

CARDINAL NEWMAN COLLEGE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS – QUALITY, CURRICULUM AND STAFFING COMMITTEE

A meeting of the above Committee will be held at **4.00 p.m.** on **Wednesday 12 May 2021** on Microsoft Teams.

Members present:

Andrew Wygladala (F), Deputy Chair
Nick Burnham, Principal
Charu Ainscough
Amy Baines
Claire Batson
Sue Davies
Peter Halpin (F)
Barbara Smith
Canon Tanner (F)
Peter Towers (F)

Officers in attendance:

Bob Deed, Clerk
Paul Vaughan, Deputy Principal
Vicky Bryant, Vice Principal
Emma Duxbury, HR Manager

Other governors in attendance:

Richard Ainscough (F), Chair of the Governing Body

MINUTES

1. Opening prayer

The meeting commenced with a prayer.

2. Welcome, introductions and apologies

There were apologies from Adrian Metcalf who was unable to attend. Andrew Wygladala deputised as Chair.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 3 February 2021 were agreed as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising not covered by agenda items.

6. Presentation on Teacher Assessed Grades

The Deputy Principal said that the guidance required that Teacher Assessed Grades should be based on an objective judgement of the evidence of the students' performance on the subject content they have been taught – that is, not necessarily the whole specification. He said that Heads of Department had to decide how to balance the Basket of Evidence for each subject. Different approaches were allowed across the College as long as the assessments used for evidence were common for all students in the subject. The grades would be robustly standardised and moderated.

The Deputy Principal explained that schools and colleges are expected to make it no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular grade this year compared to previous years. He explained that value-added measures are significant – particularly as the College raised entry requirements in 2019.

The Deputy Principal outlined the internal quality assurance process. He noted that the College's grades would be expected to be comparable to previous years with evidence and explanations required for divergences.

The Deputy Principal noted the importance of equality and diversity issues including safeguards against unconscious bias.

A governor asked about the timing. The Deputy Principal set out the timescales with submission to the exam boards by 18 June 2021. The Principal noted the workload for teaching staff.

7. Human resources update

The HR manager noted the increased turnover although they remain below the Association of Colleges' benchmark. The HR Manager said that absence levels compared well with the Association of Colleges' and Sixth Form Colleges' Association benchmarks. She noted that the pandemic had affected the measures with the College closures and blended learning meaning that staff may have been working at home when in normal circumstances they would have to stay off work.

8. Consultative staffing mechanisms

The Principal said that during the pandemic, there was ongoing communication rather than face-to-face meetings. He said that relations with unions were positive.

9. Policy review: HR

The HR Manager noted that the Staff Disciplinary Policy had been drafted in line with best practice and in accordance with ACAS guidelines and reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team, the College's solicitors and trade union representatives. She set out the main changes to the Staff Disciplinary Policy as outlined in the paper.

The Committee recommended the Staff Disciplinary Policy for approval to the Governing Body.

The HR Manager note the limited changes to the Stress Management Policy, including the reference to the policy falling under the wider College Health and Safety Policy.

The Chair of the Governing Body asked about stress levels among staff during the pandemic. The HR Manager said that there was no evidence of widespread issues with stress.

The Principal noted that the College had sought to ease burdens with, for example, changing interviewing arrangements for applicants. He also highlighted a supportive workplace culture.

A governor asked about the availability of counselling for staff. The HR Manager said that with pandemic, the College had redirected expenditure to an improved employee assistance programme.

The co-opted Committee member asked about the move to on-site teaching and working for students. The Principal outlined the shift of Year 12s being on-site full-time when Year 13s were on study leave and then participating in the transition programme with Lancaster University and UCLan. He said that staff were being supported with appropriate flexibility. He also noted the need for enhanced support for Newly Qualified Teachers.

The Deputy Chair asked about what might be retained from blended learning. The Principal said that the possibility of keeping online Curriculum Plus on Wednesdays had been considered. But he said that this was set against the importance of College life, human interaction and face-to-face learning.

The Committee recommended the Stress Management Policy for approval to the Governing Body.

10. R.E. and Chaplaincy: update report

The acting Chair as RE and Chaplaincy Link Governor highlighted the twice-weekly Liturgies and other activities. He said that a virtual Newman Day was being planned for 30 June 2021. The acting Chair also noted the positive feedback on online RE lessons.

The Committee thanked the lay Chaplain and the RE Team for the report and their work.

11. College Report and areas of support

The Deputy Principal said that the College Report was in place of the usual Self Assessment Report. He outlined the main themes of the Report.

The acting Chair highlighted the high levels of retention and the excellent destinations reported.

The Principal said that the Committee Chair had requested the report as he was particularly interested in the areas being supported. The Principal noted these areas.

A governor asked about the recruitment from Partner schools. The Principal noted the high rates of intake from the Partner schools but observed the widening of the College's recruitment area.

The Committee asked that Governors should receive a report on the College's market share at local schools.

The Committee agreed that the College Report should be put on the Full Governing Body agenda as a document for information.

12. Feedback from Link Governors

The acting Chair as Careers Link Governor noted the work this term involving Careers including the Year 12s attending Open Days and Year 13s participating in the transition activities.

The Safeguarding Link Governor outlined discussions with the Chair and Committee Chair. He said that he had met with the Designated Senior Leads. He said that, on the basis of this engagement, he believed that arrangements were robust. He noted that there were national concerns around safeguarding with Ofsted conducting a review following the issues raised by the Everyone is Invited website.

The Clerk confirmed that the Safeguarding Policy was being reviewed by an external consultant familiar with the College and its safeguarding arrangements. The outcome of the review would be brought back to the Committee in the autumn.

The Safeguarding Link Governors asked about the documentation of procedures. The Principal agreed that the College needed to ensure practices were being documented adequately and effectively.

The Principal said that the College was looking to further enhance pastoral support arrangements. He noted the mental health issues being presented by some students.

The Safeguarding Link Governor noted the increased resources. The support staff governor agreed that counselling support had expanded during the pandemic.

The Safeguarding Link Governor suggested a more narrative approach to reporting safeguarding. He suggested that reporting could be on a more frequent basis. The Principal agreed that this would be reviewed. The Link Governor suggested a SOFT report setting out Successes, Opportunities, Failures and Threats.

The Committee agreed that SLT should bring back a proposal to the next Committee meeting.

The Clerk said that Kathryn Podmore had confirmed that she was able and willing to undertake the triennial Safeguarding assurance review if this was commissioned by the Audit Committee.

The Chair of the Governing Body thanked the Safeguarding Link Governor for his full report and his work on Safeguarding.

13. Policy review: Quality and Curriculum

The Clerk said that the previous Student Conduct Policy had been reviewed by the Assistant Principals Students. In addition, the Policy needed to be revised to align with the College's process for exclusions which reflected the requirements of the College's Articles of Government. The changes were shown using track changes.

The Committee recommended the revised Student Conduct Policy for approval to the Governing Body.

The Clerk explained that the University of the Arts London had required an exams Conflicts of Interest policy when they reviewed the College's Art Foundation qualification. The College generally applies and has to apply the regulations of the Joint Committee for Qualifications. He said that a policy on exams Conflicts of Interest had therefore been incorporated into the College's exams Malpractice Policy which applied when JCQ regulations did not.

The Clerk said that the Exams Officer had reviewed the current exams Malpractice Policy and no other substantive changes were required.

The Committee recommended the revised exams Malpractice Policy for approval to the Governing Body.

14. Risk register

The Clerk noted that as a result of the Risk Register assurance review, the risk register was at the end of agendas so that governors could comment on it and suggest additions or changes in the light of the foregoing discussions. There were no matters raised.

15. Determination of any items to be treated as Confidential

There were no items deemed Confidential.

16. Date and time of the next meeting

The next ordinary meeting of the Committee is provisionally scheduled for 1 December 2021.