

## 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 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022

|                |  |   |
|----------------|--|---|
| Present:       | Sarah de Souza-Ingle<br>Stephen Lawlor<br>Jenny Fowle<br>Jason Oster | Chair<br>Headteacher  |
| In Attendance: | Fiona Harrison<br>Jo Cross<br>Wendy Newton                           | Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)<br>Assistant Headteacher (T&L)<br>Clerk to Governors     |
| Apologies:     | Funmi Osilaja<br>Erin Cameron<br>Sophie Dulake                       | Student Rep - Chair of the Student Voice<br>Student Rep - Chair of the Sixth Form Council |

#### **ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Funmi Osilaja and the two Student Representatives, Sophie Dulake and Erin Cameron.

#### **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 2021-22, or conflicts of interest, receipts of gifts or hospitality reported.

#### **ITEM 3 – STUDENT ISSUES**

3. The minutes of Student Voice meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and the Sixth Form Council meetings held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021 and 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were received for information and noted. In the absence of the Student Representatives, the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) advised that the matters reported in the minutes were standard topics but that there was the intention to include more teaching and learning topics in future meetings. Governors noted repeated references to the canteen and asked the School for confirmation that there was no major background issue, this was confirmed. One reference to microaggression was queried and the situation behind the comment was explained. The issue had been an isolated peer-on-peer incident. Governors asked for clarification on a comment in the Sixth Form Council minutes concerning the use of PowerPoints during lessons, this was given by the Assistant Headteacher (T&L).

#### **ITEM 4 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were approved as a true record.

#### **ITEM 5 - MATTERS ARISING**

5. Item 21, Para 29 – Governor Visits. The Clerk advised that no formal Governor visits had occurred this academic year, the matter was to be raised at the next Full GB meeting. Governors were encouraged to undertake a School visit as soon as possible and send the Clerk their proposed dates and any particular areas of interest within the School.

#### **ITEM 6 – CHAIR’S ACTION**

6. No Chair’s Action had been taken since the last meeting.

**ACTION**

**All**

## **ITEM 7 – GENERAL SCHOOL UPDATE**

## **ACTION**

7. The Headteacher gave an update on the current School situation. Having had very high attendance during the earlier phases of Covid, attendance had recently dipped with 6 staff members and 20 students currently isolating. Some staff had been infected for a second time and were more unwell than previous infections. Staff absence was causing some strain operationally. Students who were isolating but well to work joined lessons remotely. The Government 'Living with Covid' document had been discussed at a Staff Voice meeting, and agreement had been reached on how to move on from Covid. Covid-related signage was being removed and there was to be closer interaction between students and teachers within classrooms. All vulnerable staff continued to have individual risk assessments whenever Covid guidance changed. Years 11 and 13 were undertaking a second set of mock examinations to ensure that the School had enough data in the event of TAGs being required in the Summer. It was currently presumed that public examinations would be held as usual, so the second mocks were considered as extra preparation. After TA2 assessments student progress meetings had been held and students requiring additional help had been identified.

8. There had been many parent events in School since the start of the year, these had been very well attended and appreciated by the parents, and very positive feedback had been received. The Year 12 options process had begun and the School had received 214 external Year 12 applications for entry in September 2022, this was up from 179 last year. Increased publicity and an additional Sixth Form Insight Evening were believed to have helped the higher number of applications. The Year 9 Options Evening had been held recently in School and had also been well attended by students and parents. Staff recruitment was increasing in order to address the expansion in student numbers. The Headteacher reported that whilst recruitment had been difficult over the past few years, things had improved recently with larger numbers of good applicants. Extracurricular activities continued with the School Production, Dance Show and Spring Concerts, and the School's Enrichment Day programme had restarted but in a slightly new format. It was confirmed to Governors that sports fixtures were now back to previous pre-Covid levels.

9. Governors queried the effect of the new Covid spike on the School and the issue was discussed. Higher levels of Covid had been noted around the Chelmsford area in recent weeks. It was confirmed that the School no longer had stocks of Covid testing kits and as a result students and staff may attend School not knowing that they had, or were carrying, the virus. Governors questioned what would happen if a student missed a public examination in the Summer due to Covid and were advised that the data held by the School would be used as evidence of student ability instead. The Headteacher stressed the difficulties for teaching staff of teaching in class as well as undertaking remote teaching for Covid-isolating students. It was noted that the School had been fortunate not to have had any seriously ill students or staff during the pandemic.

## **ITEM 8 – STAFFING**

10. The Headteacher advised that because of the requirement to hold the additional sets of Year 11 and Year 13 mock examinations, the decision had been made to have an additional two staff INSET days in order to assist with the additional marking. This was considered to be essential for staff wellbeing. The extra INSET days were to be remote learning days for the students with set work being undertaken from home.

## **ITEM 9 – STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

11. The Assistant Headteacher (T&L) presented a Staff Development Report dated March 2022 and summarised the content of the report. The importance and success of the internal staff-on-staff training was stressed and the range of INSET Day and twilight CPD sessions, led by the School Development Leaders, was summarised. External CPD continued with much still being carried out online still and subject training was held within departments. Staff mental health training also continued and was to be expanded to include all year leaders. Governors queried whether the increase in mental health issues were all Covid-related, it was stated not all but some were. The Committee were advised that the School had seen a decrease in student resilience in relation to tests and examinations and an increase in classroom anxieties since the Covid lockdowns, and the issue was discussed. Governors queried how the twilight CPD sessions were managed, and the system of teachers' disaggregated INSET and directed time was explained. It was reported that all

schools were recommended to have a designated mental health lead and the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) was noted as having this role but that the title had not yet been formalised. The Chair queried the progress of the Mental Health Policy and was advised that the need for the policy was still being considered as the School had already committed to the DfE Mental Health Charter.

### **ITEM 9b – TEACHING & LEARNING**

12. The Assistant Headteacher (T&L) reported that currently teaching and learning was aimed at the Year 11 and 13 provision and the changes in the subject requirements for the Summer examinations and ensuring that students were getting the correct support. The new student progress meetings were working well and brought the academic and pastoral teams together to look at all areas of a student's needs. If required, curriculum adjustments and interventions would be made to best help a student. The MyTutor system, part of the National Tutoring Programme, was being used to help certain students in Year 10 and 11. School Development Leaders (SDLs) were working on their specific areas of interest, and new teaching and learning projects were being undertaken by individual members of teaching staff. The work done by the School in relation to the Fair Access Plan was also summarised. It was reported that subject leaders were now receiving more focussed guidance on areas that needed addressing such as PPG and SEN students. All staff were working hard and there was much collaboration going on within the School. Governors queried the work of the SDLs and additional information was received.

13. The National Tutoring Programme was raised by Governors and the School was challenged as to how the funding was being used. The meeting was advised that the School had identified students, discussed how best to support them and plans were now in place for 3-to-1 after-school tuition sessions to take place grouped by ability. A MyTutor contract was also due to start after Easter. It was confirmed that the dedicated money had not yet been spent but that it was committed expenditure and that there was no deadline to use it. The tutoring programme and general situation was discussed. The Headteacher stressed that it was the result of teaching staff working so hard during the Covid that the School had fewer problems now and confirmed that the additional funding was being used for the students who had been identified as genuinely needing it. The willingness of the teaching staff to undertake additional work to help their students was noted and commended.

### **ITEM 10 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

14. The Mid Term Review of the School Development Plan (SDP) 2021-22 was received for information and reviewed. Attention was drawn to the updated progress column and the progress that had been made was noted. Governors queried how much was likely to be completed and were informed that most areas were expected to be completed. It was stated that whilst there was some post-pandemic energy amongst staff, staff had worked hard over the past two years and were tired and that delayed ill-health issues were possible. This was particularly true for SLT who had not had any appreciable break from work. Governors noted how much work and progress had been made with the School Development Plan items and commended the School for their excellent work.

### **ITEM 11 – CARE & GUIDANCE REPORT**

15. The Care & Guidance Report dated March 2022 was received and its contents noted. An additional report on Young Carers had also been received for information and the meeting discussed the issue. The School was currently working towards the Bronze Young Carers in Schools Award. Governors asked if there was any obvious link between attendance and being a young carer and it was confirmed that attendance was key to many issues. The Committee were advised that many useful contacts with outside agencies had been made during the pandemic and that the School hoped to keep the links going in the future. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) highlighted the form time wellbeing programme and commended the work of the year leaders. Governors enquired about the counselling service and its funding. It was confirmed that the service had ten hours per week and that there was a waiting list. Funding for the counselling service came from PPG money and the School decided on the amount allocated. The meeting discussed the funding against the need for counselling and the alternative external options available for help. The use of the School's mental health first aid clinic was growing and the School Nurse was still well-used.

## **ITEM 12 – SEN**

## **ACTION**

16. A written SEN Update from the SENCO dated March 2022 was received for information. A new SENCO Support Assistant had just started and details of her employment were summarised for the Committee. Governors queried how SEN funding was used by the School and whether a breakdown of expenditure was available for review. The meeting was advised that only EHCP funding was reviewed and reported back to the DfE, other SEN expenditure did not and came from central funding. Governors suggested that as the number of SEN students increased, there was greater need for them to ensure that funding was correctly utilised, particularly in case Ofsted queried the matter with them. The issue was discussed and it was confirmed that SEN provision was increasing. The meeting was advised that SEN work was growing and that in comparison to other SSGS schools, the CCHS provision was generous. The School confirmed that there was still an attainment gap between SEN students and their peers, but that their attainment was above the national average. Details of the attainment situation were clarified by the Headteacher and it was stated that the School could show the backstory of all SEN students and could evidence the additional interventions taken by the School for each student, particularly the extra support given during the pandemic lockdowns. It was noted that the small number of SEN students affected the data figures.

## **ITEM 13 – ADMISSIONS**

17. The Committee received data on the Year 7 entrance test for entry in September 2022 and the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) highlighted areas of note. Since National Offer Day on 1<sup>st</sup> March the School had received 166 acceptances, 9 rejections and 5 replies were still awaited (out of 180 places). It was believed that the rejections related to location. Governors queried the low numbers from the partner primary schools, this was considered to be a factor of the lockdown and reduced outreach work during the pandemic. It was stated that work with the partner primaries was now increasing again and details of the School's current work explained. Background on the choice of partner primaries was received, and it was stated that the School hoped to expand relationships with more primary schools in the future. The entrance test data was reviewed and the low number of places attained by pupil premium (PP) students noted. Governors asked if there could be repercussions from DfE/ESFA for not reaching the proposed targets in relation to the SSEF project and the Fair Access Plan. It was hoped that there would not be any repercussions as the School could evidence all the work undertaken aimed at increasing PP student numbers, and the issue was discussed. It was confirmed that regular reports were sent to the DfE about the progress made and that Covid had had a major effect on the PP numbers. The School strongly believed that PP student numbers would increase in the future.

## **ITEM 14 – PUPIL PREMIUM**

18. A summary of Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) spending from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 to 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 was received showing expenditure totalling £17,500. The sum of £26,565 had been carried forward from 2020-21 and anticipated income for 2021-22 was £31,791. There were currently 33 PP students including one Looked-After Child. A new IT software system called Provision Map was under test in the School which would aid the tracking of PP expenditure and the impact of the spend. Governors challenged the large PPG underspend particularly considering the large carry forward figure. The School advised that much of the carry forward figure related to the pandemic and that a lot of the money was to be spent in the near future due to timing issues. The meeting was noted the items being covered by PP funding, and it was stated that emphasis on expenditure was now returning to extra teaching & learning opportunities for student progression rather than extracurricular activities as had happened previously. A new Homework Club had begun utilising teachers and student tutors which was well-received by the students attending. It was also confirmed that additional publicity had been sent to parents concerning Free School Meals and how to apply.

## **ITEM 15 – SAFEGUARDING**

19. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) advised that the School was currently very busy with safeguarding issues. There had been two social care referrals since the last meeting, one in-patient situation and 14 students on safety plans. The Committee were informed of how safety plans were run by the School. It was reported that the School was experiencing some challenging behaviour issues, some of which were new to the School, and details were summarised. There had been five

new MyConcern reports this month in addition to numerous updates to previous concerns. The meeting was reminded of the pastoral support available within the School and it was reported that the pastoral team now used walkie-talkies for quicker communication within School. It was confirmed that the war situation in Ukraine was causing extra anxiety and some students had reached out for support. Governors raised the high level of safeguarding issues reported at the last meeting and asked if levels had changed. It was confirmed that levels varied but were still quite high and that it was post-pandemic. The reasons for spikes in student concerns were discussed. Governors asked for confirmation that the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) had enough support herself and this was confirmed. It was reported that in light of the growing student numbers, the School was looking at a possible new structure to increase pastoral support within the School.

### **ITEM 16 – POLICIES**

20. **Decision.** Nine School policies required re-approval. A couple of minor grammatical and typographic amendments had been sent to the Clerk prior to the meeting and would be amended. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) **agreed** to include reference to microaggression in the Behaviour Policy and staff training in the Anti-Bullying Policy. The Committee reviewed and **approved** the policies with the review periods below:

F Harrison

- a. Suspension & Exclusion Policy – statutory, 3-year review,
- b. Behaviour Policy – statutory, 4-year review,
- c. Anti-Bullying Policy – non-statutory, 4-year review,
- d. Staff Leave of Absence Policy - non-statutory, 4-year review,
- e. Recruitment Policy - non-statutory, 4-year review,
- g. Bereavement Policy – non-statutory, 4-year review
- h. Staff Development Policy – non-statutory, 4-year review,
- g. Cover & PPA Policy – non-statutory, 4-year review,
- h. Probation Procedure - non-statutory, 4-year review.

21. **Decision.** The Written Particulars for teaching and support staff, which are part of their Contract of Employment, had been changed to reduce the notice period for teacher probation terminations down to the national statutory notice requirements as stated within the documents. The reasons for the change were explained. The Committee **approved** the revised Written Particulars as presented and **agreed** that they were to be used for all permanent contracts with effect from 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

S Lawlor

### **ITEM 17 – RISK REGISTER**

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

### **ITEM 18 – INFORMATION ITEM(S)**

23. Item 18.1 – Disclosure & Barring Service Checks. A summary of DBS and Barred List checks undertaken from December 2021 to March 2022 was received for information and noted.

### **ITEM 19 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

24. Single Central Record (SCR). The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) advised that it was best practice for the Safeguarding Governor to review the SCR regularly and Jenny Fowle agreed to liaise with the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) to arrange a suitable time to visit and review the SCR.

J Fowle  
F Harrison

### **ITEM 20 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

25. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting was agreed as 5.00pm on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022. (**Clerk's Note** – Changed post meeting to Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022.)

All

The meeting closed at 7.18pm.

Sarah de Souza-Ingle  
Chair

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022