

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 23rd November 2022

Present:	Sarah de Souza-Ingle Stephen Lawlor Jenny Fowle Funmi Osilaja Svetlana Warhurst	Chair Headteacher (from 5.30pm)
In Attendance:	Fiona Harrison Michael Palmer Sophie Dulake Erin Cameron Ody Ozono Wendy Newton	Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) Assistant Headteacher (Head of Sixth Form) Chair of the Sixth Form Council Chair of the Student Voice Secretary of the Student Voice Clerk to Governors
Apologies:	Jason Oster	

1. The Chair opened by welcoming the student representatives to their first Committee meeting.

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

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 2022-23, 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 meeting held on 29th November 2022 were received and summarised by the Chair and Secretary of the Student Voice Committee. Issues raised included: culture week & diversity, concerns on the amount of homework, topics for RTP, student lunchtime activities and charity events. Queries had been raised on the cost of School uniform and the School advised that the issue was being addressed for the next academic year, this had been fed back to the students. Governors asked questions about the items raised and further clarification was received.

5. Item 3.2 – Sixth Form Council Minutes. The minutes of Sixth Form Council meeting held on 29th September 2022 were received and summarised by the Chair of the Sixth Form Council. Issues raised included: the content of rolling tutor period, the recording of lessons for catch-up purposes and requests for more pre-reading and wider reading guidance. Student feedback on teaching and learning had been passed to the Asst Headteacher (T&L) for consideration. Microsoft Teams was being used to collect and distribute information amongst the students. The lack of quiet study areas and poor WiFi reception in certain areas of the School had been raised as a student concern and Governors received additional information from the School on both issues. The issue of long queues in the Sixth Form canteen had been taken to the Business Manager. Governors queried specific items in the minutes including UCAS information and the speed of lessons, and further explanation was received.

6. Item 3.3 – Other Student Issues. No other items were raised for discussion.

5.25pm – The Student Representatives left the meeting.

ACTION

ITEM 4 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR 2022-23

7. **Decision.** Nominations were sought for the role of Vice Chair of the Committee for 2022-23. Svetlana Warhurst volunteered for 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 11th July 2022 were approved as a true record.

ITEM 6 - MATTERS ARISING

9. Item 16, Para 18 – e-Safety & Data Security Policy. The Clerk confirmed that the e-Safety & Data Security Policy had been approved by email after the last meeting but that the School intended to re-write the policy during this academic year. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would re-present the e-Safety & Data Security Policy for review in one year.

ITEM 7 – CHAIR’S ACTION

10. The Chair had approved the Child Protection Policy early in September 2022 as the policy was required 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 2022.

5.30pm – Funmi Osilaja joined the meeting.

ITEM 8 – COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE & MEMBERSHIP

11. Item 8.1 to 8.3 – Terms of Reference - 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 and **approved** as presented.

12. Item 8.4 – Staff Pay Committee - Decision. It was **agreed** that the membership of the Staff Pay Committee for 2022-23 would be Sarah de Souza-Ingle (Chair), Jenny Fowle and Funmi Osilaja. Svetlana Warhurst **agreed** to act as chair of the Staff Pay Appeals Committee, if required.

ITEM 9 – GENERAL SCHOOL UPDATE

13. The Headteacher reported that the start of the school year was very normal but that some disruption was occurring due to the rail strikes. Sixth Form students were being encouraged to make every effort to attend school in person, 35 to 41 students had been absent on recent strike days. It was suggested that students living close to each other could be encouraged to share alternative travel arrangements. The School did not wish to return to blended learning as, whilst possible, it was additional work for teachers. Traditional School events had returned to normality along with external School trips. In light of the Covid pandemic, the School’s focus was on the Year 11 and 13 examination year groups. There was to be no curriculum adjustment for public examinations this academic year and SLT was preparing a strategy to help these year groups with opportunities to undertake additional assessments to ensure that students were prepared for sitting the examinations. Teacher Assessment 1 was underway and would be followed by student progress meetings to identify individual students in need of specific support.

14. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) confirmed that the School was returning to normal. Year 11 mock examinations had taken place and students had coped well. Governors queried how the students had handled to examination process and further details were received. It was noted that CCHS students are generally very good at examinations and that the School works hard to build confidence prior to the final examinations in the Summer. The Head of Sixth Form advised that there was however some evidence of issues caused by the pandemic, such as worries about workload. The School had 69 early entries for UCAS, a similar number to previous years, and the pressures of the university entry system were explained and discussed. Governors queried what support was in place for unsuccessful students during the various stages of applying for university, and additional information was received.

ACTION

Clerk

All

ITEM 10 – OFSTED

ACTION

16. An Ofsted visit was still awaited. The Headteacher had recently been to an SSGS meeting and Ofsted had been discussed. Four schools had recently been inspected and reported that they had been happy with the inspection process. Media reports suggested that 80% of previously Outstanding schools had been downgraded following recent Ofsted inspections. The Headteacher advised that only 25% of former Outstanding schools had kept their rating but that grammar schools had a higher success rate of 33%. Some prominent schools had lost their Outstanding rating. The School had been prepared for an Ofsted visit for some years and had attempted to normalise the concept with staff. CCHS had last been inspected by Ofsted in 2007, and all previously exempt Outstanding schools were due to be visited before 2025. The meeting was advised that an Ofsted visit was generally an evidence gathering exercise to check the reality behind School results.

ITEM 11 – STAFFING

17. A summary of staff changes since the last meeting were received for information. The Headteacher advised that staff members seemed more willing to change employment or retire nowadays which may be a residue factor from the pandemic. New staff had been recruited and allowance had been made for the ongoing expansion and increasing student numbers. Governors queried if there had been any issues relating to low student numbers in any specific subjects and which had affected staffing needs. There were a few smaller subject groups but none that had caused concern. The breadth of the CCHS curriculum was noted, and the meeting advised that it was very hard to bring back a subject once it had been removed from the curriculum. Teacher recruitment was very difficult at present and that there was a general teacher retention and recruitment crisis in the country as a whole. Governors queried the staffing of Computer Science following the late notice departure of the Subject Leader last term and the Headteacher gave details of how the situation had been resolved. A vacancy caused by the unexpected departure of an ECT Teacher of French had been temporary filled by a current Governor and the former Languages Faculty Leader.

18. The Chair raised the topic of staff wellbeing and was advised that staff morale was good following the disruption of the Covid experience. There was potential for upset with the future teacher strike action when it was known. School union representatives had stressed that any industrial action was aimed at the national context and not the School itself. SLT had begun planning for industrial action and it was stressed that the School would not close. Staff wellbeing was a standing item on the weekly SLT agenda and details of activities available for staff were summarised and commended by Governors. The minutes of the Staff Voice meeting held on 8th November 2022 were received for information. Governors asked for explanation of the absences and cover figures reported in the minutes and the Headteacher gave additional explanation, it was confirmed that the figures were normal for this time of the year. There was discussion on the general cover situation, and it was stressed that the School ensured quality of cover work was good and that strong personnel supervised the lessons. If there were any long-term teaching staff absences, examination groups were taught by specialist teachers and cover moved to lower year groups.

ITEM 12 – STAFF DEVELOPMENT

19. A Staff Development Report dated November 2022, prepared by the new Asst Headteacher (T&L and Staff Development), was received for information. Governors noted the large amount of CPD undertaken by both teachers and support staff. The Headteacher reminded the Committee that a former member of support staff had trained through the TES Institute Scheme and was now a fully qualified teacher of French and working at the School. The process of internal promotions was noted and commended by the Governors. The use of paid TLR3 projects to aid staff development and progression was explained.

ITEM 13 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

20. The School Development Plan (SDP) 2022-23 was received for information and noted. The document had recently been reviewed at the Full GB meeting and no further questions were raised.

ITEM 14 – CARE & GUIDANCE REPORT

21. The Care & Guidance Report dated November 2022 had been reviewed by the Committee and the contents of the report were noted. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) highlighted the good work being undertaken within the School including the recent Year 11 Leadership Conference. The Meet the Tutor Evenings had been very successful and had allowed for pastoral information to be passed directly to parents, mirroring the information students received in assemblies. Governors queried the ongoing lack of a School Nurse and it was stated that Provide, the NHS sub-contractor, was too stretched to be able to provide an individual school nurse on a weekly basis and this was also true for other schools. It was reported that there was currently a one-year wait for external student counselling. The meeting discussed the alternative options for counselling and noted that the current counselling situation was a worry.

22. **Decision.** The Chair agreed to write to Vicky Ford MP to voice her concerns about the School Nurse situation.

ITEM 15 – SEN

23. An SEN Report dated November 2021 prepared by the SENCO was received for information. The SENCO had been away on sick leave for most of the term and SLT had been working hard to ensure that all SEN students were supported. A number of One Plan meetings had taken place and the remainder would be undertaken by the SENCO after her return in early December. Heidi Pocock, one of the School Development Leaders, was undertaking a project with an SEN focus. A new ECC framework was coming out about supporting everyone within the classroom and the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) advised that the School was working hard to make sure that classrooms were inclusive. Governors noted the intention to use Provision Map for SEND students this year. The work of Claire Fairchild, SEND Assistant, was highly commended in the absence of the SENCO.

ITEM 16 – ENTRANCE TEST UPDATE

24. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) gave an update on the Year 7 Entrance Test held in September. All candidates had now received their entrance test results and had been required to enter their school choices on the ECC CAF by 31st October. The final list of successful Year 7 entrants would be received on National Offer Day on 31st March 2023. It was hoped that PPG numbers would be higher again this year. The School was currently investigating the options for a new entrance test and details would be brought to Governors at the Governor Conference in January 2023. It was suggested that it was an exciting opportunity to help disadvantaged students even further. The concept and ethos of the Fair Access Plan was discussed.

ITEM 17 – PUPIL PREMIUM

25. A summary of Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) spending from 1st September to 9th November 2022 was received showing expenditure totalling £9,761.58. The sum of £35,519 had been carried forward from 2021-22 and anticipated income for 2022-23 was £37,334. The meeting was advised that a new member of support staff was now overseeing the administration of PPG funds and was putting all the PPG information onto Provision Map so that the School can track the impact of School interventions. Details were given on how the PPG could be used utilised. It was noted that some expenditure was very bespoke to particular individuals and their own situations. It was stated that a positive impact could be seen from the PPG expenditure. Governors reviewed the PPG expenditure items and additional clarification was received. The School now had two Looked After students and their family had been given information on how the School can help them.

26. The Head of Sixth Form explained the Sixth Form Bursary scheme and how the rules on expenditure differed from the Main School PPG expenditure and were much tighter. Travel, uniform, stationery and food were covered but things like trips and visits were not. The Sixth Form team were working to see how students could be better supported including university contextual offers. Sixth Form Bursary spend was also going to be recorded on Provision Map. The School stressed

ACTION

Chair

that information was regularly sent out to parents and on the School website informing them of the help available and how to apply.

ACTION

ITEM 18 – SAFEGUARDING

27. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) tabled a summary of safeguarding concerns in comparison to the previous year. There had been 36 new concerns reported since September and 280 visits to the Pastoral Hub. The Hub was very successful and supported by a roster of year leaders at all times. Two referrals had been made to CAMS but there was a one-year wait for counselling. The details behind the information received were explained in detail by the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral). A new female Community Police Officer had been assigned to the School who was very supportive and helpful, talking to students, giving advice and was to address some Sixth Form assemblies in the future. Governors commended the new format of the safeguarding information.

ITEM 19 – POLICIES

28. **Decision.** Six School policies required approval. The Committee discussed the policies and the proposed amendments and approved the policies with the review periods stated below:

- a. Confidentiality Policy – non-statutory, 4-year review,
- b. Safeguarding Allegations against Staff Policy – non-statutory, annual review,
- c. Early Career Teacher Policy - non-statutory, annual review,
- e. Menopause Policy –non-statutory, 2-year review,
- f. Mobile Phone Policy –non-statutory, annual review,
- g. Communication Protocol – non-statutory, 2-year review.

ITEM 20 – RISK REGISTER

29. **Decision.** The Staff & Student Matters Committee section of the CCHS Risk Register was reviewed. The Clerk **agreed** to update SLT role titles and reduce the probability of Risk S6 from '3' to '2'. With those amendments, the Risk Register was approved.

Clerk

ITEM 21 – INFORMATION ITEMS

30. **Item 21.1 – DBS Checks.** A summary of DBS and Barred List checks undertaken from June to November 2022 was received for information and noted. The meeting was advised that the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) undertook half-termly checks of the School's Single Central Record. Governors noted the new requirement for German Exchange host parents to be DBS checked and there was discussion on the time taken for checks to be completed.

ITEM 22 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

31. No other items of business were raised.

ITEM 23 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

32. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting was agreed as Tuesday 15th March 2023.
(Clerk's Note: Changed post meeting to be 27th March 2023)

All

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Sarah de Souza-Ingle
Chair

Date: 27th March 2023