

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL
MINUTES OF AN ONLINE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY
HELD AT 5.00PM ON TUESDAY 21 APRIL 2020

Present: Mr. K. Balfe Mr. S. Lucas
Mr. K. Down Mrs. F. Manning (Headteacher)
Mr. G. Edwards Dr. K. Middleton
Mrs. C. Emmings Mr. S. Mills
Mr. T. Fitzakerly Mr. C. Minton
Mr. C. Hall (Chairman) Mrs. S. Morrison
Mrs. N. Job Mrs. K. Rowe
Mrs. M. King Mr. M. Seaman Hill
Mr. M. Winter

In attendance: Mr. T. Hankin (Clerk)
Mr. J Crowther (Deputy Headteacher)

1. Welcome & Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first online meeting of the Governing Body. Apologies were received and accepted from Ms. J. Briggs and Mr. T. Scott. Mr. S. Sprawson was absent.

2. Notification of items to be raised under Any Other Business

None

3. Declarations of Interest

Governors were reminded of the need to declare any pecuniary or other interest in the items for discussion. There were none.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2020.

The minutes were approved as an accurate record and confirmed by the Chair.

4.2 Matters arising.

SGLI. Mrs. Manning advised that this years SGLI conference has been cancelled, as have all school trips for the time being.

Multi Academy Trust Mrs. Manning informed Governors that the meetings of the Headteacher board have been suspended and the DfE review and consideration of the MAT application is on hold.

5. Coronavirus update

Mrs. Manning gave Governors an update on the effect on the school of the pandemic, covering the period up to the closure of schools and the changes that followed. She informed Governors that the past few weeks have been a very difficult time, trying to keep

staff and students safe. She outlined the arrangements in place for staff and students working at home, the benefit of having introduced Google Classroom last summer, issues with the national free school meals voucher system, the additional support provided for Pupil Premium students, arrangements for Form Tutor contact with all students at least once a week and Pastoral Support contact. She also provided Governors with the latest information regarding the cancelled summer exams and the Ofqual consultation on provision and use of Centre Assessed Grades. Staff wellbeing is very important. Staff briefings are issued twice a week and departments and groups of staff are holding regular online meetings and catch up sessions.

Governors asked a number of questions relating to the actions being taken, including the difficulty of teaching practical subjects e.g. Drama & PE, the motivation of students to work from home, communication with other schools and potential return dates.

Staff Governors responded that some subjects are harder to set work for than others and that getting students used to ways of responding has been time consuming. Things are improving as students get used to this way of working.

Mrs. Manning replied that some students will naturally need more motivation than others, which is why regular contact from Form Tutors is important. Adjustments are made where a student is struggling with work.

Two parent Governors stated that they have been impressed at the structure and varied content of the work provided by staff and were also surprised and pleased with the way in which their daughters are managing workloads. They asked for their thanks to be passed on to staff.

Mrs. Manning stated that the media speculation regarding dates for schools to reopen is unhelpful. Staff and students need to continue to focus on delivering learning at home until a clear decision has been made regarding a return. She does not expect this to happen soon.

All Governors expressed their thanks to staff for the work they are doing to support students at this very difficult and unusual time.

6. Headteacher's report

Mrs. Manning highlighted the main points in her report and these were discussed by Governors.

- Staff CPD report, with cancellation of most courses from mid March.
- Admissions update for September 2020. There are 11 appeals scheduled.
- Joint union guidance for working at the current time. The performance appraisal process is paused for all staff in school.
- Pupil premium review update, including actions taken since the school closure.
- Successful funding bid to 'Train the Trainers' for Relationship, Sex and Health Education. This programme is currently on hold.

School Improvement Plan update

The closure of schools and the additional work for staff in providing home learning has meant that some actions in the plan cannot be completed or will not be possible over the

rest of this year. SLG will undertake a review of the plan and identify what has been completed. Mrs. Manning proposed that a modified plan is continued into 2020/21, with completed items removed and a few additional ones added but with the main activities carried forward.

Governors agreed this proposal.

Mrs. Manning was thanked for her report.

7. Committee reports

7.1 Admissions committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 were reviewed and noted. An update on admission numbers is included in the Headteachers report.

7.2 Curriculum & Performance Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 were reviewed and noted. The meeting had received feedback and reports on World Class School status, targets and student achievement, the Herts for Learning standards visit, student panels and pupil premium.

The committee had reviewed the updated Equality Policy and recommended this to the Governing Body. Governors **APPROVED** this policy.

The committee had also reviewed and approved the updated Administration of Medicines policy and a new Emotional and Mental Health Wellbeing policy. This was **NOTED** by the Governors.

7.3 Finance, Resources & Audit Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2020 were reviewed and noted. The meeting had discussed the current financial position and also the initial funding allocation details for 2020/21. The premises and health and safety report was received. A H&S advisor visit was completed in February and the report is awaited. Initial feedback is that there are no major issues.

Governors asked whether there is likely to be an impact on budget allocations for next year as a result of the current pandemic. Mr. Hankin advised that there is no change to the budget allocation for 2020/21.

7.4 Personnel Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2020 were reviewed and noted. A staffing update had been received. A number of updated policies were reviewed and discussed.

The committee had reviewed updated versions of the Capability, Disciplinary, Grievance and Whistleblowing policies and recommended these to the Governing Body. Governors **APPROVED** these policies.

The committee had reviewed and approved the updated Flexible Working, Probation, Social Media and Staff Health and Attendance policies and this was **NOTED** by Governors.

8. Feedback from Ofsted framework briefing for Governors

Mr. Edwards and Mr. Lucas attended this briefing. Feedback has been circulated to all Governors. Their general view is that the school is not far off being Ofsted ready, but that Governors need to ensure they are also ready for any inspection, including being able to evidence where Governors have made a difference to the school.

Mrs. Manning informed Governors that updates and information will be shared with them over the coming months.

9. Link Governor visits

Mr. Winter reported on time spent with the History department. It was a very helpful visit and he was impressed with what he had seen and heard.

Mrs. King advised that she had met with Mrs. Mills to discuss Safeguarding.

Dr Middleton advised that she has also held meetings with Mrs. Cole regarding Mental Health work.

10. Any Other Business

Mrs. Manning informed Governors that Hitchin Boys' School have appointed a new Headteacher for September 2020.

11. Dates of next meetings

Tuesday 2 June 2020 (To approve the School Improvement Plan)
Tuesday 16 June 2020