

CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Minutes of a Meeting of the STAFF & STUDENT MATTERS COMMITTEE held at the School at 5.00pm on Monday 27th March 2023

Present:	Sarah de Souza-Ingle Stephen Lawlor Jenny Fowle, Funmi Osilaja Jason Oster Svetlana Warhurst	Chair Headteacher
In Attendance:	Fiona Harrison Michael Palmer Wendy Newton Elodie Bennie Emily Yarham	Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) Assistant Headteacher (Head of Sixth Form) Clerk to Governors Student Rep - Chair of the Student Voice Student Rep - Chair of the Sixth Form Council

ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. There were no apologies for absence, all Committee members were present.

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, receipts of gifts or hospitality reported.

ITEM 3 – STUDENT ISSUES

3. The Chair welcomed the new Student Representatives to their first meeting.
4. Item 3.1 - Student Voice Minutes. The minutes of Student Voice meeting held on 9th February 2023 were summarised by the Chair of the Student Voice Committee. Items raised included: concerns about homework time, the allocation of computer rooms, a request for uniform shorts and minor canteen issues which were being resolved by the School. Governors asked for clarification on homework timing and were advised that it related to specific subjects. Students had been advised to discuss the problem with relevant teachers and that it was correct to stop after 30 minutes even if the homework had not been completed. It was confirmed that every question raised by a student was put onto the Student Voice agenda and discussed at the actual meeting.
5. Item 3.2 – Sixth Form Council Minutes. The minutes of Sixth Form Council meeting held on 9th February 2023 were summarised by the Chair of the Sixth Form Council. The need for greater spacing between homework tasks had been raised. This issue related to the layout of the timetable and affected students were advised to discuss problems with the relevant teacher as extra time or a deadline extension can always be arranged. There was Year 13 concern about subject content coverage and if there was enough time to cover the full syllabus for one subject. Students had been reassured all syllabus content was covered. The extra intervention and subject revision sessions had been praised by students and considered to be very useful, particularly 1-on-1 language speaking sessions. The need for canteen prices to be fully displayed was being addressed by the School. Governors noted the ongoing comments on access to lesson PowerPoints and associated notes. The meeting discussed the issue which was generally resolved by students asking relevant teachers to make such resources available as appropriate.
6. Item 3.3 – Other Student Issues. No other issues were raised and the students left the meeting.

ITEM 4 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

7. The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2022 were approved as a true record.

ACTION

ITEM 5 - MATTERS ARISING

ACTION

8. Item 14, Para 22 – School Nurse. It was confirmed that the Chair had written to Vicky Ford MP concerning the lack of a School Nurse. Since the intervention the School now had a new School Nurse on a monthly drop-in basis (it had been weekly) or on an individual request basis. The School thanked the Chair for her assistance in the matter.

ITEM 6 – CHAIR’S ACTION

9. It was reported that the Chair had recently approved the Accessibility Policy as an interim measure prior to it being formally reviewed later in this meeting.

ITEM 7 – GENERAL SCHOOL UPDATE

10. The Headteacher gave an update on the current School situation. The industrial action taken by members of the NEU had occurred and the School had remained fully open to all year groups throughout the action. SLT and remaining staff had worked incredibly hard to keep the School running. The current focus of the School was on Years 11 and 13 as they approached their public examinations. There had been no adjustments by central authorities for the Summer public examinations and the School had initiated additional assessments to help the students of these cohorts prepare for their examinations. A recent INSET day had been re-purposed as a workload management day for staff. During that day Year 11 students had attended School in order to undertake some additional assessments. Students were very appreciative of the extra work being undertaken by teaching staff. It was reported that members of staff would have gained time in the Summer Term for CPD and planning for the next academic year. Governors queried whether there had been any resurgence of Covid and were advised that there had been occasional cases in both the student body and amongst staff members but that Covid was now treated like any other illness.

ITEM 8 – OFSTED

11. The School was still awaiting an Ofsted visit; it was thought to be one of only three secondary schools in Essex waiting inspection. An Ofsted visit this side of the Easter holiday was thought to be unlikely. The School was prepared whenever a visit might occur. Governors queried the outcome of Ofsted visits to other outstanding schools. The Headteacher advised that a number had been downgraded - 20% of schools had been graded as outstanding under the previous Ofsted Framework and the current Ofsted target was now 10%. Data suggested that grammar schools formerly graded as outstanding were more likely to keep their outstanding grading as opposed to non-selective outstanding schools. Some notable grammar schools had however lost their outstanding grading for varying reasons. The Committee discussed the general Ofsted situation and the current views relating to school inspections. It was recognised that schools needed to be inspected and CCHS wanted to be inspected to validate its work. The meeting was reminded of the programme of an Ofsted visit and the post-inspection report timescale was discussed.

ITEM 9 – STAFFING

12. The Spring Term 2023 School Staffing Update for 15th November 2022 to 17th March 2023 was received showing internal promotions and appointments, new staff and staff leavers. The Headteacher advised that the School had been interviewing for a new Mathematics teacher that day, the advert had attracted a significant pool of candidates and six teachers had been invited in for interview. This was deemed unusual in relation to the generally challenging reality of teacher recruitment.

13. The minutes of a Staff Voice meeting held on 7th March 2023 were received for information. Attention was brought to the actions taken by the School to help offset the additional work being undertaken in relation to Years 11 and 13, they included: an INSET day becoming a workload management day, bringing forward the last day of the Summer Term and the allocation of normal staff workload management days. Governors queried whether staff absence was analysed and were informed that the School had just invested in a new electronic system through which absences would be record and analysed more easily.

ITEM 10 – STAFF DEVELOPMENT

ACTION

14. The Staff Development Report dated March 2023 was reviewed. The Headteacher reminded Governors of the roles and responsibilities of the School Development Leaders (SDLs) which had continued into a second year as a permanent area of focus for the individuals concerned. The activities of the SDLs were summarised, and it was noted that they join with SLT at key times to become a larger Extended SLT group if a wider pool of input was required. It was confirmed that it would be possible for an SDL to change subject focus if deemed appropriate. The extensive list of training courses undertaken by staff was commended, demonstrating the extensive connections the School has with other agencies.

ITEM 11 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-23

15. The School Development Plan 2022-23 Mid-Term Review was noted. The document had been reviewed at the Full GB meeting the previous week and no additional questions were raised.

ITEM 12 – CARE & GUIDANCE REPORT

16. The Care & Guidance Report dated March 2023 was received for information. Governors noted the challenges reported in Year 9 and the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) gave additional explanation on the situation. The School's first school refuser was in this year group. It was confirmed that the Year 9 issues related to the Covid pandemic and its after-effects, and that the School was seeing problems never encountered before. There were continuing difficulties getting help from outside agencies. Governors queried the School's responsibilities relating to the school refuser and received more information on the situation. It was hoped that the student would eventually return into School.

ITEM 13 – SEND

17. The Committee received a SEND Update from the SENDCo dated March 2023. There were currently 34 students on the SEND Register (up from 28) including 2 students with an EHCP. The report gave a comprehensive summary of the current SEND situation within the School. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) advised that an EHCP review had been undertaken this week with the help of an external advisor. The training on autism undertaken by Heidi Pocock, SDL with a SEN focus, was highlighted, the findings of which were now being passed on within the School. A comment was queried on the support for Sixth Form SEND students and Non-Examined Assessments (NEAs) which could prove challenging for students with SEND. Additional information was received from the Head of Sixth Form and the issue was discussed. It was reported that the needs of every student were assessed and could therefore change year-on-year. The related issue of the EPQ and its suitability for SEND students was also debated.

18. Svetlana Warhurst, SEND Link Governor, had met with the SENDCo and her assistant in January and a summary of the meeting was received and summarised for the Committee. It was reported that with 2.23% of K Code (SEND Register) students the School was well below the national average (12.6%). In general, there was no difference in attendance between SEND and non-SEND students. There was good connection between staff in all year groups and all SEND students have access to the full curriculum. The proposed use of Provision Map for SEND students was noted for the future. It was suggested that one possible area of focus could be a review of the Sixth Form curriculum structure in relation to SEND students. It was reported that the meeting had been very informative, and the work of the SEND Team was commended.

ITEM 14 – ADMISSIONS

19. An Admissions Update for Year 7 Entry in September 2023 was received. Data relating to the Year 7 Entrance Test including: number of registrations, numbers attending the test and a breakdown of the successful candidates was reviewed and discussed. The success rate between independent and state schools, which was approximately 1-in-4 and 1-in-7 respectively, was discussed. It was stated that this would hopefully change once the new entrance test was in place

from September 2023. The increasing number of successful PPG students was noted. A new phase of primary outreach was about to start, and details of the proposed activity were summarised.

ITEM 15 – PUPIL PREMIUM

20. A summary of PPG spending from 1st September 2022 to 10th March 2023 was received showing expenditure totalling £27,161. Anticipated income for 2022-23 was £36,392. The sum of £35,519 had been carried forward from 2021-22 plus an additional £9,384 from Recovery Premium funds. Governors reviewed the expenditure items and were advised that the School was looking into additional ways of spending the PPG. A new member of support staff had been tasked with the administration of the PPG expenditure and using Provision Map to track outcomes. Governors queried how the remainder of the PPG funding was to be used and details of future planned expenditure were explained.

ITEM 16 – SAFEGUARDING

21. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) tabled data on safeguarding concerns raised on MyConcern since the last meeting. There had been 60 new concerns, compared to 38 for the same period last year, and 344 visits to the School's Pastoral Hub, up from around 200. It was reported that visits to the Hub were recorded and tracked against lessons missed. Years 8-10 were the biggest users and the reasons discussed; anxiety was noted as a major factor. There had been four referrals to CAMHS and one current school refuser in Year 9. The new School Nurse was now visiting monthly, or when specifically requested. Student counselling continued on three days per week. Details of School activity relating to student and staff wellbeing were summarised.

ITEM 17 – POLICIES

22. Item 17.1 - Accessibility Policy - Decision. The non-statutory Accessibility Policy was presented with minor amendments and **approved** with a 3-year review.

23. Item 17.2 - Staff Code of Conduct - Decision. The statutory Staff Code of Conduct was presented with Juniper HR and School amendments. The Committee discussed an amendment relating to alcohol consumption and the Clerk **agreed** to re-word the paragraph. With the amendment, the Staff Code of Conduct was **approved** with a 2-year review.

Clerk

ITEM 18 – RISK REGISTER

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

ITEM 19 – INFORMATION ITEM(S)

25. Item 19.1 – Disclosure & Barring Service Checks. A summary of DBS and Barred List checks undertaken by the School from 15th November 2022 to 17th March 2023 was received and noted.

ITEM 21 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

26. Vote of Thanks. On her retirement from the Governing Body, Jenny Fowle was thanked by the Chair for her work on the Committee during her time as a Governor.

ITEM 20 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

27. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting was agreed as 5.00pm on Wednesday 28th June 2023. The meeting closed at 6.50pm.

All

Sarah de Souza-Ingle
Chair

28th June 2023