

## APPROVED AND SIGNED

### MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE WHITCHURCH HIGH SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY HELD ON 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021

<b>PRESENT</b>	Joyce Slack	Foundation (Chair)
	Sian Hopkins	Foundation
	Max Vine	Foundation
	David Collins	Foundation
	Dr Paul Bulpin	Community
	David Roylance	Community
	Ashley Collins	Parent
	Ceri Reed	Parent
	Kelly Vanstone	Parent
	Lisa Williams	Parent
	Hayley Jeans	Parent
	Nicola Davies	Local Authority
	Mark Powell	Headteacher
	Nick John	Teacher Governor
	Noreen Linforth	Teacher Governor
	Richard Burge	Staff Governor
	Cara	Head Girl
	Sam	Head Boy
	Wayne Lilly	Observer (Business Manager)
	Claire Hollings	Assistant Head Teacher
	Gareth Coombs	Clerk to the Governors

#### **23 APOLOGIES AND WELCOME**

Apologies were received from Denise Kelland, Ian McIlquham and Steve Williams.

The Chair welcomed Claire Hollings (AHT) and Cara and Sam (Head Girl and Boy).

#### **24 MINUTES**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

#### **25 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT – Mark Powell**

A written report had been previously circulated with the agenda. The Headteacher highlighted some of the main points of the report.

The narrative around the period of the time since the November 2020 report had been sadly one which revolved largely around the following:-

- Rapidly increased transmission rates of COVID from late November to mid-December. Details of how this affected the school and the coping mechanisms followed were expanded upon by the Headteacher. Governors were informed

that the school did not have a case of COVID amongst the staff until 21<sup>st</sup> November 2020, then as school was closed in mid-December there was an escalation of cases amongst staff.

- A new national lockdown requiring distance learning from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 up to the present day.
- The school opening for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers.
- A shifting and currently unfixed set of national protocols around assessment and qualifications. The Headteacher was still unaware of the assessment plan from WJEC regarding KS4 and KS5 pupils.

The Headteacher reported that the school had moved back to a distance learning scenario on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and has remained in that status ever since. It was not envisaged that this would change until after the February half-term at least. The Lower School had been closed since 11 January 2021 and just the Upper School site was open for staff.

The Headteacher explained the three types of live digital lessons which were delivered via Microsoft Teams.

Teachers were required to complete a self-regulating overview summary of their lessons each week where they confirm which of these lessons they have delivered.

Pupil engagement was tracked with live registers of pupils' attendance taken in type 1 lessons where the teacher was live and visible. A new SIMS code was also used to track engagement. Where pupils failed to complete any on-line work which indicated a pattern then this was followed up to check if extra support was needed.

At the time of this report the school had distributed over 350 Chromebooks to pupils since the start of lockdown. These had been provided by the Local Authority. The school had also received a generous donation of £10,000 from a local businessman which allowed the school to purchase a further 50 Chromebooks. However there was still a shortfall and the school was actively working to rectify the situation. All TAs now had laptops so that they could fully attend lessons following Welsh Government safeguarding guidelines. It was noted that the school had invested in bags for the laptops as these were not provided by the Local Authority.

Attendance to date was as follows:

KS3 88%

KS4 92%

KS5 99%

Hub attendance up to 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021 was also reported.

Under Assessment and Qualifications it was noted that exams had been cancelled for Summer 2021. The original plan for a three-pillar approach has had to be hastily

withdrawn and replaced with Centre Determined Grades. The Headteacher explained in detail what was understood to be the current approach to assessment and it was noted that there would be no algorithm or external moderation applied. If Wales did not follow England then it could be that results day in Wales would be different from that of England. It was hoped that more detail of the process would be known by the end of February 2021.

To replace the traditional Parents' Evenings the school held a virtual Parent Consultation Day which seemed to go well. Of the 61% of parents who booked an appointment 90% accessed their appointment.

An Estates update was provided. The Headteacher reported that the new Social Sciences Block would be available for lesson delivery immediately after the February half-term. Preparatory work had begun ahead of the demolition of the Art Terrapins in Upper School. The school was still in delicate and ongoing negotiations with officers of the Local Authority in respect of a new block on the Upper School site to replace the current Maths block. It was hoped to have further updates on this matter by the end of the Spring Term. It may be necessary for the Estates Committee to meet to consider options for making the best use of any finance available.

At this stage in the school year, pupils in Years 9 and 11 were in the middle of the options and guidance process. This would involve one to one interviews. The planning and process was progressing very well and the Headteacher wished to record his thanks to all staff in this matter and particularly the work and support of Nick John.

As part of the annual curriculum review the Headteacher reported that the schools was considering curriculum models that would bring an element of choice into the Year 9 curriculum for September 2022. The Curriculum Committee had considered three models and had agreed for the school to investigate and further refine a model where pupils would be able to focus more on an area of learning that interests them for six additional lessons. The input of department leaders would be critical in decisions moving forward in this matter.

The school had made significant progress with the academic achievement honours board which would be housed in the corridor which runs through the main block. The board would be updated each year.

On 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 the school recorded its first ever online carol concert. This was a testament to the determination and talent of the pupils involved and of the music department colleagues.

The Chair, on behalf of the Governors congratulated the Headteacher and staff for the way that they had risen to the challenges presented by the Covid 19 crisis. The

Headteacher felt that this had been a real team effort by all members of staff. Of particular mention in this respect were the Pastoral teams and the support provided by Nick John, Richard Burge and Scott Britt.

In closing his report the Headteacher wished to record his thanks to the Governing Body for their support throughout what continued to be a very serious and challenging time.

## **26 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

It was agreed that David Greaves be a member of the following Committees:-

- Admissions
- Complaints
- Finance
- Pupil Discipline and Exclusion
- Staff Disciplinary and Dismissal

## **27 WELLBEING PRESENTATION – Claire Hollings**

A full presentation was given which focused upon the following areas of support provided by the school to pupils:-

- Reflection on current provision during lockdown.
- Wellbeing Issues.
- The rise in mental health issues and how the school supported pupils.
- THRIVE approach to wellbeing.
- Pastoral Teams.

There was evidence of extensive work and support for pupils which was noted and commended by Governors and the Chair asked that this be passed on to staff.

In closing the presentation Claire wished to record her thanks to Governors for all their support for the Wellbeing provision and support for pupils.

## **28 COMMITTEE UPDATE**

The Finance and Estates Committees would be meeting in the near future.

## **29 POLICIES**

The **Admissions Policy 2022/23** had been circulated with the agenda for consideration and comment. Amendments had been taken into account and the revised policy was adopted by the Governing Body.

## **30 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**(i) Self-Evaluation: Health & Safety Procedures** – The Headteacher gave an up to date report on Health & Safety procedures in place to cope with the problems and pressures posed by Covid 19. It was noted that 872 pupils had been directed to self-isolate in the Autumn Term. This meant that 64% of pupils were not required to self-isolate. From this data and feedback from the Local Authority it would seem that the school’s health & safety procedures and processes were operating very well. The Chair, on behalf of the Governing Body commended the Headteacher and all staff at the school for their work in this matter.

**(ii) Audit of School Finances** – Wayne Lilly informed the Governors that, because of Covid restrictions, it had not been possible for the school to invite the regular Accountant into school early last year and since. The Local Authority had been consulted in this matter and were in agreement with the school’s approach to this matter. The school would endeavour to invite someone to complete the audit by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021 if safe to do so. If this was not possible then Governors would be informed. This action was approved by the Governing Body.

**31 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

None.

**32 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be confirmed.

Meeting concluded.

***J Slack***

**Chair of Governors**