



GOVERNORS' MEETING Minutes of the meeting on 11 June 2020 by video-conferencing

Present: Mr Adrian Allan, Ms Michelle Balcombe, Mr Graham Biggs, Mr Andy Clarke, Mr Peter Cooper (Principal), Miss Caitlin Jenkins, Mr James Miller (Chair), Mr Andrew Roberts, Ms Beth Rudolf, Mrs Danielle Thompson, Mrs Catriona Ward, Sarah Woodall (12)

In attendance: Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk), Mrs Catherine Brearey (Vice Principal), Mrs Helen Osborn, Mr John Pratt, Mr Paul Rogers

The Chair welcomed the new Governors to their first meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Dr Andrew Black, Mrs Vicky Orsmond (2)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2020

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair confirmed that there was no Finance report for this meeting since there was no real change to report from the previous meeting only 3 weeks ago.

The Principal assured Governors that the Finance Director would advise any significant change over the next couple of months in these uncertain times.

6. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk reported that that Board strength presently stood at 14 governors including the Principal, 2 parent governors and 1 student governor. An additional student governor would be appointed in October.

The Clerk went on to present the draft calendar of meetings for the next academic year, stressing that the programme of business was a draft in so far as business may be added, removed or rescheduled during the year. The academic year has a cycle of events on its calendar which form the basic business for the Board. Governors **AGREED** the calendar of meetings and business for 2020/21.

7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Principal, presented the report, giving particular attention to staffing and the reopening of College in the current COVID-19 situation.

The report included a listing of new staff and 'leavers', and the Principal noted that of the leavers, Library Manager, Jackie Jones, had 15 years' service, and Estates Manager, Stephen Scott-Lee, and Estates Assistant, Pat Gaze, 30 years. All had been good servants to the College. The number of starters exceeded leavers, in part due to the appointment of Personal Tutors.

In response to a Governor's question about the proportions of mentoring and welfare work for the new Personal Tutors, the Principal indicated that the role was a balance of the two, depending on the needs of the student, but was quality assurance and performance management for the most part, with consultation periods built into the timetable. The new system will also have a focus on retention. Most of the new tutors are ex teachers. Accommodation was an issue but remodelling of the ground floor at the front of College has gone ahead during lockdown for completion by end of term.

The Principal went on to report on Multi Academy Trust developments, noting that King Edward VI Stourbridge had been approved by the Head Teacher Board to join Heart of Mercia Trust. In response to a Governor's question about capital funding for a MAT, the Principal confirmed that MATs with at least 5 academies and more than 3,000 students, receive a School Condition Allocation (SCA) to deploy strategically across their estate to address their priority maintenance needs.

Turning to accommodation, the Principal indicated that there was still no news of the College's bid to the Capital Improvement Fund. Also, there had been an objection on ecological grounds to the College's planning application for 4 mobile classrooms of teaching space. The College had, therefore, made a new application had been made for a location on the College's existing site, and it was considered that under present exceptional circumstances, and the pressing need for accommodation in September, the College carry on and organise it, including the leasing of cabins. Sport England had been contacted about the project. Governors understood the College's reasons of not wishing to exclude or not teach students, but to promote wellbeing and education of students. There were also concerns about autumn resits of examinations. Governors **SUPPORTED** the SMT in going ahead to be ready for when term starts, and **AGREED** that the College should do whatever was necessary to ensure the appropriate level of accommodation for the start of next academic year.

The Principal went on confirm that preparations for a return 15 June are continuing, informed by Government guidance and information from Public Health England. The Principal had said previously that the College needed to deliver in a hybrid way in order to continue to educate students, and said that now we will find out how best we can work in the 'blended world' of remote and face to face teaching to the new timetable. Details of activities week by week were presented to Governors, with provision, including hybrid teaching and a series of assessments, varying for some subjects. Student and staff surveys will provide input. In response to a Governor's question as how many students will return, the Vice Principal commented that this would vary by subject, transport would be a factor, but thought that more than 40% would come back in. Broadband width within College and at home could also be a factor.

Governors **SUPPORTED** the SMT in the provision and timetable outlined. The Chair, commenting that operation of the College is for the Management team and Governors give their support, confirmed that he and the Vice Chair would keep in contact with the College over the next couple of months to September.

In response to a Governor's question about NMITE, the engineering university in Herefordshire, the Principal indicated that its original plans had been delayed almost 12 months, and that the College had been collaborating on an 'Hereford open for business as usual' article.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

8. **SAFEGUARDING, PREVENT AND ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT**

The Director of Studies (DOS), Helen Osborn, senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), presented an updated addendum, *COVID-19 arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection at Hereford Sixth Form College*, with only minor changes, and confirmed that the main Safeguarding policies would be updated in September to

take into account latest changes from the DfE.

The Board, after a brief discussion, **AGREED TO APPROVE** the updated Addendum.

The DOS went on to present the annual Report on Safeguarding.

No student's names are mentioned in the annual report at any stage. Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) monitor the implementation of the safeguarding policies through fortnightly meetings with the Directors of Studies (DOSs), at which the College Counsellor is also present. All reports of safeguarding issues are 'logged', and followed through. DOSs have access to supervision themselves on a monthly basis with a trained counsellor.

At April 2020 there were 448 (last year 429) students on the Vulnerable Students file, excluding 112 (last year 41) related to safeguarding information received from previous schools with no further concerns raised to date at HSFC.

A summary schedule of Logs, by Lead Issues, comparing the last 9 years' data is included in the report. Mental health including extreme anxiety and stress accounts for the largest category, comprising over 30% of the vulnerable students, but it was noted that the increases seen are in line with national trends with figures increasing over the last few years. The counselling service, still in demand, has continued during lockdown. To date since September, 12 referrals have been made to Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)/social services team and external agencies depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern.

Other points reported included:

- | | |
|---|--|
| online Herefordshire Council local authority safeguarding audit | - completed and returned in Nov'19 |
| student perception of College questionnaire | - 99% of HSFC students indicated that they feel safe in College |
| Education for Life (E4L) | - continues to be main platform for educating students on safeguarding issues and other key areas |
| College site security | - site and visitors' procedures reviewed during year. Swipe locks in use on all entrances |
| safer recruitment | - practices put in place, working with Head of HR, to ensure that HSFC continues to meet all safer recruitment duties and responsibilities in line with statutory guidance |

The DOS went on to outline the action plan for 2020/21, including:

- establishing effective personal tutorial system through moving to new tutorial model
- continued development of E4L and general education programmes
- staff safeguarding training with staff training refresher at least annually

HSFC Governors are expected to complete an online safeguarding training programme. All new Governors should complete this training on joining the Board and all Governors should refresh their knowledge at least every three years. In response to a Governor's question, it was confirmed that all the safeguarding checks and balances have continued during lockdown.

The Chair thanked the Director of Studies for a comprehensive report, which Governors discussed in considerable detail, and then **APPROVED** the report.

In relation to PREVENT, the College's Prevent Strategy was circulated. John Pratt, DOS, and Single Point of Contact for Prevent, confirmed that there were no substantial changes from the previous version other than dates and references. The Board **AGREED TO APPROVE** the updated Prevent Strategy for 2020/21 with minor changes.

The DOS, who leads on the operational delivery of Prevent-related duty at the College and represents 4 colleges on the multi-agency Prevent Steering Committee for the County, went on to update Governors on various issues involved. The Strategy covers all forms of terrorism, although Herefordshire is considered low risk area. There have been no Channel referrals from the College, being the reference of a case to the regional Channel Panel, a multi-agency group.

Prevent and Equality and Diversity go hand in hand, and are presented to students in that way. All staff have undergone training, and Governors also use this user-managed access, WRAP (Web Resource Authorisation Protocol)-based training.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of Studies indicated that the focus of the Steering Committee had move towards the far right and extreme right, where increased activity has been seen locally and regionally. Governors received a copy of a tutorial given in College on Fundamental British Values and how the College promotes them.

The Committee thanked the Director of Studies for an informative report, **NOTED** the report.

9. REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS AND COLLEGE RESPONES

The Chair had read and reviewed all 9 complaints against the College during the year, together with the Principal's responses, and confirmed that there was nothing that gave cause for concern. Governors discussed the complaints briefly, which were judged to have been handled promptly and fairly. There had been no complaints about the Local Governing Body or its Governors.

In response to a Governor's suggestion last year, the Principal confirmed that compliments were now recorded, and presented a schedule to Governors.

Governors **NOTED** the reports.

10. RISK REGISTER, ACTION PLAN AND PLOCY AND PROCEDURES

The Principal presented the updated Risk Management Policy and Procedures, and confirmed that the MAT had an overall brief through its Audit Committee. Governors discussed the Risk Management Policy and Procedures, with minor changes in relation to the MAT and LGB relationship.

The College SMT consider all aspects of Risk Management, and review the risks identified as requiring significant focus within the RM Action Plan. The LGB monitors the significant risks and the Action Plan.

The Principal confirmed that HSFC Risk Register was now a section of the MAT Register, and presented a summary schedule of the HSFC major risks, RAG rated, and in the new format adopted by the MAT. Governors were in favour of the new layout. The only red risk was around closure of College and the pandemic. In response to a Governor's question about accommodation and the proposed provision, the Principal confirmed that the risk would be reviewed by SMT.

After a brief discussion the Board **AGREED TO APPROVE** the

- Risk Management Policy and Procedures 2020-21 with minor changes
- Risk Management Action Plan 2019/20

11. PREMISES UPDATE

The Estates Manager presented the premises update report, and confirmed College readiness for students to come back on 15 June. Governors were also updated on:

- conversion of some ground floor areas in Aconbury and Dinedor blocks to accommodate tutor rooms
- planning for porta cabin classrooms
- planned summer works

The Principal commented that the whole Estates team had been magnificent in meeting the challenges of COVID-19 and the changes required.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a Governor's question about the virtual open event on the previous day, the Principal indicated that about 200 enquiries had been received, and the event was well worthwhile and had served its purpose – HSFC was open for business.

The Chair had circulated a letter of 3 June to Governors of General FE and Sixth Form colleges from Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State, thanking governors for their inspiring leadership at this challenging time. The Chair thanked the Principal, senior management team and all at the College for all they have done during this very difficult time. The Chair also thanked Governors for their contributions.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 17 September 2020, at 6.00pm.