CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the CURRICULUM COMMITTEE held in the School and via Zoom at 5.00pm on Wednesday 11th May 2022

Present:	Andrew Bonwick	Chair
	Stephen Lawlor	Headteacher
	Sarah Clements	
	Priya Rangaswamy	
	Lauren Smith	
	Aisha Sohail	
	Mary Argent	Associate Member (via Zoom)
In Attendance:	Emma Matthews	Deputy Headteacher
	Jo Cross	Assistant Headteacher (T&L)
	Michael Palmer	Assistant Headteacher (Head of Sixth Form)
	Wendy Newton	Clerk

1. The Head advised that Jo Cross was in attendance to present Agenda Item 4 and would also remain at the meeting in her capacity as Deputy Headteacher (Academic) from September 2022.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE **ACTION**

2. There were no apologies for absence, 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 2021-22 or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th January 2022 were presented for approval. One additional sentence was suggested in order to give clearer explanation to one comment.

5. **Decision**. The Clerk agreed to revise the minutes in line with the discussions of the meeting for the Chair's final approval by email. **Clerk Chair**

ITEM 4 - MATTERS ARISING

6. Item 9, Para14 – Examination Comparison Data. Following receipt of IDSR data at the last meeting, Governors had requested additional explanation on the 2019 Progress 8 (P8) figure for Mathematics as there had been concern over decreased attainment in the subject. The Assistant Headteacher (T&L) presented a written analysis of the 2019 GCSE Mathematics results and gave a verbal report on the background of the situation. Whilst the GCSE Mathematics Grade 7-9 percentage had been maintained, the number of Grade 9s had decreased, and the School had already undertaken a departmental investigation into the issue. There had been staffing issues (driven by underperformance of a particular teacher) in Year 10 which had been noted at the time and addressed with interim measures. However, it had not been possible to find a longer-term solution until Year 11. The School has also subsequently made changes to the manner in which it manages probationary teachers. It was also noted that this particular cohort had shown uncharacteristically low quantitative ability in their Year 7 CAT tests.

7. was stressed that whilst the 2019 Mathematics P8 score had dropped to the second quintile, the actual score had still been significantly above the national average. The Committee also received data to show that the School was confident that the reduced 2019 Mathematics P8 score was an individual

Chelmsford County High School is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (company number 07445392).
Registered Office: Chelmsford County High School for Girls, Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1RW

DRAFT

event and that the future P8 score would return to historic higher levels. Governors noted that there had only been two years of Grade 9 data and that the student cohort numbers had changed which prevented like-for-like comparison. The School stressed that they undertake a lot of investigation down to individual student level to ensure that all students are supported and attain to the best of their ability. The Committee noted the information received and accepted the explanations given by the School.

ACTION

ITEM 5 – CHAIR'S ACTION

8. There was no Chair's action since the last meeting to report.

ITEM 12 – POLICIES (Item taken out of agenda order)

9. Item 12a – Collective Worship Policy - **Decision**. The Collective Worship Policy was reviewed and the statutory requirements and obligations of the School discussed. The Headteacher outlined the assembly process within the School and stressed that all gatherings included a meaningful message and time for reflection pertinent to students of all faiths. The Collective Worship Policy was **approved** as presented with a 3-year review.

10. Item 12b – Curriculum Policy - **Decision**. The Curriculum Policy for September 2022 was reviewed and one error noted within the GCSE language options. The Deputy Headteacher **agreed** to amend the policy in line with the discussions of the Committee. With the amendment, the Curriculum Policy for September 2022 was **approved** with an annual review.

Dep Head

11. A query was raised on the curriculum information available on the School website and the issue was discussed. It was noted that curriculum subjects and study hours are open to change for different year groups and may not be relevant to future years. The Deputy Headteacher **agreed** to review the curriculum area of the School website and see if any information could be presented in a collated or tabular form for ease of understanding. The Headteacher noted that it was a deliberate decision to present the sixth form as requiring 4 A-levels, notwithstanding that a number of girls will drop one A-level later on. This is to set ambition at an appropriate level.

Dep Head

ITEM 6 – SCHOOL UPDATE

12. The Headteacher gave a verbal update on the general School situation. It was reported that the Covid had settled down and that the School had adjusted to living with it. There were occasional cases of Covid but very few and did not adversely affect the School. Year 11 had had their final day and were now on study leave, and this was the final week for the Year 13 students. Both year groups had worked hard and were being well-looked after. The Committee were reminded that this would be the first public examinations for Year 13 as they had not sat any GCSE examinations due to Covid.

13. Governors queried what was to happen for any students taking public examinations if they were testing positive for Covid on the day of the examination. It was reported that very few students seemed to be testing or reporting themselves as being Covid positive at the present time, particularly in the higher year groups. There were very few people unwell and isolating with Covid in both students and staff, and general sickness absence was also very low. The School stated that they would follow the JCQ examination guidelines if such a situation arose.

14. Staff recruitment had begun for September 2022 but there had been a few recent resignations which the School was now addressing as a matter of urgency. Most noteworthy was for full-time Subject Leader of Psychology as there are only two teachers for the subject (one full-time and one 0.4 part-time) so this could potentially leave a significant gap. It was reported that it was sometimes difficult to get good calibre teachers with late recruitment and there was an informal cut-off date for moving schools of 31 May. However, interviews were already underway for three posts and a full complement of teaching staff of appropriate calibre was expected for September 2022 which was noted as being rare for schools these days.

DRAFT

Chelmsford County High School is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (company number 07445392).
Registered Office: Chelmsford County High School for Girls, Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1RW

ITEM 7 – CURRICULUM & TIMETABLING **ACTION**

15. The Deputy Headteacher gave a verbal report on the curriculum and timetabling. It was noted that timetabling depends on recruitment and certain parts of the timetable could not be built until all new staffing had been confirmed. A new member of staff was to take over the role of timetabler in September (from the Deputy Headteacher, who is leaving the school) and was currently undergoing training. The Committee were advised that there had been a number of timetable changes during the last academic year and again this year, brought about by three maternity covers.

ITEM 8 – SUBJECT OPTIONS

16. The Committee were reminded that Latin had been brought into the GCSE languages option block for 2022-23 and Year 10 students would have to take at least one of either French, German or Latin next September. GCSE PE was now a dedicated subject in the GCSE options choices rather than an additional GCSE. Both these changes had had a positive effect on student numbers in the relevant GCSE subject groups. The Committee reviewed the internal subject option projections for Years 10 to 13 in September 2022 and were advised that due to the requirements of the timetable, some of the subject classes had now been decreased from 3 small classes to 2 larger classes, but all were deemed manageable for teaching staff. Governors were advised of a very low take-up for GCSE Spanish (8 students), an accelerated course, which was possibly caused by post-Covid anxiety about the speed of teaching, with students opting for a known subject instead. The new Computer Science A level was growing and had increased in student numbers from 10 last year to 19 next September. The meeting was reminded that the figures presented were for internal student subject choices only and that the new Year 12 student choices would be in addition to those presented.

ITEM 9 – CHANGE@

17. The Deputy Headteacher advised that a Change@CCHS Curriculum Update had been published in March 2022 which summarised the changes that had been undertaken in the curriculum in relation to the Change@CCHS initiative. (Clerk's Note: Sent out to all Governors by email on 11/03/22). Students were always encouraged to read around their curriculum, particularly in the Sixth Form when attending university interviews. It was reported that the Change & Diversity Prefects wanted to hold a cultural festival next year and had also raised the issue of communicating and reporting incidents within the School. Whilst the School sent out information electronically, students had reported that they preferred verbal messages being given out in form time and this was to be accommodated by the School. During the most recent meeting, the Change & Diversity Prefects were asked about the issue of misogyny and what, if anything, the School could do to tackle it , Students were very clear in their response that it was not for girls in Girls Schools to tackle this wider societal issue. The Change Prefects were commended for their work on the initiative. Governors queried the progress of curriculum changes by the examination boards and were advised that there had been some minor changes but that it was only happening very slowly. It was noted that any curriculum changes would need new resources and teaching materials as well as a change in attitude of teachers in general. The Headteacher advised that CCHS had staff who were very committed to the Change cause.

ITEM 10 – RISK REGISTER

18. **Decision**. The curriculum-related section of the CCHS Risk Register was received for termly review and approved as presented.

ITEM 11 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-22

19. The Mid Term Review of the School Development Plan dated February 2022 was received and noted. The document had previously been received and discussed at the Full GB meeting in March 2022. The Headteacher advised that there had been good work this academic year following the disruptions of Covid and highlighted the new structure of the document. Certain elements within the document would be ongoing to next year. SLT were now working on the 2022-26 School Strategic

Chelmsford County High School is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (company number 07445392).
Registered Office: Chelmsford County High School for Girls, Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1RW

DRAFT

Plan which would be presented to Governors at the next Full GB meeting. Governors queried the success of the Help Desk at the recent School Open Evening, and it was reported that the event had gone well and the Help Desk well-utilised. Details of the event were summarised by the Headteacher and discussed by the Committee. The Year 7 student tour guides had been praised for their work and were deemed good ambassadors for the School.

ACTION

ITEM 13 – INFORMATION ITEMS

20. Item 13.1 - Student Voice & Sixth Form Council Minutes. Curriculum-related extracts from the minutes of the Student Voice meetings held on 9th February and 23rd March 2022 and Sixth Form Council meetings held on 27th January and 24th March 2022 were received for information and noted. The Headteacher stressed that there was a drive to guide the discussions of both forums to be around teaching and learning and to gather information from students as to how they can be helped in the classroom. Governors noted the positive comments on peer-led workshops and how effective they can be for sensitive issues. The quality of debate within the meetings was queried by Governors and it was reported that the effectiveness of the meetings increased during the tenure of the students in charge. Discussion at the meetings was open and was always respectful, and students engaged well within the meetings.

ITEM 14 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21. **Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)**. Prior to the meeting a Governor had sent the School a query on the EPQ in the Sixth Form and the EPQ results in Summer 2021 and had asked for clarification from the School. The Deputy Headteacher confirmed that numbers for the EPQ had grown as student numbers grew and that the EPQ was always very popular. The Committee noted that seventy-eight Year 12 students had opted to undertake the EPQ next September. Reports had been received that there had been a moderation issue last summer which had adversely affected some students' university offers and asked the School for confirmation of the situation. The Deputy Headteacher confirmed that the students had been issued with School predicted grades, used for their university applications, and that half the cohort had had their final grades downgraded by the AQA external moderation. This had never happened before and the reason for the downgrading was unknown. One student had appealed but had not been successful. The School had also contacted AQA but had not received any reasons for the downgrading. The issue had also been reported by other schools across the country. It was an unexpected situation which was difficult for the School but there was nothing further that could be done. It was confirmed to Governors that the School had done nothing different last year, using the same marking methods and levels of internal moderation. The School was waiting to receive the detailed examination board report and feedback and would act on their recommendations if necessary.

22. It was suggested that it was a difficult year for university offers in general post-Covid and the meeting noted the effect on the university offers. It was confirmed that there were some students who were struggling with their examination study and that the School had set up additional information sessions for both the students and their parents which had been well-received and appreciated.

ITEM 15 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

23. **Decision**. The calendar of GB meetings for academic year 2022-23 was to be presented at the Full GB meeting in July. The Committee **agreed** to continue with meetings at 5.00pm on Wednesday. **All**

24. **Vote of Thanks**. This was the last Curriculum Committee meeting for the current Deputy Headteacher, Emma Matthews, who was leaving at the end of the term to take up headship at Westcliff High School for Girls in September 2022. Emma was thanked for her contribution to the School and to the Committee during her time at the CCHS.

The meeting closed at 6.40pm.

Agreed as a true record.

Andrew Bonwick, Chair 2nd November 2022

Chelmsford County High School is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (company number 07445392).
Registered Office: Chelmsford County High School for Girls, Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1RW

DRAFT