

## 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 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Present: Yvonne Wickers Chair  
Stephen Lawlor Headteacher  
Ros Cornish  
Jenny Fowle  
Jason Oster

In Attendance: Maria French Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)  
Wendy Newton Clerk to Governors  
Bethan Evans  
Jessica Steadman

#### ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

#### ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2. The Chair declared that she had recently become a Staff Governor at The Anglo European School in Ingatestone. The Chair of Governors had already been made aware of the situation and had deemed that there was no conflict of interest in relation to the CCHS Governing Body. No other declarations of business interest, further to those already stated on the Register of Business Interests for 2019-20, or conflicts of interest or receipts of gifts or hospitality were made

#### ITEM 3 – STUDENT ISSUES

3. Item 3.1 - Student Voice Minutes. The minutes of Student Voice meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019 were summarised by the Chair of the Student Voice Committee. It was reported that there was now a big push for the School to become more eco-friendly and the students' suggestions and actions were summarised. Concerns had been raised about the School expansion in relation to the canteen, bag space and congestion, and the Headteacher advised how the School was addressing the issue of overcrowding in the canteen at lunchtime. Governors were advised that a GCSE taster day in Year 9 had been well-received and the general concept was discussed. The Chair queried a comment made about teacher-student relationships and additional explanation was received. It was noted that room numbering had been raised and the meeting was advised that the situation was likely to be reviewed once the new teaching block had been completed.

4. Item 3.2 – Sixth Form Council Minutes. The minutes of Sixth Form Council meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 were summarised by the Chair of the Sixth Form Council. Issues discussed by the Sixth Form included recycling, slow wi-fi and extra study space but it was reported that additional rooms had now been allocated as Sixth Form study areas. Students had queried whether the two student forums were being used effectively due to the amount of time between meetings and the difficulty in following up action points and the issue was discussed by the meeting. It was stressed that all points raised in both forums were discussed by SLT. The problem of bag storage had been raised in a number of Sixth Form Council meetings and as students no longer had personal lockers it was suggested that cubby holes in the common rooms may help to alleviate the problem. The Student Reps were informed that the Business Manager was currently investigating the issue. A suggestion had been made that mixing Year 12 and 13 PE groups would be beneficial to better socialisation between the year groups.

5. Item 3.3 – Other Student Issues. It was reported that there had been concerns about predicted A level grades as a result of varying attitudes to grade prediction between subjects and individual teachers. Examples were given and the general situation was discussed. The concern of the students was noted by the meeting and it was confirmed that students could query their predicted

#### ACTION

grade and receive an explanation from their teachers. Governors suggested that it might be beneficial for the Head of Sixth Form to have clearer discussions about predicted grades with the Year 12 students next year. This was the last meeting for the current Student Representatives before they handed over their roles and the students were thanked for their participation and wished well for their future studies. It was suggested that the timing of the Senior Prefect handover of roles was not ideal and the comment was noted by the meeting.

**5.38pm – The Student Representatives left the meeting.**

#### **ITEM 4 – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR 2019-20**

6. **Decision.** Nominations were sought for the role of Vice Chair of the Committee for 2019-20. Jason Oster volunteered for the role and was unanimously elected.

#### **ITEM 5 - MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

7. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 were approved and signed as a true record.

#### **ITEM 6 - MATTERS ARISING**

8. **Item 5, Para 6 – VLE Resources.** The Chair confirmed that she had spoken to the Chair of the Curriculum Committee about the issue of VLE resources.

9. **Item 11, Para 21 – Pupil Premium.** Having conferred with the Director of Music, the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) reported that the School was unaware of any Pupil Premium students who had been required to drop music lessons once they had entered the Sixth Form.

#### **ITEM 7 – CHAIR'S ACTION**

10. There was no Chair's Action to report.

#### **ITEM 8 – COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE & MEMBERSHIP**

11. **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. **Staff Pay Committee Membership - Decision.** It was agreed that the membership of the Staff Pay Committee for 2019-20 would be Yvonne Wickers (Chair), Ros Cornish and Jason Oster. If required, Jenny Fowle would act on the Staff Pay Appeals Committee.

#### **ITEM 9 – POLICIES**

13. **Item 9.1 – Staff Pay Policy.** The ECC-model Staff Pay Policy for 2019 was presented for annual approval. Changes related to the national cost of living pay and TLR allowance increases which were in line with the STPCD 2019 plus some minor revisions to the wording and rate of pay for additional work and one-to-one tuition. It was confirmed that the Management Committee had authorised the payment of the cost of living pay award in September. Governors queried phraseology in the policy relating to teaching standards and the classification system used within the School and how it related to the teacher standards was explained. The Chair asked how the performance management process impacted on teachers, what effect it had and how the process created improvement within the School and the Headteacher gave a full explanation of the process and answered additional Governor questions on the concept of learning walks.

14. **Decision.** The Staff Pay Policy for 2019 was approved as presented with an annual review.

15. **Item 9.2 – Smoking Policy - Decision.** The Smoking Policy was presented for re-approval. A proposal was put forward that the current exclusion in the policy for the Caretaker's House should be

removed and the meeting discussed the issue. The meeting was advised that a letting contract was already in place and may need to be revised. Confirmation was received that a small number of School staff did still smoke.

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16. **Decisions.** With agreement on the proposed change, the Smoking Policy was approved with a four-year review period. It was also agreed that the policy should be re-circulated for the benefit of new School staff.

**M French**

### **ITEM 10 – STAFFING & STAFF WORKLOAD**

17. The Headteacher gave a verbal update on the current staffing situation and summarised the changes occurring at the start of the academic year. It was stated that recruiting teachers was becoming more challenging and that overseas applicants often exceeded those from the UK. It was also reported that it had been necessary to use an agency teacher for Chemistry due to the lack of applicants. The meeting was advised that the performance management of all the teaching staff had taken place.

### **ITEM 10 – OFSTED READY**

18. A summary of possible Ofsted questions relating to safeguarding was tabled for information along with relevant SLT comment and the meeting discussed the information. The Headteacher reminded the Committee that the School had not been inspected by Ofsted since 2007 and, whilst currently exempt from a full inspection, was liable to have a short 2-day Section 8 inspection which would focus on the quality of education and safeguarding. It was stated that unless Ofsted found major concerns it could not change the School's current judgement of Outstanding. The change of headship and the recent SSEF grant were likely to increase the likelihood of an inspection at some stage. The GB did not currently have the role of Link Governor for Free School Meals but the issue was reported to the full Staff & Student Matters Committee. It was also noted that the position of Link Governor for SEND was also now vacant due to a recent Governor departure. The Clerk advised that it was possible that the new Parent Governor may be joining this committee and may be able to take up the SEND Link Governor role in due course.

19. **Decision.** Yvonne Wickers volunteered to be Link Governor for Free School Meals and Jenny Fowle volunteered to be Link Governor for SEND for the interim.

**Chair  
J Fowle**

### **ITEM 12 – FOREIGN EXCHANGES**

20. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) advised that guidance in the September 2019 DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' suggested that the School should consider undertaking an Enhanced DBS Check and Barred List Check on any person over the age of 16 years in UK host family household involved in foreign exchange visit. ASCL guidance also suggested that it was good practice to undertake the checks. The big administrative burden and financial cost of undertaking DBS checks was discussed. The meeting was advised that there is no similar system of checks in either France or Germany for when CCHS students undertook the second leg of a foreign exchange which caused more concern for Governors. The meeting discussed the situation, the responsibility of the School and alternative options. The School's current risk assessment was to review host families against the MyConcern database and historic paperwork. The Headteacher advised that additional information was currently being gathered from other schools to assess what was being done elsewhere. SLT intend to consider the situation further and would take the issue to the Management Committee for further discussion in due course. The Committee acknowledged that the School may be required to commence DBS checks on host families but would need to monitor the impact on School's exchange programme.

### **ITEM 13 – CARE & GUIDANCE REPORT**

21. The Care & Guidance Report dated November 2019 was received and the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) summarised the content of the report. Governors questioned specific aspects of the report and additional clarification was given. The recent Year 11 Leadership Conference was noted and it was stated that a similar event for Year 7 students was being considered. It was reported that the

Year 8 Year Leader, Fiona Harrison, had just become a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. Governors queried the current waiting time for student counselling and were advised that there were currently only two students on the waiting list. It was suggested that parents are becoming more willing to pay for external counselling. A comment stating that approximately 50% of Sixth Form students dropped from studying four to three A levels at the end of Year 12 was queried by Governors as the figure was considered very high. The situation was explained by the Headteacher and it was reported that the issue had also recently been discussed by the Curriculum Committee. The programme of the Year 11 Leadership Conference was received for information and the very successful event was commended.

#### **ITEM 14 – SEN**

22. An SEN Update dated November 2019 prepared by the SENCO was received for information. There are currently 16 students on the SEN Register, seven of whom were in the Sixth Form. One student was on an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) receiving Band 4 funding and who was by a dedicated member of support staff, the student was reported as making excellent progress in the School. The meeting was advised that pupils officially came off the SEN register when they reached 18 years old, although there were circumstances when support could continue until 25 years old. It was noted that students do not have to pass SEN information onto universities and the School cannot pass it on. Students were strongly encouraged to inform their universities in order to receive suitable adjustments.

#### **ITEM 15 – PUPIL PREMIUM**

23. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) tabled a Pupil Premium spending report dated 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019 showing details of expenditure to date. There are currently 33 students in the School in receipt of the Pupil Premium each with an individual grant of £935 and totalling £30,855; of this £11,200 had been spent to date. The meeting discussed how the grant had been spent and its effect on the students involved. It was confirmed that pupil interventions were suggested by both staff and parents.

#### **ITEM 16 – SAFEGUARDING**

24. The Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) reported that the electronic MyConcern system continued to work well within the School, the reporting system was deemed as water-tight and it was stated that referrals are always addressed by one of the Safeguarding Leads immediately. At present, one Year 8 student was on a Child Protection Plan and two Sixth Form students were on Child in Need Plans. Governors asked if MyConcern identified trends and it was confirmed that it did. It was stated that social care in Essex was good and the School's biggest challenge was supporting students in domestic violence situations, a trend of which was also noticed within Chelmsford.

#### **ITEM 17 – RISK REGISTER**

25. **Decision.** With one change in role title, the Staff & Student Matters Committee section of the CCHS Risk Register was approved.

#### **ITEM 18 – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

26. The School Development Plan for 2019-20 was received for information and the content of the document was noted. No questions were raised by Governors.

#### **ITEM 19 – INFORMATION ITEMS**

27. **Item 19.1 – Staff Development Report.** The Staff Development Report dated November 2019 collectively prepared by SLT was received for information and noted. The Committee commended the amount of training undertaken by School staff. The Chair stated that it was a credit to the School that so much effort is put in to developing staff.

28. Item 19.2 – DBS Checks. A summary of School DBS clearances and Barred List checks from July to November 2019 was received for information. The Clerk advised that the result of one full DBS check was still awaited.

**ITEM 20 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

29. No other items of business were raised.

**ITEM 21 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

30. **Decision**. The date of the next meeting was revised and agreed as 5.00pm on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

**All**

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

Agreed as a true record.

Yvonne Wickers  
Chair

18<sup>th</sup> March 2019