

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL
MINUTES OF AN ONLINE MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BODY
HELD AT 5.00PM ON TUESDAY 16 JUNE 2020

Present: Mr. K. Balfe Mr. S. Lucas
Ms. J Briggs Mrs. F. Manning (Headteacher)
Mr. K. Down Dr. K. Middleton
Mr. G. Edwards Mr. S. Mills
Mrs. C. Emmings Mr. C. Minton
Mr. T. Fitzakerly Mrs. S. Morrison
Mr. C. Hall (Chairman) Mrs. K. Rowe
Mrs. N. Job Mr. T. Scott
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 online meeting of the Governing Body. 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 meetings

4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2020.

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

4.2 Matters arising.

There were none

4.3 Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2020.

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

4.4 Matters arising.

There were none

5. Headteacher's report

Mrs. Manning began by providing an update on the Covid-19 situation. Year 10 and 12 have started to return to school this week, with 25% able to come in each day. A small

number are unable to attend due to shielding but the vast majority have been present. A welfare check is made on the one or two who don't attend. Feedback is very positive. Some students have seen very few other people during lockdown and have welcomed the opportunity to see and speak to similar aged students. Guidance from the DfE continues to evolve and school arrangements will be updated as and when required.

Mrs. Manning then highlighted a few areas from her report, circulated in advance to the Governors.

- Curriculum - There is still uncertainty regarding the curriculum and exam requirements for next year. Latest information from ACSL is that schools should be preparing for three scenarios in September - full return; continued closure with remote learning; and a mix of in school and remote learning.
- Centre Assessed Grades – Entries have been signed off with two exam boards and there are 3 to do over the next few days.
- Founders' Day – plans are being put together for a remote celebration of Founders' Day and for some sporting/fun activities in the afternoon in place of Sports Day.
- Admissions – there were 13 appeals, with 2 upheld, although 1 has now declined the place.

Governors asked about the impact on staff and student wellbeing and productivity if return to school is not possible in September. Mrs. Manning stated that this is very hard to assess. Return will depend on changes to social distancing guidance. Many staff are exhausted. Governors also asked whether the latest news report that one third of students are not engaging with online activity applies to HGS. Both Mrs. Manning and Mrs. Rowe reported that there is good engagement across the school with only a handful of students not engaging at all. There appears to have been a 10 week lockdown hurdle which has now been crossed and student interaction is increasing again.

Governors asked about performance appraisal for staff. Mrs. Manning confirmed the guidance that the process is paused. There have been no updates or changes to this. Governors agreed that the work staff have been doing during the lockdown is outstanding, even though it may not match their objectives.

6. Committee reports

6.1 Curriculum & Performance Committee

Mrs. King reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2020. The meeting received initial information on Centre Assessed Grades and reviewed details of lesson observations and the Key Stage 4 student panel, Parent Questionnaire responses and the SEND report.

The committee had reviewed and approved the updated Careers Policy. The Relationship, Sex and Health Education Policy was also reviewed and approved, noting that Mrs. Cole will be undertaking a remote consultation with parents regarding this policy.

The approval of these policies was **NOTED** by the Governors.

6.2 Finance, Resources & Audit Committee

Mr. Down reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2020. The meeting had considered the current financial position which remains sound and discussed a draft budget for next year. Arrangements were made for Mr. Down and Mr. Hall to carry out a remote Internal Scrutiny check on the financial practices and procedures being followed during lockdown and this had gone very well. The premises report was reviewed. An announcement regarding the Condition Improvement Fund bids has been delayed and a decision is still awaited. Site staff have been able to carry out a lot of maintenance work during lockdown. The Every system allows the committee to monitor the regulatory and compliance checks that are carried out each week and month.

The committee reviewed the updated Health & Safety Policy which was recommended to Governors for approval. The policy was **APPROVED**.

The committee also reviewed and approved the Governor's Allowance Policy and this was **NOTED**.

Mr. Hankin summarised the proposed budget for 2020/21. Grant funding for the year is confirmed but income from other sources, such as lettings, has been reduced due to the current situation. Expenditure costs are similar to this year. Governors asked about additional costs due to Covid-19 and Mr. Hankin confirmed that the budget does allow for this. The budget also includes a transfer to capital towards capital expenditure relating to an additional science space and also improvements to the Lower Block. This is the first time for a number of years that this capital amount has been possible. The net position for 2020/21 is a small surplus of £15,000.

The budget for 2020/21 was **APPROVED**.

6.3 Personnel Committee

Mrs. Job reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2020. The budget was discussed and the headcount for 2020/21 agreed.

The committee had reviewed an updated version of the Code of Conduct and recommended this to the Governing Body. Governors **APPROVED** these policy.

The committee had reviewed and approved two new policies – Parental Bereavement Policy and Wellbeing Policy and this was **NOTED** by Governors.

The committee had also reviewed and approved updated versions of the Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling at Work Policy, Bullying and Harassment Policy, Adoption Policy, Maternity Leave Policy, Paternity Leave Policy and Unpaid Parental Leave Policy and this was **NOTED** by Governors.

7. Multi Academy Trust update

Mrs Manning advised that the application to form a MAT with The Knights Templar School has been considered at the Headteacher Board and they have emailed some questions. This were items not covered in the initial application. At the moment there has not been time to consider these, and it has not been a priority in the current situation. Contact with the DfE will be made by the end of term seeking clarification on the information they need.

8. Meeting dates

A proposed schedule of Governor meeting dates for 2020/21 was agreed. It is subject to change depending on the situation in September and Governors will be kept informed.

9. Any Other Business

None.

10. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 7 July 2020 (To approve the School Improvement Plan)