

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a meeting of the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

held in the School and via Microsoft Teams at 8.00am on Friday 23rd September 2022

Present:	Steve Miles Stephen Lawlor Andrew Bonwick Richard Vass	Chair of Governors Headteacher Chair of Curriculum Committee (via Team) Vice Chair of Governors & Chair of Facilities & Finance Committee
In Attendance:	Melissa Mulgrew Jo Cross Wendy Newton	Business Manager Deputy Headteacher (Academic) Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Sarah de Souza-Ingle Fiona Harrison	Chair of Staff & Student Matters Committee Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Sarah de Souza-Ingle and Fiona Harrison.

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 2022-23, or conflicts of interest, or receipts of gifts or hospitality.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2022 were **agreed** as a true record.

ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 15, Para 18.- Cyber Security Link Governor. (**Clerk's Note Post Meeting:** The optional concept of having a dedicated cyber security link governor had been discussed at the Facilities & Finance Committee held on 22nd June 2022 and had been rejected by the committee.)

ITEM 5 – CHAIRS' ACTION

5. A summary of chairs' actions taken since the last Full GB meeting held on 8th July 2022 was received and noted.

ITEM 6 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

6. **Decision.** The terms of reference for the Management Committee were received for annual review and, after the revision of one job title, were **approved**.

ITEM 7 – HEADTEACHER'S UPDATE

7. The Headteacher reported that the start of the new school year had gone well. Attendance was good although there was a small amount of staff sickness. Covid-related absences were going down. After the disruption of the past two years, morale was particularly high following the good public examination results. Twenty Year 13 students had achieved Oxbridge places (15 to Cambridge & 5 to Oxford). The Year 7 Entrance Test had been held earlier that week with 1186 candidates in total, the highest ever and an increase of 180 on the previous year. Forty-two candidates were PPG, up from 34 the previous year. Governors noted the increase in PPG candidates and acknowledged that it would take time for the School's fair access message to spread in the local community. An Ofsted inspection was still awaited and expected in the near future.

ACTION

ITEM 8 – FINANCIAL & SSEF PROJECT UPDATE

ACTION

8. The Business Manager advised that the School was still awaiting the final accounts from Horizon for the SSEF Project and that the School had pushed back a few items to the contractor. A final School settlement figure was to be sent shortly. It was suggested that due to circumstances caused by Covid, the project had run at a loss for the contractor. The School was reported as being in a good place financially and that the turnout for the year-end accounts 2021-22 was likely to show a small surplus. The forecast for the end of 2022-23 was now expected to be breakeven, this followed the announcement of the new staff cost of living pay increases which were more than previously budgeted (3-4%). Some School savings were likely to arise from the reversal of the National Insurance increases. Governors noted that the increase in energy prices would have an effect in the future once the current fixed-term contracts had ended (2023 for electricity and 2024 for gas). The School was only eligible for an energy cap on one recent short-term contract for the SSEF buildings. It was stated that if the School was not on fixed term energy contracts, there would be a £0.5million impact on School expenditure.

9. **Decision**. The audit options available within the Juniper internal scrutiny programme were presented for consideration. The Committee reviewed the options and the Business Manager proposed that following some recent School incidents, a Site Security audit would be beneficial. It was **agreed** that, in addition to the usual Financial Internal Controls audit, a Site Security audit would be undertaken during 2022-23. It was suggested that financial assistance for any required remedial work may be available from a future CIF bid.

M Mulgrew

8.20 - Andrew Bonwick joined the meeting remotely via Teams.

ITEM 9 – NEW YEAR 7 PARENTS EVENING

10. The new Year 7 Parents' Welcome Evening had taken place the previous evening. It was the third parent event of the term and had been very-well attended. The activities of the evening were summarised and it was reported that parent feedback would be received in due course.

ITEM 10 – ANNUAL EXAMINATION REVIEW

11. The Public Examinations Review 2022 and summaries of A level and GCSE grade breakdowns were received. There was an 86.9% A*-B grade success rate at A level and a 94.4% 9-7 grade success rate at GCSE for Summer 2022, this was a 2.8% and 10.4% increase respectively on the last formal public examinations taken in Summer 2019. The Headteacher reminded Governors that some exam boards had given schools extra syllabus guidance to take into account the disruption caused by the Covid years. Governors commended the excellent examination results and praised the work of the teaching staff. The close correlation between the TA figures and final exam results was highlighted as demonstrating the teachers' knowledge of their students. It was stated that there was still room for improvement in a few small areas and that the School would be addressing them. The benefit of holding a second set of mock examinations for Years 11 and 13 was stressed and Governors asked whether this system would continue. It was stated that the School's Extended SLT were considering this concept but that it would affect teaching & learning time as well as having a knock-on effect on formal assessments in other year groups. Data on the performance of other Essex grammar schools was reported as being sparse but that it would become available in due course. CCHS was currently third in grammar schools in Essex for A levels and was top for GCSEs. It was noted that Year 11 students and their parents use GCSE results when looking for possible sixth forms, and that good results at GCSE were key for Sixth Form recruitment. The Governors expressed their formal thanks to the whole school for the excellent examination results.

12. **Decision**. The Chair agreed to write a letter of thanks to staff about the examination results.

Chair

ITEM 11 – SIXTH FORM UPDATE

13. It was reported that Year 12 numbers had now settled at 168 students. Admissions had peaked at 189 but numbers always fell as the start of term approached and school choices were finalised. It was stressed that the CCHS Sixth Form admissions process was now far more robust and that the market for Sixth Form education was very competitive. Governors noted the significant increase

in Year 12 student numbers and asked the School for confirmation that Sixth Form lessons were still workable with the higher numbers. It was confirmed that Year 12 class sizes varied with subject but that it was manageable in all subjects. Close attention had been paid to class sizes and group numbers during the Sixth Form recruitment period and good, full thriving classes were reported. The substantial effect of increased Sixth Form numbers on School income was noted.

14. Thirty-six students had chosen to leave the CCHS after Year 11 and fifty-five new students had joined Year 12, approximately 1/3 of the year group. The new students had been quickly assimilated into the School with a formal access lessons programme for any students with gaps in their basic knowledge. Governors queried why the new external Year 12 students would have chosen to leave their previous schools. It was suggested that shorter travel time was likely to be the main reason for moving to CCHS particularly if they had not been successful in getting into the school in Year 7.

ITEM 12 –STAFF COST OF LIVING PAY INCREASES & PAY POLICY 2022

15. The Clerk advised that the recommended cost of living pay increases for teachers had been passed to the Government, but that formal approval was not due until 14th October. Changes to the Teachers’ Pay Review Board recommendations were highly unlikely and approval in principle was requested on the proposed CCHS Teachers and Leadership pay scales for September 2022. The teachers’ pay award ranged from 8.98% at M1 to 5% at M6, all the UPS spine points, all the Leadership spine points and all CCHS TLRs. The proposed figures had been included in the CCHS Pay Policy for September 2022. Unions were still in discussion about the Support Staff (NJC) cost of living pay increase for April 2022. The latest employer offer was an additional £1,925 on every point of the pay scale, this represented an increase of 10.5% at Point 1 to 4.13% at Point 42. Governors discussed the increases and noted that they were above the budgeted figure of 4%. The Committee discussed the proposed pay scales and the Headteacher advised that staff strike action was expected in the future. The proposed changes to the CCHS Pay Policy for September 2022 were reviewed. The Clerk raised one issue relating to the staff remuneration disclosure figure in Section 18 of the Pay Policy. The figure had been reduced to £60,000 in the March 2022 Accounts Direction but still remained at £100,000 in the September 2022 Academies Trust Handbook (was the Academies Financial Handbook). Additional ESFA guidance was to be sought on the matter.

16. **Decisions.**

- a. The Committee **approved in principle** the CCHS Teachers and Leadership Pay Scales for September 2022 as presented and **agreed** that the School could implement and backdate the pay award to 1st September 2022 once formal approval was received from the Government in the form of the School Teachers Pay & Conditions Document (STPCD) 2022. Back pay was to be processed in the School’s November 2022 pay run.
- b. The Committee also **approved in principle** the CCHS Support Staff Pay Scale for April 2022 as presented and **agreed** that the School could implement and backdate the pay award to 1st April 2022 once formal agreement had been made. If agreement was made, back pay was to be processed in the School’s November 2022 pay run.
- c. The CCHS Pay Policy for September 2022 was **approved in principle** as presented, subject to STPCD publication. It was **agreed** that reference to an actual disclosure figure in Section 18 would be removed to say in line with the Academies Accounts Direction.
- d. It was **agreed** that the Business Manager would investigate the effect of changing from the School’s current Funding Agreement, if required by a change of Company Articles.

M Mulgrew

M Mulgrew

Head Clerk

M Mulgrew

ITEM 13 – GOVERNING BODY MATTERS

17. **Item 13.1 – Full GB Meeting Agenda - Decision.** The proposed agenda for the Full GB meeting to be held on Thursday 20th October 2022 was reviewed. The Committee noted the agenda item on the possible revision to the Company structure and discussed a recent DfE reply concerning the proposed changes to the Company Articles. The Clerk advised that she was awaiting telephone contact from the DfE to discuss the revisions and the effect on the School’s Funding Agreement. The Committee stressed that full information of any possible consequences caused by a change of Articles was required before a decision to change to the new DfE-model articles was made. With the expansion of Item 6.4 - Company Structure, the agenda was **approved**.

Clerk

18. Item 13.2 - GB & Sub-Committee Membership - Decision. Details of the current GB terms of office and sub-committee membership were received. The Committee noted that there were two vacant Nominated Governor positions, and that Richard Brown and Jenny Fowle would be coming to the end of their current terms of office in January and March 2023 respectively. The Clerk **agreed** to ascertain if Richard Brown and Jenny Fowle intended to continue as Governors. The current sub-committee membership was reviewed, and it was noted that any removal of Staff Governors, as suggested by DfE, would have a detrimental effect on certain sub-committee membership.

ACTION

Clerk

19. Item 13.3 – Academy Structure. Discussion on the possible change to the Academy structure had been covered during Item 13.1.

20. Item 13.4 – MAT Update. The Headteacher advised that communication on the MAT issue had stopped during the recent Government Cabinet changes. The new Secretary of State for Education was Mr Kit Malthouse. There had been a commitment by the previous Cabinet for all schools to be part of a MAT by 2030 and the School was awaiting confirmation that this was to continue with the new Cabinet. Two possible MAT options had been suggested for CCHS: (1) for a MAT formed from other girls' grammar schools from around the country and (2) for a MAT composed of local MESH schools. Tentative discussions had been undertaken with both these groups. Governors questioned the requirement for a lead school within a MAT and it was confirmed that one school was required to take on the role. The meeting discussed the issue of MATS and what the benefits would be for CCHS. It was suggested that some schools had experienced a dilution of ethos and lack of control after joining a MAT. It was stated that the School needed to keep on top of the MAT issue, have full investigations, and ensure that there was full balanced debate at GB level. It was noted that if the School was forced to become part of a MAT it needed to be in control of the change and not be forced into anything at short notice. There was still time to fully investigate the MAT situation but any decision should not wait until the last minute.

ITEM 14 – POLICIES

21. Nine ECC-model GDPR policies were presented for re-approval as follows: (1) Acceptable Use Policy, (2) Information Governance Framework Policy, (3) Non-Disclosure Agreement, (4) Records Management Policy, (5) Security Incidents Policy, (6) SIRO Role Profile, (7) Statutory Requests for Information Policy, (8) Information Governance Strategy and (9) Data Protection Policy. All policies were ECC policies and the Business Manager reported no material changes.

22. **Decision**. All policies listed in Para 21 were **approved** with a 2-year review apart from the Information Governance Strategy which was **approved** with an annual review.

ITEM 15 – WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

23. **Decision**. The Whistleblowing Policy was presented for annual review with one minor Juniper HR amendment and **approved** for presentation to the Full GB for their final approval.

Clerk

ITEM 16 – RISK REGISTER

24. **Decision**. The Management Committee section of the CCHS Risk Register was reviewed and **approved** as presented. It was noted that there was a need for a specific energy-related risk which would be listed within the Facilities & Finance Committee section of the Risk Register. The Business Manager **agreed** to review the Risk Register for energy risks and report her findings at the next Facilities & Finance Committee meeting. Governors questioned whether, in light of the rising fuels prices, there was a need to increase the swimming pool hire rates or reduce the energy costs by the use of alternative energy. The Business Manager advised that an energy audit had just been completed and the audit report was awaited.

M Mulgrew

ITEM 17 – COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS

25. The Headteacher informed the Committee that complimentary remarks received by the School were now incorporated into various parts of the School website. There had been one verbal complaint from a local resident on the day of the Entrance Test concerning car parking around the School. The matter had been addressed by the Site Manager in a polite, professional manner. It

was confirmed that the authorities had been informed of the test and of possible traffic problems. No other complaints had been received by the School. Governors queried whether the new road scheme on Broomfield Road had improved the traffic situation around the School in relation to student safety. The Headteacher advised that whilst the traffic light sequencing had improved, cars still ignored the yellow road hatchings. The School's biggest concern related to the cycle lanes running between the pavement and the new bus stops which were deemed very dangerous for the students and had already caused three accidents. The problem had been raised with Essex County Council in September 2021 as a child safety issue, but a formal response was still awaited. There had also been one complaint from a parent of a Year 10 student concerning a request to change subjects which was deemed inappropriate and was being dealt with by School staff.

ACTION

ITEM 18 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

26. No other items of business were raised.

ITEM 19 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

27. **Decision**. The date of the next meeting was **agreed** as 8.00am on Friday 2nd December 2022.

All

The meeting closed at 9.50am.

Steve Miles, Chair

2nd December 2022