

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the CURRICULUM COMMITTEE held remotely via Zoom at 5.00pm on Wednesday 20th October 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

1. Prior to the start of the meeting the Headteacher gave an update on the Covid situation within the School. It was reported that positive cases of Covid were increasing in all Lower School year groups. Nearly 65% of students had been vaccinated, far higher than in some other schools, and it was hoped that other students would use the community vaccination programme during the half-term break.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. There were no apologies for absence to receive, 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 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

4. **Decision.** Nominations were sought for the role of Vice Chair of the Committee for 2021-22. Andrew Bonwick proposed Lauren Smith for the position and the Committee unanimously approved Lauren Smith as Vice Chair of the Committee for academic year 2020-21.

ITEM 4 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

5. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th May 2021 were approved as presented.

ITEM 5 - MATTERS ARISING

6. There were no matters arising which required further discussion.

ITEM 6 – CHAIR’S ACTION

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

ITEM 7 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

8. **Decision.** The Terms of Reference for the Curriculum Committee were presented for annual review and approved as presented.

ACTION

ITEM 8 – PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS REVIEW

ACTION

9. The Public Examinations Review for 2021 was received for information. The Headteacher outlined the process for producing Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) and advised that external subject moderation had been undertaken with other local schools for benchmarking and validation. It was hoped that these new links would continue as it was useful for networking and a CPD benefit. There had been good feedback from the external moderating colleagues. The Committee were advised that the normal examination process contained much engineering of grades, by the central authorities, and grade boundaries and that caps and quotas had been in place for some years to address the issue of grade inflation. Further revision of the exam marking framework was likely by the Government and exam boards in the next few years to address the issue of over-assessed CAGs and TAGs and get grade levels down to pre-Covid levels. The Committee discussed the issue, and the effect of exam board moderation and balancing grades post examination marking was noted. It was reported that the Summer 2022 grades would be pegged to the School's last proper examination results in 2019. It was confirmed that the School followed the Government's CAG and TAG regulations exactly and had used previous TA target grades as a base guideline when deciding on grades. The School's results had been very high and reflected the students' achievements in a very specific set of circumstances. The difference between grades achieved in exams and those awarded as CAGs and TAGs was noted.

10. The effect of teaching during Covid was highlighted and the resilience and robustness of staff commended by the Headteacher. It was stated that the School would much prefer assessment by examination, as did the students, but confirmed that enough assessment milestones were in place to be used for grade prediction if it were to be required again next summer. Governors queried whether the School had learnt any lessons from the experiences of the previous year, and it was suggested that the experience of remote learning had shown the wide variety of methods available for assessment to take place and examples were given. The Committee questioned whether any students were unhappy with the TAG they had been awarded and it was confirmed there were a few and the process of TAG appeals was explained. It was reported that all A level TAG appeals had been completed in time for university place acceptances. The Staff Governor present confirmed that the TAG process had been incredibly detailed and vigorous. The work of the teaching staff in producing the TAGs was commended and appreciated by the Committee.

ITEM 9 – SCHOOLING & CURRICULUM UPDATE

11. The Headteacher advised that the School was now working to a normal timetable and that most students were in school, those who were isolating and fit enough to work were accessing lessons remotely. Recent staff absences had been due to the 'super' cold that was currently circulating rather than because of Covid. The Deputy Headteacher stated that the first few weeks of term had been exciting with subject specific rooming back in place as well as the use of the new SSEF buildings. Students were moving around freely and the School felt very normal again. Any isolating teachers continued to teach remotely from home whenever possible. It was confirmed that the School had been able to teach all subjects during Covid. Governors queried how the School covered subjects with only one specialist teacher and the various means of covering such a situation were explained. School trips were now occurring, and primary school students had been in to visit CCHS. All usual student activities were now back in place.

12. The Committee queried whether there were any concerns for Year 12 students in relation to their current performance because of Covid. The Head of Sixth Form reported that issues may arise later in Mathematics as there were a large number of students studying a challenging subject and who had missed out on the harder Level 9 areas of the GCSE syllabus due to the pandemic. It was also suggested that there may be issues with Further Mathematics and Chemistry in due course due to the complexity of the subjects but these had not yet arisen. The means by which the School supported students with gaps in their academic knowledge were summarised. The Headteacher advised that the School had removed the system of faculty leaders this year and had replaced the middle leader role with School Development Leaders. Subject leaders now reported directly to a specific member of SLT, this accelerated getting information to senior staff members. It was also reported that the TA system was to be more holistic and include liaison with both pastoral and

academic staff members. The new system was expected to help in identifying any students who may need additional support. Feedback on the new process would be given to the Committee at the next meeting.

13. Governors queried the lack of extra-curricular opportunities over the past two years for Year 13 students in relation to university applications and the meeting discussed the issue. It was suggested that many university courses no longer relied on extra-curricular activities or related work experience, and that students had been very resourceful in finding alternative ways to gain additional experiences during Covid. The Head of Sixth Form advised that there was some concern over the situation at some universities as there had been over-acceptance of students and were very full, this may affect the number of available places but would hopefully not affect higher ability students such as those from CCHS. It was confirmed that additional help was made available to students with lower TA data scores and the systems on offer were explained.

ITEM 10 – SUBJECT NUMBERS AT KS4 & KS5 AND SIXTH FORM SUBJECT OFFER

14. Data regarding September 2021 KS4 and KS5 subject and group sizes was received and discussed. The high degree of consistency in the larger subjects was noted. Governors queried whether any students had not been given their chosen subjects. It was confirmed that all KS4 students had received their first choice of GCSE subjects but that there were a few KS5 students who had not attained the required GCSE grade for their chosen subject and/or who had changed their option on results day and whose new subject choice could not be accommodated by the timetable. It was also confirmed that no Year 11 student left CCHS because their subject was unavailable but that some external applicants may have chosen to go to another school if their subject grade had not been high enough or if the subject had not been available at CCHS by results day. The Deputy Headteacher was commended for her work on producing such a complex timetable.

ITEM 11 –POLICIES

15. Item 11.1 – Examination Policy 2021-22 - Decision. The Examination Policy was presented for approval. It was confirmed that the policy was an external, professional model policy and was produced for a normal examination year rather than the previous two Covid years which had had separate specific regulations in place. The series of underlying examination policies had been reviewed and approved at SLT level. One error in a staff role title was noted, and with the correction of the role title, the Examination Policy was approved as presented with an annual review. Governors noted that the policy may need to be revisited if changes needed to be made due to Covid.

ITEM 12 – RISK REGISTER

16. The curriculum-related section of the CCHS Risk Register was received for termly review. Risk C2 had been re-written after the last meeting and the Committee discussed the new wording. The Headteacher gave further explanation on the risks of exam board marking and gave examples of previous disputes. It was confirmed that the School could raise marking requests for whole cohorts if considered necessary.

17. **Decision**. After one contextual correction the curriculum-related section of the CCHS Risk Register was approved as presented

ITEM 13 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-22

18. The School Development Plan (SDP) 2021-22, which had been received at the recent Full GB meeting, was reviewed. It was reported that SLT undertake a review at the end of each half term and that department leaders are questioned to ensure that SDP items are being addressed. There would be a full review prior to the next update in February 2022. The meeting received information on the document in relation to the Ofsted Framework and how the SDP would be used by Ofsted. Lauren Smith, Training Link Governor, advised that she was currently in the process of trying to arrange a Juniper GB Development Session on 'Ofsted Readiness' and further information would

follow in due course. The Committee noted and commended the references throughout the document to the change@cchs project.

ACTION

ITEM 14 – INFORMATION ITEMS

19. **Item 14.1 – Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR)**. The Deputy Headteacher summarised the range of data contained in the Government’s IDSR and advised that the new IDSR was expected from the Government in mid-November.

20. **Item 14.2 - Enrichment**. The Committee were advised that the School was returning to a more normal programme of schooling and that as much as possible was being undertaken with trips and residential visits now starting again. A summary of activities and trips undertaken in the School since the start of the Autumn Term was received for information. Governors noted Sixth Form Council minutes (Item 14.3) reported a Year 13 preference for enrichment days to relate to their studies rather than being university-based topics. The comment had also been noted by SLT and was to be investigated further by the Deputy Headteacher. A Governor reported that there had been recent School communication relating to collaboration between CCHS and KEGS for a joint Year 8 Drama Club and noted the new joint activity. The Headteacher confirmed that there was now a deliberate effort to run more joint activities in an attempt to increase interaction through supervised and non-competitive events to strengthen the relationship between the two schools.

21. **Item 14.3 - Student Voice & Sixth Form Council Minutes**. The Committee received curriculum-related extracts from the minutes of the Student Voice meeting held on 29th September 2021 and Sixth Form Council meeting held on 28th September 2021. Governors queried comments in the minutes and additional explanation was received from the Deputy Headteacher. The content of certain Rolling Tutor Period / PSHE relationship lessons had been raised by students against whether similar lessons were being taught in other local schools. Governors challenged the comment and the issue was further clarified by members of SLT and accepted by the meeting.

ITEM 15 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22. No other items of business were raised.

ITEM 16 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

23. **Decision**. The date of the next meeting was agreed as Wednesday 19th January 2022. The format/location of the meeting would be confirmed nearer the date.

All

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

The meeting closed at 6.47pm.

Andrew Bonwick
Chair

19th January 2022