

## CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

### Minutes of a meeting of the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held remotely via MS Teams at 4.00pm on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Present:	Steve Miles	Chair of Governors
	Mike Worboys	Vice Chair of Governors & Chair of Curriculum Committee
	Richard Vass	Chair of Facilities & Finance Committee
	Yvonne Wickers	Chair of the Staff & Student Matters Committee
	Stephen Lawlor	Headteacher
In Attendance:	Melissa Mulgrew	Business Manager
	Wendy Newton	Clerk to Governors

This was the first meeting of the Management Committee during the Coronavirus School closure, held to receive a general update from the Headteacher and to assess the viability of holding remote Governor meetings. There was no formal agenda and no documents were presented.

#### ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. There were no apologies for absence to receive.

#### ITEM 2 – HEADTEACHER'S UPDATE

2. **People – Student and Staff Wellbeing.** The Headteacher opened by giving an update on the passing of a Year 12 student following a long battle with cancer; he and two other staff members were to attend the student's funeral and a memorial service would be organised in School at a later date.

3. It was reported that most students were coping well with remote schooling. Year leaders and form tutors contact girls on a daily basis and feedback to relevant staff, give extra support by email and telephone, when necessary. A recent survey of KS3 students had shown difficulties in workload and as a result the KS3 timetable had been scaled back but with protection for the core subjects and languages. The Committee were assured that remote schooling was happening fully with good communications with students and good systems in place. One Year 10 PPG student with difficulty accessing technology at home was to receive a School laptop in order to assist her studies.

4. School staff had been surveyed and seven staff members were struggling with their work/home-life balance, SLT had been assigned a staff member and were to undertake casual weekly checks. It was suggested that the recent changes to the KS3 timetable would hopefully assist their situation and allow them to focus on Years 10 and 12. It was reported that Jo Cross and Fiona Harrison, both due to take up Assistant Headteacher roles in September, were now working as members of SLT.

5. The Headteacher confirmed that there had been no formally-confirmed cases of Coronavirus in either students or staff but reports had been received of people having mild symptoms. Two grandparents of students were known to have passed away due to the virus. The question of the additional welfare checks on students and staff workload was queried, and the system in use was summarised. It was noted that MyConcern was being used fully by staff to report and log issues. Governors checked the Headteacher's own personal condition; a steep learning curve was reported along with disappointment over the lack of DfE guidance on school closure and remote schooling advice. The Coronavirus support from ECC was commended however.

6. **Practice – CCHS Remote Schooling.** The Headteacher complimented all School staff for their preparation and planning work prior to the formal school closure which had provided an easier transition into remote teaching when it became necessary. Remote schooling had now become the new way of working for staff although the additional workload resulting from the need to use emails and remote meetings was noted. Planning was already underway in relation to the return to school when it was announced and it was confirmed that no formal Government guidance had yet been received on this matter. There had been suggestions that after the Summer Half Term may be a possible opening time for schools with Years 6, 10 and 12 getting priority. Some form of part-time school or rotation of pupils may be required but it was noted that social distancing would be very hard

#### ACTION

in a school setting. The psychological impact of the current situation on students was noted. It was hoped that the Government announcement on 10<sup>th</sup> May would give a better indication of future school actions.

7. The Headteacher advised that schools had been delegated the power to make their own assessment in relation to students' GCSE and A level examination grades. The School was currently determining grades for submission to the examination boards. Ofqual guidance had now been received and shared with teaching staff, students and parents, but additional clarification was awaited on some specific issues including Year 14 resits. The School plan for how the grades were being produced, using a mixture of both internal and external assessment data, was summarised. The final grades had to be submitted to Ofqual during a 2-week window starting in late May and would be published as usual in August. It was stressed that no interaction or discussion was permitted with students in relation to examination grades and that two members of SLT were handling all related enquiries. Governors noted that CCHS students generally under-performed in mocks and hoped that this would be taken into account in the assessment process. It was stated that the School was data-rich and would need to be able to justify all the final grades.

8. Governors queried the Year 7 entrance test due to be held in September. As the School is its own admissions authority, it was believed that the School itself would have the final say on how the test would be undertaken and when. Various options were discussed including a later date, off-site testing or possible total cancellation, leaving primary schools to provide ability data on applicants. The GSHA are working on this issue with DfE and further information was expected in mid-May.

9. **Premises – Site Security and Building Project.** It was reported that the Business Manager had already been in discussion with the Site Manager about what needed to be done before the school site could be opened again. Such things as deep cleaning, Legionella testing, tank emptying and usual maintenance would be needed. Governors were advised that the current budget should cover any additional expenditure required in order to open the School.

10. The Site Manager had been checking the School every 1-2 days to undertake swimming pool and security checks. It was hoped that larger maintenance tasks would now begin in light of possible re-opening. The SSEF building project had re-started the previous day, subject to social distancing guidelines which was possible at this stage of the build. It was hoped that the time lost because of the school closure would be regained as there would be no public examinations. Any major delays in the project would be flagged up to DfE, the worst-case scenario would be the need for temporary accommodation in September 2021. The Business Manager advised that the closure period had been used to work on design issues and the final phase surveys.

11. **Planning – Finances and SDP.** The meeting was advised that the loss of lettings, events and trips income was around £92,000 although this was offset by some savings from overtime, postage, utilities etc by £45,000. Some music tuition had not been able to continue causing a further loss of income of £24,000 although two music peripatetic teachers had been furloughed, saving £6,000. The School had not joined the Government Free-School Meal Scheme but had made their own arrangements with Tesco before lockdown and costs could be reclaimed. The net financial impact of the closure to date was around £47,000 and it was stated that schools with reserves would be expected to use them to cover any losses.

12. The School had not been able to hold the usual test for ten additional Year 10 students which would result in a £52,000 loss of income for the next two years. Ongoing discussions were taking place with Chartwells caterers relating to their expectation for CCHS to pay their staff costs during closure, nothing was to be paid until further clarification was received from the Government. The Business Manager advised that there may be additional income from insurance claims; claims for £29,000 had already been submitted and a further £30,000-worth of claims were still to be filed. Overall the closure financial losses were estimated to be between £50,000-£100,000, plus the impact of the loss of the extra Year 10 funding.

13. The Business Manager advised that the School gas contract was due for renewal at the end of September but in light of the low full prices she had asked Zenergi to go out for quotes early. Initial information suggested good rates for a fixed price 4-year contract and possible savings of up to £8,000.

14. **Decision.** The Business Manager agreed to send details of gas contract options to the Committee by email after the meeting for their approval.

15. The Headteacher requested to put on record his thanks to the Business Manager and all the Finance Team for their additional hard work during the Easter holiday. Governors were advised that in light of the current Coronavirus situation, the School SDP for 2019-20 would not be finalised. SLT would review the document and transfer any necessary uncompleted key points into next year's SDP alongside new initiatives relating to expansion and disadvantaged students. Another key SDP focus will relate to maintaining the ongoing expertise of staff, particularly new staff. The situation relating to a possible Ofsted visit was raised and discussed, the Headteacher advised that the School was still fully prepared for a visit whenever they were re-instated.

16. The situation concerning the non-standard appointment process for the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) for September 2020, the result of the Coronavirus situation, was queried. The Headteacher summarised the proposed future actions relating to the appointment which would occur when possible in the future. The Headteacher also advised that recent appointments had been made for teachers of English and French and four other internal positions in September, all undertaken by MS Teams.

### **ITEM 3 – GOVERNOR MEETINGS**

17. The Chair reminded the meeting that the Governing Body was still required to manage the School despite the current situation but that it should be very light-touch in order to allow the SLT and School staff to focus on their main task of student education. It was suggested that Governors needed to meet in order to fulfil their duties and processes, with the minimum burden to the School, and that remote meetings seemed work sufficiently well. It was thought unlikely that a Full GB meeting would be possible before the end of the academic year which posed issues relating to the departure of two sub-committee chairs, also members of the Management Committee, which would need addressing. The Headteacher suggested that great clarity of the long-term School situation should be known at the end of the week which would then make meeting decisions easier. The Committee discussed the sub-committee meeting situation and what items needed to be covered. It was suggested that Zoom was possibly a better video-conferencing facility for larger meetings.

18. **Decision.** The Clerk agreed to produce a revised meeting programme for the remainder of the term following the discussions of the meeting for SLT and then Committee approval.

**Clerk**

19. The Chair and members of the Management Committee voiced their thanks to the Headteacher, SLT and School staff for their exceptional work over the past two months, both before and during the School closure, and asked that their thanks be passed on to all School staff.

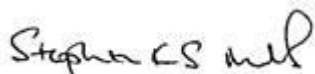
### **ITEM 4 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

20. **Decision.** The date of the next meeting would be agreed once the action in Para 18 had been undertaken.

**All**

The meeting closed at 5.25pm.

Agreed as a true record.



(Electronically signed due to Coronavirus closure)

S Miles, Chair

20<sup>th</sup> May 2020