

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a Meeting of the STAFF & STUDENT MATTERS COMMITTEE held at the School at 5.00pm on Tuesday 30th November 2021

Present:	Sarah de Souza-Ingle Stephen Lawlor Jenny Fowle Funmi Osilaja	Chair Headteacher
In Attendance:	Fiona Harrison Jo Cross Sophia Aung Aadya Rao Wendy Newton	Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) Assistant Headteacher (T&L) Chair of the Sixth Form Council Chair of the Student Voice Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Jason Oster	

1. The Chair opened by welcoming the two student representatives to the first in-person Committee meeting since the start of the Coronavirus outbreak.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Jason Oster.

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, receipts of gifts or hospitality reported.

ITEM 3 – STUDENT ISSUES

4. Item 3.1 - Student Voice Minutes. The minutes of Student Voice meetings held on 29th September and 17th November 2021 were received and major issues summarised by the Chair of the Student Voice Committee. Two main issues were the return of some Covid-19 uniform relaxation within the School and short-notice homework; these issues had been taken to SLT. A few canteen issues had been raised but a new lunchtime schedule had improved things. Governors noted that the future increase of student numbers would add to the crowding situation and additional seating areas were being prepared by the School. Wider choices of vegetarian food had been well-received by students. The Chair of the Student Voice confirmed that some pastoral issues were taken directly to Year Leaders or the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) when appropriate. It was reported that between meetings issues can be reported via MS Teams or by the Student Voice mailbox.

5. Item 3.2 – Sixth Form Council Minutes. The minutes of Sixth Form Council meeting held on 28th September 2021 were received and summarised by the Chair of the Sixth Form Council. It was noted that the Sixth Form Council had a greater focus on teaching and learning. Problems had been reported on overnight homework, but students had been reminded that there were different expectations within the Sixth Form. There had been discussions on the best methods of teaching and the provision of teaching booklets had been appreciated. There had been recent concern about the new Government requirement for a second set of Year 13 mocks, and issues with SchoolPost messages for the new Year 12 students had now been addressed by the IT Manager. The Assistant Headteacher (T&L) advised that all teaching and learning issues were reported back to the Deputy Headteacher and then on to Subject Leaders by herself or the Head of Sixth Form.

6. Item 3.3 – Other Student Issues. It was noted that having Years 12 & 13 bubbles in School had allowed in person meetings which worked well and were appreciated by students.

5.20pm – The Student Representatives left the meeting.

ACTION

ITEM 4 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR 2021-22

7. **Decision.** Nominations were sought for the role of Vice Chair of the Committee for 2021-22. Jenny Fowle volunteered to continue in the role and this was unanimously agreed by the Committee.

ITEM 5 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

8. The minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2021 were approved as a true record.

ITEM 6 - MATTERS ARISING

9. There were no matters arising.

ITEM 7 – CHAIR’S ACTION

10. The meeting was informed that the Chair had approved the September 2021 version of the Child Protection Policy as the policy had to be in place and on the School website at the start of the Autumn Term. The policy had since been received and approved by the Full GB in October 2021.

ITEM 8 – COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE & MEMBERSHIP

11. **Decision.** The terms of reference (ToRs) for the Staff & Student Matters, Staff Disciplinary, Staff Disciplinary Appeals, Staff Pay and Staff Pay Appeals Committees were presented for annual review. New ToRs for the Safeguarding Link Governor and SEND Link Governor were presented for consideration prior to Full GB review. All seven ToRs were approved as presented.

12. **Staff Pay Committee Membership.** It had previously been agreed that the membership of the Staff Pay Committee for 2021-22 would be Sarah de Souza-Ingle (Chair), Jenny Fowle and Funmi Osilaja. Jason Oster would act as chair of the Staff Pay Appeals Committee, if required.

ITEM 9 – GENERAL SCHOOL UPDATE

13. The Headteacher gave a verbal update on the School situation. There were some student absences due to Covid and some recent staff absences due to the current ‘super cold’; this had caused additional pressure on the cover situation. The Government had advised schools to be prepared for the cancellation of public examinations should it be necessary in Summer 2022, and the School now had a project group to address the issue. It had been decided that an additional set of Year 11 and Year 13 mock examinations would be taken in the Spring Term. Overall, life in the School was running well with extra-curricular and House events, clubs and sports being held wherever possible. Future large-scale events continued to be planned as these were deemed important for morale and the wider cultural life of the school.

14. The results of recent student and parent surveys were received and the Assistant Headteacher (T&L) summarised the findings. 858 students had responded, including 220 Sixth Form students, and 93% were confident or very confident in the quality of their education and 96% agreed they enjoyed learning at CCHS. This was deemed very significant considering the disruption caused by Covid over the last 18 months. The student questions and ratings were reviewed and discussed. It was noted that the student survey was not anonymous, and the School confirmed that certain things were passed on to relevant School staff for action. Governors suggested that a future check was required to ascertain if the things raised had been actioned. It was stated that a second survey would be done later in the year to check if things had been addressed. Whilst the survey was useful for Ofsted, it was deemed more important for the School to know the information received. The parent survey had a 25% response rate and the replies were noted. There were no major issues raised by parents, it was suggested that time-pressures for parents may have reduced the response figure. The survey responses had been presented at a recent staff meeting and had been well-received by the staff.

15. Governors noted the School’s decision to only do two Year 11 & 13 mock examinations instead of the three suggested by the Government and queried if this would pose any problems for the

School. It was stated that the number of mocks was only guidance and the School felt that it could justify its choice by having other in-school assessments. It was confirmed that if the public examinations were cancelled, teacher assessment would take place as per the previous academic year. The situation was deemed challenging but possible for the school to do. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) advised that in response to the student survey, new helpline cards had been issued to all students giving information on who they could contact for help both within the School and outside. The areas of pastoral support available within the School were summarised. Pastoral issues continued to be busy across the School. It was confirmed that the School always tried to involve parents in pastoral issues whenever possible.

ITEM 10 – OFSTED

16. The Headteacher advised that the new Ofsted HMI for the Essex region had recently spoken to headteachers and had given an update on the current Ofsted situation. The backlog of schools overdue inspection was to be cleared within two years but no firm timetable had been produced. The details and timetable of a standard Ofsted inspection was summarised for the Committee. It was suggested that Ofsted would possibly wish to speak with the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors or one of the other committee chairs.

ITEM 11 – STAFFING

17. The staff joining the School in September had undertaken the new staff induction programme and the contents of the programme were explained. Staff wellbeing was a standard item on the weekly SLT meeting agenda and SLT were allocated specific staff members to oversee if required. The School's 'Commitment to Staff' document, which listed internal and external areas of help, had been updated and was available to all staff members. The Headteacher advised that Ofsted had recently published a national 'Staff Wellbeing Charter' which schools can sign up to, the new charter was currently under review by the School. It was confirmed that the teachers' performance management process had now taken place and would be discussed at the Staff Pay Committee meeting which followed. The Chair advised that she had attended a mental health and wellbeing training course in November, and it had been suggested that having a mental health and wellbeing policy was beneficial for schools. It was suggested that once the new Ofsted charter had been reviewed the School would assess the model mental health and wellbeing policy and decide if both documents were required. Governors noted that support was also required for the Headteacher and the issue was discussed. The support and teamwork of the SLT was highlighted and praised. The composition and expectations of the Staff Voice forum were explained to Governors.

ITEM 12 – STAFF DEVELOPMENT

18. The Assistant Headteacher (T&L) presented a Staff Development Report dated November 2021 and summarised the content of the report. The importance of the two staff INSET days at the start of the academic year was stressed. Training sessions had been held on staff and student matters. The Committee was reminded that Faculty Leaders had now become School Development Leaders and their wider remit and key projects were explained. It was reported that a new online system of performance management was now being used by the School called 'SchooliP' which allowed the uploading of continual professional development (CPD) documents into an individual's own specific area. It was reported that training courses were now returning to be held in person although many remained online which were very useful and preferred by some staff members.

ITEM 13 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

19. The School Development Plan (SDP) 2021-22 was received for information and reviewed. The SDP had been re-designed to follow the themes and mission of the School. Some SDP actions had been carried across from the previous SDP due to the Covid pandemic and new actions had been added. The initial objectives were noted and progress on each issue would be presented at the Mid-Term Review in February 2022. It was confirmed that all areas were reviewed at the end of each term by SLT and individual departments to ensure all issues were being addressed. It was stated that department development plans sat below the main SDP and then fed into this document.

The new SDP format had greater fluidity between subject areas and SLT members now reported in multiple areas of the SDP rather than having ownership of just one area.

ACTION

ITEM 14 – CARE & GUIDANCE REPORT

20. The Care & Guidance Report dated November 2021 had been reviewed by the Committee and the contents of the report were noted. The Headteacher highlighted the extraordinary work of the Year Leaders, despite different levels of experience all were very committed and worked as a team for the benefit of the students. The work of the Form Tutors was also commended.

ITEM 15 – SEN

21. An SEN Report dated November 2021 prepared by the SENCO was received for information. The Committee were advised that, as suggested by Governors in a previous meeting, the SEND page of the School website had been updated and expanded and now included quotes from parents. The improvement of the web page had already been noted by Governors. The quality of the work of the SENCO was highly praised. The Chair, in her capacity of SEND Link Governor, had personally met with the SENCO in September and a written report of her meeting was received by the Committee and noted. One issue of concern that had arisen related to the workload of the SENCO and was stated to be under review by the School.

ITEM 16 – ENTRANCE TEST UPDATE

22. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) gave a verbal update on the Year 7 Entrance Test held in September. 1110 girls had registered for the test, 920 girls had attended at CCHS and 37 had sat the test at another location. Fifteen Pupil Premium girls had registered for the test and 13 had attended. The School was now awaiting the CEM test data results in December and then National Offer Day on 1st March 2022 to find out who had put CCHS as their first choice of school. It was reported that the Entrance Test day had gone very well and the new Sports Hall had been used for the first time. It was confirmed that there had been two contingency days this year due to Covid.

ITEM 17 – PUPIL PREMIUM

23. A summary of Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) spending from 1st September to 22nd November 2021 was received showing expenditure totalling £11,152.09. The sum of £26,565 had been carried forward from 2020-21 and anticipated income for 2021-22 was £32,985. There were currently 36 PP students including one Looked-After Child. It was reported that the School, had to publish a new 3-year plan by 31st December 2021 and that it was currently in production. A new electronic system for recording and mapping PP spending was being introduced which would allow closer monitoring of PP expenditure and outcome. Governors noted the large amount of money carried forward from the last academic year due to the Covid restrictions – lack of trips & music lessons – and it was confirmed that plans were already in place for its use this year to benefit the PP students.

ITEM 18 – SAFEGUARDING

24. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) gave a safeguarding update and advised that the School was currently very busy with safeguarding issues. There had been: one in-house referral to social care; one multi-agency meeting; three social care enquiries; a number of external agency enquiries; one Team Around the Family (TAF) referral, plus other agencies working with four students within the School. It was hoped to start another Year 8 Anxiety Group. The School Nurse had six appointments per week, all were currently filled and a waiting list was in place. There had been several referrals to the Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Service (EWMHS) and the School runs Mental Health drop-ins on a Friday lunchtime. The School has 10 hours of counselling places per week which were full and had a waiting list. Governors queried how long students had to wait to see a counsellor and were advised that it depended on the individual circumstance, Year 11 and 13 students were given priority. It was reported that ADHD and ticks were increasing and seemed to be a post-pandemic issue. The issue of waiting lists was discussed by the Committee. It was stated that the School was working with a lot of outside agencies and was trying to break down the stigma of social services support with families. Governors queried whether the Assistant Headteacher

(Pastoral) was able to handle the increasing number of safeguarding issues and had sufficient resources to assist her. It was confirmed that the situation was under control at the moment.

ACTION

ITEM 19 – POLICIES

25. **Decision.** Eight School policies required approval. The Committee discussed the policies and the proposed amendments and, after a couple of minor typographic amendments, approved the policies with the review periods stated below:

- a. Staff Pay Policy – statutory, annual review,
- b. Equalities Policy – statutory, 2-year review,
- c. Equalities Framework – non-statutory, 2-year review,
- d. Early Career Teacher Policy - new policy, non-statutory, annual review,
- e. Flexible Working Policy - non-statutory, annual review,
- g. Menopause Policy – new policy, non-statutory, annual review,
- h. Mobile Phone Policy – new policy, non-statutory, annual review,
- g. Communication Protocol – new policy, non-statutory, annual review.

ITEM 20 – RISK REGISTER

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

ITEM 21 – INFORMATION ITEMS

27. **Item 21.1 – DBS Checks.** A summary of DBS and Barred List checks undertaken from June to November 2021 was received for information and noted.

28. **Item 21.2 – Mental Health.** Presentation slides from a recent Juniper Education 'Mental Health & Wellbeing Provision' training course were received for general information.

29. **Item 21.3 – Governor Visits - Decision.** The Chair raised the issue of Governor visits and requested that Committee members make arrangements for visiting the School. Governors should contact the Clerk with possible dates and any specific areas of interest for their visit.

**All
Clerk**

ITEM 22 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

30. **Meeting Format.** It was suggested that the face-to-face in-school meeting format was preferable to an online meeting as it allowed easier discussion.

ITEM 23 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

31. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting was discussed and a revised date was proposed as Tuesday 15th March 2022. The Clerk agreed to canvass the Committee for the suitability of this new date by email.

**All
Clerk**

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Sarah de Souza-Ingle
Chair

Date: 15th March 2022