



**Part 1 Minutes of the Meeting of the
FULL GOVERNING BODY
of Helsby High School**

Date:	Thursday 12 th May 2020 at 3.30pm	
Venue:	Via Zoom Video Conferencing	
Present:	Ms G Fulbrook (GF) Chair Mr M Hill (MH) Mr A Wheeler (AW) Mrs A Critchley (AC) Mr C Jennings (CJ) Miss R Clarke (RC) Mr G Corker (GC) Mrs J O’Hare (JO’H) Mr T O’Neill (TO’N) Mrs F Miller (FM) Mrs D Jones (DJ)	Co-opted Governor Head Teacher Co-opted Governor Parent Governor Co-opted Governor Staff Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor Co-opted Governor LEA Governor Co-opted Governor
In attendance:	Mrs S Warburton (SW) Mr M Vickers (MV) Mr John Addison (JA)	Deputy Head Teacher School Business Manager Clerk to the Governors

The meeting met its quorum.

Decisions, actions and areas of challenge during discussions indicated in bold text

Agenda item 1	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Discussion:	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that apologies for absence had been received from Mr I Devereux-Roberts , Dr A Morley and Mrs B Ratcliffe
Resolved:	That the apologies be accepted
Agenda item 2	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
Discussion:	The Governing Body considered the Part 1 minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2020.
Resolved:	That the Part 1 minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held on 16th March 2020, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
Agenda item 3	ACTION LOG
Discussion:	The Action Log was reviewed and updated. Future versions of the Action Log would include an “End Date” column.
Resolved:	That the report be noted

Agenda item 4	CORONA VIRUS UPDATE RE SCHOOL OPERATION
Discussion:	<p>The Headteacher submitted a report on the operation of the School following the Covid 19 lockdown</p> <p>The report provided detailed information under the following headings, viz:-</p> <p>Childcare Provision: There had been between 5-10 students in school each day, including throughout the Spring Break holiday, although no parents had indicated the need for the School to open at weekends, Bank Holidays or beyond the school day, all of which the School would have been prepared to do. Students (and staff) attending school had followed all the Public Health England 'social distancing' guidelines whilst provision had mainly involved facilitating access to the on-line learning set for all of the students - to do otherwise could have meant those students having to 'catch-up' on schoolwork outside of the school day and to do more could cause concern that students working from home were missing out on 'teaching' that students in school were receiving. The provision had been staffed by minimum levels of site, catering, cleaning, SLT and teaching staff, with far more staff being able and willing to be in school than had ever been required, a willingness that was no less evident during the Spring Break holidays.</p> <p>TO'N asked if there had been any issues around students social isolating? MH advised that a particular student had needed some support but in the main there had been no specific issues.</p> <p>Vulnerable Students and Families: Keeping in touch with and supporting all of the students and their families had been a priority since school 'closed', but particularly of those considered to be 'vulnerable'</p> <p>Learning From Home: Since School closed students had been provided with and supported in their learning using the 'ShowMyHomework' platform which was previously used to set and co-ordinate homework provision. All staff had been working from home supporting their own classes in this regard. Our experience to date had been mirrored across many schools nationally. The School quickly realised how challenging this was for students and parents and reduced the expectations in terms of volume of work set accordingly. In the last week or so the Department for Education released some best-practice 'case studies' of remote learning currently taking place across the country and it was reassuring to read that the School's provision was very similar to that described.</p> <p>The School's awareness of the range of difficult circumstances in which our students and their parents were attempting to keep up with their learning had informed the strategy to date. Departments were trying to minimise new learning, focusing on consolidation of previous learning and trying to make the learning as fun and accessible as possible, the latter both educationally and technologically. The School's view had been that to provide more direct 'teaching', such as video lessons or on-line lessons, would only further disadvantage and upset those students (and their parents) who could not easily work from home, a view that had been taken currently by all Cheshire West and Chester state secondary schools. Some independent schools were, however, providing such learning and hence any parental anxiety was understood, particularly those of Year 10 and 12 students who were only 12 months away from their GCSE and A-Level examinations.</p> <p>GF asked if any work was being undertaken with Yr11 students to prepare them for the 6th Form? MH advised that such work was being done and that work was also being done with Yr13 students to prepare them for any further education which they wished to pursue. It</p>

was stressed, however, that all such work was voluntary.

Once there was greater clarity about how long students might continue to be absent from school a review would be undertaken into the current approach adopted aimed at consolidating learning as holding off from new topics and concepts could only last so long. Whatever approach was adopted, the biggest part teaching staff had to play in this crisis would be when students finally returned to school, when their subject expertise and teaching skill would be put to the ultimate test as they planned and delivered a curriculum which allowed all students to get back on track with their education, regardless of how successful their 'home-learning' had been during this time.

Stakeholder Communication:

As a large organisation with all of its stakeholders (students, parents, staff and governors) working in their own homes, communication was key to ensuring the School's on-going work was as successful as possible, as well as trying to help minimise any individual feelings of isolation. Current means of communication being employed included the following:

- Regular contact between staff and students, which had been much-appreciated by both students and parents.
- A weekly letter to parents, which hopefully provided parents with as much clarity as was possible at a time when so much was uncertain. It hopefully also served to reassure parents that they would straightaway receive information about important matters in the future when the school knew more about issues such as a potential re-opening or Summer 2020 GCSE and A-Level results.
- Responding to all parent queries/issues as quickly as possible so to avoid adding to anxiety in our students' family homes at such a challenging time.
- Our social media feeds, which hopefully struck a sensitive balance between providing information and a welcome sense of positivity for our school community.
- A weekly briefing for staff, which hopefully provided clarity over expectations of their work and also kept colleagues up to date, enabling them to feel that they were still very much an important part of the collective team.
- Regular communication between colleagues, with SLT having regular phone-calls with link Department Leaders and departments making use of WhatsApp groups and Microsoft Zoom and Teams to meet regularly and plan together.

Summer 2020 Results:

Work had begun on the important process of informing this year's GCSE and A-Level results, with the process for vocational qualifications such as BTECs likely to be very similar. Although Ofqual had yet to finalise the process of awarding this year's GCSE and A-Level results following their April consultation, it was likely to involve the school providing a 'centre-assessed grade' and rank order for each qualification. In their consultation Ofqual proposed using a 'statistical standardisation' approach which "emphasises historical evidence of centre performance given the prior attainment of students". Simply put, this meant that the 'centre-assessed grades' the school provided were likely to carry less weight than the estimation that would be made of our centre's results based on previous years' subject performance, with the school's rank orders then required to match students to the grades generated from the estimation. Subject Leaders were currently working with great thoroughness and professional integrity to produce robust processes for the determination of their rank orders so that the

School could feel confident in the information it provided to inform the awarding of grades. This work would be on-going over the next few weeks, with a current submission deadline of Friday 12th June. Ofqual acknowledged that the final grades awarded would differ from Schools' centre-assessed grades due to the processes they would apply and there were bound to be 'winners and losers' from the process in terms of students and departments. It was reassuring for Schools that Ofqual's consultation proposed very few avenues for appeals or complaints from students/parents and it was suggested that there would be little to be gained from extensive analysis of this summer's results given they would be based on historical school performance rather than students' performance in examinations.

It was understandable that Ofqual were prioritising the generation of this summer's results and plans for the promised 'Autumn re-sit' for students unhappy with their results this summer were far less developed. On all of the above matters the Headteacher was very grateful for the patience and understanding of Year 11 and 13 students and their parents, who despite the understandable anxiety they must be feeling had left the school to proceed with its work and had not put any undue pressure on staff.

Year 6 Transition:

Although it was difficult at present to visualise what the School's transition activities would look like in practice, there was no doubt that transitioning Year 6 students, maybe back into education, not just into Helsby HS would be a top priority for the school this term. The School was in close contact with partner primary headteachers and School had already spoken to the majority of Year 6 teachers of its' September 2020 Year 7 cohort. The Headteacher had recently written to Year 6 parents advising that School would do whatever it was able to do to ensure Year 6 students and their parents felt as confident as possible about joining us in September.

GC asked if there were any issues about Yr7 students being unable to obtain uniform would they be able to come to School in non-uniform? MV advised that the uniform order was due to be delivered in June so would be in stock for September and some parents had already begun to order. Post half term the School would contact parents about payment and collection arrangements. It was possible that a rota system might have to be put in place.

FM asked if any thought had been given to issues around transport arrangements to get pupils to School. MV advised that the local authority had already been in contact to gauge likely take up. There were 69 Yr10 pupils who came into School by bus or taxi and it was not known how many of these students would return in September.

Year 11 Transition:

Staff had kept in close contact with Year 11 students since school 'closed' back in March and had provided 'transition' activities for students who were considering further study in different subjects, mainly in the form of 'bridging units' between GCSE and A-Level/BTEC Level 3 courses. It did seem possible that the uncertainty prevalent in all areas of life at present might mean that some students who were considering going to other post-16 establishments might be drawn towards staying in an environment and with friends and teachers who they knew well in September. With the uncertainty around GCSE results this summer, the strength of applications from current Year 11 students meant that School was able to offer all of those who had already applied a guarantee of a Sixth Form place from September 2020 onwards, which appeared to have been a well-received removal of one source of anxiety for students who had had a very difficult couple of months since the start of March.

2019-20 School Development Plan (SDP):

At the start of this term the Senior Leadership Team undertook the termly monitoring of the current SDP. This was an even more useful exercise than usual as it allowed School to reflect upon the impact of the current circumstances on its planned actions for this term. The

disruption caused by Covid-19 had meant that many of the School's plans had had to be suspended, although some of them could be addressed via different approaches to those originally planned and one or two plans could actually be accelerated whilst the School was working in the ways in which it was. A more detailed update on the progress of this year's SDP would be provided at a Full Governing Body meeting later this term.

Planning for September 2020

Curriculum/Staffing:

With the curriculum plans for September 2020 having been approved at the 16th March Governors' Meeting, School had continued with any recruitment processes necessary to ensure that it would be fully-staffed and in a position to deliver the planned curriculum at the start of the Autumn Term. All necessary recruitment had been progressed and any non-essential appointments postponed. When the school re-opened it would be important to provide as much continuity as possible and hence wherever possible School had extended temporary contracts so that students could return to staff who knew them and knew their curriculum, where their learning was up to when school closed and what they had worked on whilst studying at home.

Premises:

With the exception of some exterior fencing and the planning of the 3G Pitch (which had continued to progress, not least due to the sterling efforts of governors involved in the process), all other planned major premises work this summer had been put on hold (for example, the building of a new Food room). Site staff had taken advantage of the empty building in recent weeks to undertake a substantial amount of maintenance and decoration which would otherwise only take place during holiday periods. On the subject of the 3G Pitch it was fantastic to get the confirmation of the £723,000 Football Association grant on Monday 30th March, which provided the final go-ahead for the project - although the school and Local Authority both chose not to go to press with the news at this stage given the wider circumstances at present.

Finance:

Although a draft budget was approved ahead of the new financial year, income and expenditure since the start of April had inevitably been very different to that planned. Although some extra costs had been incurred due to the coronavirus crisis (posting home of work for students unable to access on-line learning for example), there would be some considerable savings in areas such as supply, invigilation, photocopying and energy. Hence there were no short-term financial concerns as a result of what had happened over the last two months, although there must be huge uncertainty over the long-term future of all public spending and hence the cautious approach taken to the setting of the 2020-21 budget now seemed even more appropriate.

2020-21 SDP:

When school eventually re-opened it would be important that students and staff returned to as much 'normality' as possible. Hence plans for a 3-year 2020-23 SDP had been postponed, with all the new initiatives and associated SLT/ELT role changes that could potentially have involved, and would instead have a very focused 1-year 2020-21 SDP which focused on the 'recovery' phase following the disruption caused to this academic year. Key themes of this plan would be the provision of care and support for students following their experiences this spring/summer, re-establishment of school expectations and practices and freeing up time for teaching staff to focus on the challenges in terms of curriculum planning and effective teaching and learning, with assessment for learning an obvious focus for staff as they tried to ascertain how students' learning had developed during their time away from school. An example of this was the support being considered for Newly Qualified Teachers next year (4 at present) - having generally not had a substantial second PGCE placement they would be far

	<p>more inexperienced than in previous years and given teaching would be so much more challenging this Autumn for the reasons described, it was important that they were supported as effectively as possible - support which started with thoughtful and effective allocation to classes.</p> <p>Following the Prime Ministerial statement some clarity had been provided over the work of secondary schools for the remainder of this term - it was likely that Years 7, 8 and 9 students would not return until September at the earliest and that students in Years 10 and 12 might return at some stage before the summer holidays, but definitely not from 1st June (possibly in July?). As suggested above, School would now need to consider what this meant for 'curriculum' delivery over the second half of this term.</p>
Resolved:	That the report be noted and the Head Teacher thanked for the informative content

Agenda item 5	GOVERNANCE
	Governors discussed what temporary Governance arrangements needed to be enacted during the current Corona Virus situation
Resolved:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Terry O'Neill be nominated to act as Chair of Governors should the Chair/Vice Chair become unavailable; 2. That the Instrument of Government be temporarily amended to allow for a quorum of 5 Governors; 3. That the reporting mechanisms currently employed to inform Governors be continued; 4. That Governors continue to access the relevant Government websites to obtain the latest updates and information; and 5. That any complaints received during the current situation be dealt with via the School's Complaints Policy.

Agenda item 6	BUSINESS CONTINUITY
Discussion:	<p>Governors received the following updates</p> <p><u>Critical Decision Making</u> The Chair reported that under the Authority delegated to her at the meeting of the FGB on 16th March 2020, the 2020/21 Budget had been submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council by 31st March 2020. The Chair had also approved the revisions to the Safeguarding Policy in respect of remote learning.</p> <p>Governors were advised that there were no policies which needed to be reviewed at present and it was suggested that current policies could be extended by 1 year should any become liable for review.</p> <p>CJ asked if the current Health and Safety Policy needed to be reviewed in the light of the any possible re-opening of School? MH responded that School would be guided by advice received from the local authority and that a lot of advice and guidance was being received at the moment.</p> <p><u>School Leadership</u> Governors had been advised by the NGA/DfE that as part of its business continuity arrangements, to consider what would happen should the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher become unavailable.</p> <p>GF suggested that as Chair, she thought that the School had a sufficiently large leadership</p>

	<p>group to manage such a situation should it arise. MH advised that School had an extended leadership team who were working from home and thus could provide leadership. MH also advised that should he become unable to attend School he would be in regular contact with SW as Deputy although should his absence be for any length of time then Governors would need to address the situation.</p> <p><u>Term Dates</u> MH advised that there was some confusion around the Cheshire West and Chester dates and asked that this item be deferred to the next meeting</p>		
Resolved:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the action taken by the Chair in relation to the 2020/21 Budget and the amended Safeguarding Policy be confirmed; 2. That any Policies due for review be extended by 12 months wherever practicable; and 3. That term dates be deferred to the next meeting. 		
Action:	What:	Who:	When:
	Term Dates be an item for discussion at the next meeting	JA	Next Meeting
Agenda item 7	STAFF WELLBEING		
	<p>GF asked RC, as Staff Governor, to give an update on staff wellbeing and mental health.</p> <p>RC advised that there were no major concerns in School although 2 members of staff had lost close family members.</p> <p>Staff who were on rota enjoyed going into School although some negative comments had been made around the suitability of the room chosen to house pupils. MH advised that this had since been addressed and a more environmentally friendly room had been identified.</p> <p>RC continued that staff who were working from home were managing quite well and the feedback received from both students and parents was very positive. Staff were having time to look at their own wellbeing as well as undertaking CPD.</p> <p>The main concern of staff was around the future and the mental health of staff and pupils when they returned to School. There needed to be a focus on counselling and clear messages around expectations. Staff also had concerns around managing additional workloads on return as well as how social distancing would be managed.</p> <p>RC read out the contents of an e-mail written by a member of staff praising the way that School had handled the current situation. MH thanked RC for the staff feedback and advised that he was conscious of student wellbeing on returning to School. In this regard a Student Support Co-Ordinator post had recently been advertised. In respect of staff, MH advised that he would undertake a review of the status of staff (isolating/vulnerable etc) who would be available or not to return to work.</p> <p>FM commented that teaching staff could have childcare issues which could impact on their ability to return to work. MH acknowledged this and suggested that School was moving into a situation which would need to be carefully and sympathetically managed.</p>		
Resolved:	That RC be thanked for her report		

Agenda item 8	SAFEGUARDING
	<p>The Chair asked SW to update Governors in respect to any safeguarding issues.</p> <p>SW advised Governors as follows, viz;-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Safeguarding Policy had been amended to reflect the increase in on-line teaching; • On-line safety had been highlighted to parents and children; • 21 children of key workers had accessed childcare, predominantly in Yrs 7&8 of which 5 of the 21 had been identified as vulnerable, the remaining being children of key workers; • 219 children were being contacted who had been RAG rated as having some level of vulnerability; • TAF/CP meetings were continuing to take place via Skype; • Counselling provision was continuing even though School was in lock down. The service was working to amended protocols and 9 students were accessing weekly sessions and feedback had been positive; • Various measures had been put in place to address any student wellbeing issues; and • In respect of Free School Meals, the School had originally used a paper voucher but had moved to the Government's Edenred System which had experienced difficulties. 132 children were eligible for vouchers and of these 126 families had redeemed vouchers to date although 2 families were still receiving paper vouchers as they didn't have the necessary technology. <p>FM enquired if any of he School's students were carers? SW advised that the School was aware of 2 such students on the current vulnerable list.</p> <p>Governors asked that their thanks and appreciation be passed onto all staff especially the Student Support Co-Ordinator and the Pastoral Team</p>
Resolved:	That the report be noted.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 16.35pm