

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 25th November 2020

Present: Ros Cornish Chair
Stephen Lawlor Headteacher
Jenny Fowle
Jason Oster
Sarah de Souza-Ingles

In Attendance: Fiona Harrison Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)
Jo Cross Assistant Headteacher (T&L)
Wendy Newton Clerk to Governors

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. There were no apologies for absence to receive, all members were present. The student representatives had not been invited to attend the meeting on this occasion.

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, conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality reported.

ITEM 3 – STUDENT ISSUES

3. Student issues were received under Item 20.

ITEM 4 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR 2020-21

4. **Decision.** Nominations were sought for the role of Vice Chair of the Committee for 2020-21. The Chair proposed Jenny Fowle for the role which was seconded by Jason Oster and unanimously agreed.

ITEM 5 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

5. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd June 2020 were approved and would be signed electronically as a true record due to the Covid-19 situation.

ITEM 6 - MATTERS ARISING

6. Item 5, Para 8b – Bereavement Policy. The Clerk agreed to check if the Bereavement Policy had been updated as had been requested.

7. Item 8, Para 17 – Policies. The Clerk confirmed that the post-meeting review of the policies received at the last meeting had been completed and finalised.

ITEM 7 – CHAIR’S ACTION

8. There was no Chair’s Action to report.

ITEM 8 – COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE & MEMBERSHIP

9. **Decision.** The terms of reference for the Staff & Student Matters, Staff Disciplinary, Staff Disciplinary Appeals, Staff Pay and Staff Pay Appeals Committees were presented for annual review. It was agreed that the Clerk would make one deletion to the Staff Pay & Staff Pay Appeals TORs and that Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) would expand the Committee duties relating to student

ACTION

Clerk

**Clerk
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issues, the Clerk would then send them out for Committee re-approval. The remaining TORs were approved as presented.

ACTION

10. **Staff Pay Committee Membership - Decision.** It was agreed that the membership of the Staff Pay Committee for 2020-21 would be Ros Cornish (Chair) and all members of this Committee.

ITEM 9 – POLICIES

11. The following policies were received for re-approval and written comments/approval from Committee members had been received by the Clerk prior to the meeting:

Staff Pay Policy; Staff Performance Management Policy; Staff Grievance Policy; Restraint of Pupils Policy; Exclusion Policy; Behaviour Policy; School Early Closure Procedure; Communication Policy and the General Equality Policy.

12. The Clerk advised that the Equality & Diversity in Employment Policy had now been incorporated into the School's General Equality Policy hence it being omitted from the meeting pack. The queries of individual Governors were put forward and discussed by the Committee.

13. **Decisions.**

- a. The Clerk agreed to amend the policies in line with the written comments received and the discussion of the meeting. With the three actions stated below, the policies were approved.
- b. The Clerk agreed to match the Staff Pay appendices to the School's Staff Pay and Staff Pay Appeals Committee Terms of Reference.
- c. The Asst Headteacher (Pastoral) agreed to amend the Behaviour Policy to reflect the new use of the SIMS system of reporting infringements.
- d. The Clerk agreed to send the comments made on the General Equality Policy to the Deputy Headteacher for her consideration.

Clerk

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ITEM 10 – GENERAL SCHOOL UPDATE

14. The Headteacher gave a verbal update on the current School situation. Student attendance remained very high at between around 97-98% which was noted as exceptional in relation to Covid-19, staff attendance was also strong. There had more been incidents of self-isolation for both students and staff. One case, initiated by a staff member, required seven Year 8 and thirty-three Year 12 students to be sent home from the school, these students were now undertaking remote schooling. Staff required to self-isolate were teaching by remote schooling if fit and able to do so. The Remote Schooling Policy had been reviewed to ensure that it covered current school practices. It was reported that it was becoming increasingly more challenging for staff as self-isolation numbers increased and that staff were tiring as the term progressed.

15. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) gave an update on the students, stating that they were adapting well to the new Covid-related requirements of the School. Students were being encouraged to go outside at break and lunchtime. The PA had also financed boxes of games for classrooms for use at lunchtime. Some students were feeling overwhelmed but were being supported by the pastoral team and extra help was available from the School Nurse. A new weekly drop-in clinic had been organised for students by the six staff mental health first aiders and additional wellbeing sessions had taken place for Year 11 and Year 12 students just after Half Term which had been well-received by the students. On the whole students were doing well but it was a very busy time for the Pastoral Team. The Headteacher congratulated the new Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) on her wellbeing and safeguarding innovations initiated since she took up her new post.

16. The Assistant Headteacher (T&L) gave an update on the public examination situation; GCSEs and A levels were now due to go ahead on 7th June 2021 but with early examinations in GCSE Maths and English before the Summer half term. The School's focus was currently on the catch-up curriculum for the examination cohorts. It was stated that the School was in a positive situation as teaching had continued throughout the Covid lockdown but that some students were needing additional interventions. The Committee were advised that the School was continuing to collate student data in case Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) were required again next year. Details of the

School's internal examination programme were explained and the importance of taking formal tests was stressed. The Headteacher advised that Jo Cross had led on the CAG work last term prior to her SLT role began and commended the work she had undertaken, and her new Assistant Headteacher (T&L) responsibilities were explained. Governors queried if there were any gaps in the current teaching levels. It was stated that most subjects were at the point they would have been ordinarily and that 80-85% of the students were at the correct stage of their learning. Some students had fallen behind during the school closure and were now receiving additional interventions and the catch-up curriculum. An additional teacher had been employed to undertake curriculum catch-up work. The work of the staff in relation to different methods of teaching was commended and their extra workload noted. Governors commended the work of all the teachers and support staff. The issue of TA data and how it would be assessed was queried. It was confirmed that the TA process was continuing as normal as it was important for both students and parents.

ITEM 11 – STAFFING

17. The Headteacher gave a verbal update on the current staffing situation and summarised the changes which had occurred at the start of the academic year. It was stated that new staff members were settling in well and the adjustment in teaching style for a grammar school was noted. All new teachers were being supported within their departments. The Headteacher stated that the School was being responsive to the wellbeing needs of staff during the Covid crisis and had recently produced a CCHS Commitment to Staff document. A new Staff Voice committee had replaced the Joint Consultative Committee which included a larger cross-section of School staff. A staff survey had been undertaken to ascertain the concerns of the staff and adjustments made when possible.

18. **Decision.** The Clerk agreed to send the CCHS Commitment to Staff document to the Committee.

Clerk

19. The Headteacher praised the tremendous work of both teaching staff and support staff and how everyone was assisting each other in challenging times. Governors queried the staff survey which had reported that a third of staff had a preference to work from home and asked how it could work. The Headteacher explained how remote schooling worked from home. It was confirmed that any additional funding to help improve the School's IT would be beneficial. The Committee were informed of a London business scheme which gave schools unwanted office furniture and stated that CCHS had benefitted from around £10,000 worth of free office furniture. The importance of technology in assisting remote teaching was stressed as was the need to ensure that all students had access to IT at home. The Headteacher confirmed that the teachers' performance management process had been completed as usual although as a result of Covid and the School closure some targets had been carried forward to this academic year.

ITEM 12 – ENTRANCE TEST UPDATE

20. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) summarised the actions which had taken place relating to the Year 7 Entrance Test caused by the Covid-19 outbreak. The usual one-day test on a Saturday had been replaced by 4½ days of testing during the school week and over 800 girls had taken the test. Details of how the test was administered were summarised and the work of the Admissions Officer was commended. It was stated that the test results would be published before the end of term. The Headteacher advised that the physical outreach work relating to PPG girls in local primary schools could not happen at the moment but that alternative means of reaching the students were being investigated. The Chair congratulated the School for the collective efforts of all staff involved.

ITEM 13 – OFSTED

21. The Committee were advised that Ofsted were still visiting schools but only doing a one-day interim visit in order to obtain a national picture of the impact of Covid on learning and to assess how schools could be supported. Details of what an Ofsted visit would cover were summarised and it was reported that Governors would not be involved in any interim visits. Ofsted were currently planning to return to normal visits by Summer Term 2021. It was stated that the School was ready for an Ofsted visit whenever it may occur.

ITEM 14 – CARE & GUIDANCE REPORT

22. The Care & Guidance Report dated November 2020 was received and noted. It was reported that two of the Main School year leaders, Charlotte Burnham and Hayley Busby, were new to the role but were both performing well and that Marion Windeatt, the most experienced year leader, had been put in charge of Year 11 in order to aid them after the troubled previous academic year.

ITEM 15– SEN

23. An SEN Report dated November 2020 prepared by the SENCO was received for information. There were no questions on the report. The SEN Link Governor, Sarah de Souza-Ingle, advised that she had recently liaised with the SENCO and stated that the SEN student numbers were the highest ever; this was a mark of the improvement in the early identification of students with particular needs. The work of the SENCO was commended.

ITEM 16 – PUPIL PREMIUM

24. A summary of Pupil Premium spending was received for the year to date, expenditure totalling £4,830 included: music tuition, counselling, additional staff costs, extracurricular activities and revision material. The Committee were informed that both a geography and a biology field trip had been undertaken this term as they fell within the permitted Covid parameters. It was also confirmed that the remainder of last year's Pupil Premium funding had been carried over to the current year.

ITEM 17 – SAFEGUARDING

25. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) reported that a whole school safeguarding meeting took place for all year leaders each week at which good practice was shared. MyConcern was still being used to very good effect and assisted with keeping track of issues, there had been 54 tasks in the past 84 days. There had been three referrals to EWMHS this term and one student was being educated elsewhere due to specific issues. The pastoral team had been very busy in recent months and school staff remained vigilant reporting issues through the MyConcern system. The School Nurse and the School mental health first aiders supported students through drop-in clinics. It was reported that there had been a wide range of safeguarding issues to deal with since the start of term.

ITEM 18 – RISK REGISTER

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

ITEM 19– SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

27. The School Development Plan for 2020-21 was received for information and the content of the document was noted. It was stated that the mid-term review of the SDP would take place in February 2021. Governors noted that the 'change@cchs' project had been incorporated throughout the SDP and it was confirmed that participation in the project was strong at student level. Details of Black History Month activities undertaken within the School were summarised for the Committee. The Change Committee was due to commence after the Christmas holiday and would have a representative from every class. It was stated that 'change' was being incorporated across the School at every level. The Assistant Headteacher (T&L) gave a summary of diversity-related activities which had taken place within the School and which continued, and advised that the School had become members of the Equality & Diversity UK network which was a source of advice, information and resources for the staff body.

ITEM 20 – INFORMATION ITEMS

28. **Item 20.1 – Staff Development Report.** A Staff Development Report dated November 2020 produced by the Assistant Headteacher (T&L) was summarised. It was stated that much of the training had been focussed on the Covid-19 situation and remote schooling. Departments had met to discuss their curriculum and how best to teach the different parts and how to teach remotely.

Training had been received on Microsoft Teams led by the Subject Leader of Computer Science. The work of the Subject Development Groups aligned with the SDP and continued positively despite the current pressures on teaching. Details of a Teams-based virtual learning programme containing various different topics of staff training were explained. Overall, CPD still thrived within the School.

29. Item 20.2 – DBS Checks. A summary of DBS and Barred List checks from June to November 2020 was received for information. The Clerk confirmed that there were no outstanding checks.

30. Item 20.3 and 20.4 - Student Voice & Sixth Form Council Minutes. The minutes of Student Voice meeting held on 30th September 2020 and the minutes of Sixth Form Council meeting held on 23rd September 2020 were received and noted. The Headteacher stressed that it was important to hear the views of the students in these difficult times. The meetings were held remotely on Teams using School iPads. It was stated that the concerns of students were noted and acted upon whenever possible.

ITEM 21 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

31. The Headteacher congratulated Ros Cornish on successfully chairing her first remote meeting.

ITEM 22 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

32. Decision. The date of the next meeting was agreed as 5.00pm on Wednesday 17th March 2021. The format of the meeting, ie via Zoom or in person, would be confirmed at a later date. It was hoped that the Student Representatives would be able to attend the next meeting.

All

The meeting closed at 6.28pm.

Agreed as a true record at the Staff & Student Matters Committee meeting held remotely on 17th March 2021 and signed electronically due to Coronavirus situation.

R Cornish

Ros Cornish
Chair

17th March 2021