

## CHELMSFORD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

### Minutes of an update meeting of the MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held remotely via Zoom at 4.00pm on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020

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

#### ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. There were no apologies for absence to receive.

#### ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2. No 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 reported.

#### ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3. After one typographic correction the minutes of the remote meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were agreed as a true record.

#### ITEM 4 – MATTERS ARISING

4. Item 4, Para 4 - Freedom of Information (FOI) Publication Scheme. The review of the CCHS FOI Publication Scheme had been completed and the document published on the School website.

5. Item 7, Para 16 – Catering Contract - Decision. The Chartwells catering contract proposal had not been circulated as it had been prepared on a basis of a full return to School on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. A new proposal based on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 was now awaited from Chartwells.

6. Item 9, Para 20 – GB Standing Orders - Decision. GB Standing Orders, revised to include remote meetings and approvals by email, were presented for consideration. The Committee reviewed the proposed amendments and recommended the document for approval at the next Full GB meeting.

#### ITEM 5 – CHAIR’S ACTION

7. There was no Chair’s Action to report.

#### ITEM 6 – HEADTEACHER’S UPDATE

8. Item 6.1 – Remote Schooling. The Headteacher advised that remote schooling was going well and good feedback had been received via teachers and year leaders from both students and parents. A Year 8 student had been interviewed for BBC Radio Essex earlier that day and had been very complimentary about the School and the remote schooling system.

9. Item 6.3 – Re-opening. Excellent work had been done to prepare the School site for the limited re-opening for Year 10 and 12 students on 15<sup>th</sup> June. One hundred Year 10 girls (63%) were expected to attend School the following week spread over three days, and it was believed that numbers would grow in the future. The administrative arrangements and H&S processes planned for within the School were fully explained. Year 12 students were to receive supervised study support in small subject groups and all subjects were able to be covered. 51% of Year 12 parents had originally stated that their daughter would be returning to School but this figure had now risen to 84%. Daily reports with photographs were to be sent out to parents after the re-opening to strengthen the message that the

#### ACTION

M Mulgrew

Clerk

School was open and working. The Headteacher thanked the staff members involved in getting the School ready for re-opening. Governors asked for clarification on how social distancing was to be maintained and the Headteacher gave a full explanation. The Business Manager advised that everything possible was being done to protect the staff who were coming in to teach including the provision of such things as personal keyboards, mice and board pens for every teacher in order to reduce the possibility of cross-contamination. The risk assessment relating to the re-opening of the School had been received and the Committee fully supported the re-opening of the School.

10. Item 6.3 – Wellbeing. The Headteacher gave details of recent activity which had happened since a Twitter feed entitled 'Racism in UK Schools' had emerged on social media containing references to CCHS and some past and present teachers. Five current Year 13 students had sent an email out on behalf of all Year 13 students to all CCHS students and selected members of staff which insinuated that the School was institutionally racist and that the School had done nothing about it in past years. It was later determined that this email was not supported by the whole cohort and had now caused divisiveness within the year group. The email had been removed from the School email system on the grounds of the fact that it was an unauthorised email action and also for safeguarding reasons. The removal had resulted in an increase in Twitter activity and emails to some School staff. In order to minimise reputational damage, the decision was made to temporarily close the School's own social media channels. The Headteacher sent three emails over four days to all members of the School community, including alumnae, addressing the issue. Advice was requested from ECC Legal Services about the content of the Tweets and whether legal action would be appropriate.

11. The Headteacher had spoken to the six members of staff named in Tweets and emails in relation to their own personal welfare and advised they would be contacting their unions for support about the matter. The effect of this situation on the teachers involved was noted. There had been a large amount of email traffic to the School from alumnae and students all of which had received a reply. It was reported that a number of the Tweets had now been removed from the platform by the original posters and that Twitter had already accepted that a number of the Tweets should not have been posted as they were inappropriate and breached the conditions of the site. No formal complaints or actual allegations had been raised through the School's official complaint system. The Headteacher advised that the incident itself had triggered upset between current students, actually causing racial division. The nature of some of the student email messages received by the Headteacher had been abusive and could lead to disciplinary action. The damaging way the student dissatisfaction had been raised with the School was noted. It was reported that much support had been received from current parents. SchoolPost letters of reassurance and explanation had been sent out to the School community which included a message of how the School was to learn and progress from this issue. Governors commended the way the Headteacher had responded to the whole situation.

12. The Chair of Governors had requested data on racist incidents in the School and advised that there were only a handful and had been between students themselves. It was stated that the proposed plan of discussion and communication which the Headteacher had now formulated (change@CCHS) which is the portal which opens a way to address any racial issues within the School. It was stressed that the School could not and would not ignore the subject and must address issues raised. It was noted that the General Equality Policy was currently under review by the Staff and Student Matters Committee and it was suggested that this would now need to be reviewed more closely. The meeting was informed that an obsolete CCHS Race Equality Policy had been erroneously quoted in some of the incident emails, that policy had not been used since 2013 but was visible when making an internet search. It was also reported that many schools had been affected by very similar incidents.

13. Decision. It was agreed that the biennial review of the General Equality Policy would be postponed until the Autumn Term to allow a more detailed and considered review.

**Clerk**

## **ITEM 7 – FINANCIAL UPDATE**

14. The Business Manager advised that financially things were changing on a daily basis. There were now an increasing number of calls from hirers trying to ascertain when they could return to using School facilities but this was dependent on Government advice and when it was safe for the School. The question of School safety was raised in relation to continuing with external hiring and it was stated that it was in the School's financial interest to continue. It was noted that hirers are responsible for their own risk assessments but there may be some cross-over liability between the School and the

hirer which could raise concerns. The Business Manager confirmed that all the statutory financial reporting requirements were being fulfilled. It was also reported that the Government had cancelled the budget out-turn report for this year and that a one-year, as opposed to three-year, budget forecast was required by September; this would need to be approved by the Full GB at their July meeting.

**ACTION**

15. **Decision.** The Business Manager asked for confirmation if the previously approved financial allocation for projector replacement should still go ahead. The meeting discussed the issue and it was agreed that the Business Manager should re-present the proposal at the Facilities & Finance Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

**M Mulgrew**

#### **ITEM 8 – SSEF UPDATE**

16. The SSEF building project continued, 2/3 of the Sports Hall steelwork had been erected and the frame should be completed in 10 working days. The Sports Hall was only 1-2 weeks behind the project plan but the teaching block was around 5 weeks behind. It was suggested that because of the current social distancing rules, the internal fit-out stage was more likely to be delayed. No revised timeline had yet been received from the project managers. It was confirmed that the Government had been informed of the current delays and that there had been no delays in building materials to date.

#### **ITEM 9 – SDP 2020-21**

17. The Committee received the SDP overview and commended the document. The Headteacher advised that the new 'Change' project would be included as a thread throughout the SDP.

#### **ITEM 10 – GOVERNING BODY AGENDA**

18. **Decision.** The Clerk advised that the agenda for the Full GB meeting on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July had not yet been finalised and agreed to send it out for Committee approval by email.

**Clerk**

#### **ITEM 11 – RISK REGISTER**

19. The Management Committee section of the Risk Register was received for termly review. It was noted that a new risk covering the risks of social media was now required. It was noted that there may be a need to invest in a formal PR-type service to cover issues relating to social media.

20. **Decision.** The Management Committee section of the Risk Register was approved as presented and the School agreed to produce a new risk relating to social media for Committee approval by email.

**Clerk  
Head**

#### **ITEM 12 – COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS**

21. Many compliments had been received from across the School community expressing support during the recent racism issue. Complaints had been covered within Item 6.

#### **ITEM 13 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

22. The Chair thanked the Headteacher for his outstanding work over the past week in relation to the racism issue; his handling of a very difficult situation was noted as being very level-headed, rational and constructive. The Committee also thanked the whole SLT for their associated work.

#### **ITEM 14 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

23. **Decision.** It was agreed that a Management Committee update meeting was needed and would be held remotely on Zoom at 4.00pm on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020. (**Note:** Later revised to 2<sup>nd</sup> July).

**All**

The meeting closed at 5.45pm.

Agreed as a true record at the Management Committee meeting held remotely on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 and signed electronically due to Coronavirus school closure.

*S Miles,*

S Miles

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020