deputy Headteacher re-check the scope of travel insurance with the Business Manager and refer back to him if required.

Dep Head

ITEM 12 – CHANGE@CCHS

15. The Deputy Headteacher advised that the greatest impact of the Change initiative will be on the School curriculum and that the next Change Update would focus on the intended curriculum changes. Meetings had been held with the new Year 10 & 12 Changing Diversity Prefects and the curriculum had been highlighted as needing greatest change. The students were aware of the limitations of the KS4 & KS5 curriculums content due to the dictates of the examination boards and recognised that the School was listening to their comments.

ITEM 13 – POLICIES

16. The Curriculum Policy for September 2021 was presented and the revisions summarised. Detail on the subjects of SEN, PHSE and RSE had been extended in particular. The Committee discussed the specific sections of the policy and one wording revision was suggested.

17. **Decision.** With the deletion of one word, the Curriculum Policy for September 2021 was approved as presented with an annual review.

Clerk

ITEM 14 – RISK REGISTER

18. **Decision.** The curriculum-related section of the CCHS Risk Register was received for termly review. Clarification was sought on the meaning of one control procedure and the Headteacher gave further explanation and agreed to re-word the procedure for additional clarity. (**Clerk's Note:** Revised post meeting).

Head

ITEM 15 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

ACTION

19. The Mid-Term Review of the School Development Plan (SDP) 2020-21 had been received and discussed at the last Full GB meeting. The Committee were advised that new high-level objectives were currently being devised and would be used to populate SDP 2021-22. The School would be undertaking a significant School Self-Evaluation process in July, the result of which would inform future School actions and be built into the SDP.

ITEM 16 – INFORMATION ITEMS

20. **Student Voice & Sixth Form Council Minutes.** The Committee received curriculum-related extracts from the minutes of the Student Voice meetings held on 10th February and 17th March 2021 and Sixth Form Council meeting held on 17th March 2021 and noted the content of the minutes. One comment in the Sixth Form Council minutes relating to 'lack of discussion' was explained by the Head of Sixth Form as referring to the difficulty of holding discussions when working on remote access via MS Teams. The Headteacher confirmed that staggered finishing times were in the process of being returning to normal.

ITEM 17 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21. No other items of business were raised.

ITEM 18 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

22. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting would be presented at the Full GB meeting on 7th July.

23. The Chair closed the meeting by thanking the School staff for their efforts over the past year and asked the Headteacher to pass the thanks of the Committee on to all the staff.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.

Agreed as a true record

Andrew Bonwick
Chair

6th October 2021

All