

INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL CLERKING SERVICES

The St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust

Minutes of a meeting of Cluster Board 3 (St Mary's College)
held on 4 November 2021 at 2.00pm

PRESENT: Mr C Cuthill, Mrs A Ward

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs N Coyle, Chaplaincy Lead
Miss R Flanagan, Vice Principal
Mr J Sargeant, Director
Mrs M Stead, Head of St Mary's College
Mr A Turner, Vice-Principal

GOVERNANCE PROFESSIONAL: Mrs M Gibson, Independent Professional Clerking Services

94 OPENING PRAYER. Mrs Coyle led members in prayer.

95 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. No interests were declared.

96 ELECTON OF CHAIR.

RESOLVED: that Mrs Ward be elected Chair for the meeting.

97 APOLOGIES. Apologies for absence had been received from Reverend Massie.

RESOLVED: that consent be given to the absence of the above-named member.

The absence of Mrs Chorlton and Mrs Hall was noted.

Subsequent to the meeting it was established that Mrs Chorlton and Mrs Hall had been unable to access their email accounts and had been unaware of the meeting.

98 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

99 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

Chaplaincy Update – The Briars Retreat Centre (minute 89 refers).

Members asked if there had been interest from students to attend the Briars Retreat. In response, Mrs Coyle reported that the trip had been planned for 19 November 2021 and 50 students had confirmed their intention to attend.

It was proposed that Directors be invited to attend the staff retreat. In response, Mrs Coyle advised that the staff visit would take place in January 2022; she would arrange for Directors to be invited.

RESOLVED: that Directors be invited to attend the staff retreat planned for January 2022.

100 CHAPLAINCY UPDATE. Mrs Coyle presented a report which detailed chaplaincy activity since the start of the academic year. She advised that the team had been incredibly busy since their return.

Changes to the Team

Mrs Leech had left the organisation to take up a post with the diocese of Nottingham. The team was led by Mrs Coyle supported by others. A meeting was planned for next week to review comments from staff to identify how the support provided could be improved.

Sharing Resources

All staff had been given access to SharePoint; this provided links and resources to a variety of activities.

Collective Worship

Weekly Collective worship was taking place for students in the lower school. Students were enjoying the prayer journey which provided opportunities to reflect on their relationship with God.

The Head of School invited Directors and Cluster Board members to attend class collective worship to observe the way in which topics were pitched to various groups and the way in which students engaged.

It was reported that the sessions were delivered at the beginning of the week to provide time for reflection. The Head of School advised that it was planned to purchase prayer candles to add to the atmosphere and provide focus. She added that it had been clear staff had prepared carefully for the sessions and had not just delivered the Power-point presentation.

Chaplaincy Representatives

17 chaplaincy representatives had been appointed from all year groups; they had been selling poppies and were very proud of their role. There was only one male amongst the group; work would be done to address the gender imbalance. They had been issued with purple lanyards to wear when undertaking chaplaincy duties and were honoured to wear them. A special Mass would be held for them later in the week.

The process of recruiting Chaplaincy Ambassadors from the sixth form had commenced.

Mrs Coyle reported that attempts were being made to better engage the Parish Priests however, some were not comfortable attending the college in the current climate. It was hoped they would support a special Mass to be organised each month; other spiritual activities would be arranged, and Parish Priests would be invited to take part.

Members acknowledged the difficulty engaging Parish Priests due to the current Covid situation alongside a reducing and ageing group.

Retreats and Visits

Options to use other retreats were being explored to accommodate the increased demand.

The visit to Lourdes was expected to go ahead as planned. A meeting would be held with diocesan chaplains to discuss how this would be organised.

Staff Spirituality and Formation

All staff new to the College had received a Chaplaincy welcome postcard. This had contained a prayer and provided information on how to contact the team.

Staff Training

Time had been allocated to deliver collective worship training on the Inset day held in September 2022. This would be followed up by input from the SLT and Chaplaincy team for new staff.

A half termly newsletter would be issued as a way of helping staff to understand more about the Catholic faith; each copy would be coloured to reflect the time of year.

The Head of School advised that the next CPD twilight session would include time to deliver an overview of the Catholic life of the school. The session would be delivered three times throughout the year to support staff and focus on the history of Catholic education and the distinctive nature of St Mary's College.

Staff Reflection Evening

25 staff had taken part and it was planned to repeat the experience each half term. Staff reported they had found the session spiritually uplifting; it had been held virtually and staff from across the Trust had been invited to attend.

Memorials

A memorial service had been held for an ex-student who sadly died earlier in the year. The service had been well attended by current and former students, alongside staff. Messages of memories would be forwarded to the students' parents. The memorial wall and book would be updated to include a former member of staff who had died recently.

Other Faiths

A permanent designated space had been provided to support students from all faiths.

Future Plans

Year 7 reflection day – details were to be finalised.

Rainbow bereavement course – the demand for bereavement support was increasing. Sessions would start in January 2022; student information would start to be collated before the end of term. In the meantime, Mrs Coyle would continue to meet with as many students as possible.

Members commended the detail of the report and the variety of activities taking place. They asked how the team was managing without Mrs Leech. In response, Mrs Coyle reported that they were working creatively to ensure expectations were met.

Members asked if the diocese had provided support. In response, it was reported that team members had attended the Alpha course and the retreat day. In addition, Fr Phil was being as supportive as possible given the demands on his time.

The Head of School reported that the plan was to get through the autumn term after which the position would be reviewed. She added that a new Head of RE had been appointed and would provide support.

Members commented that the report failed to reflect the enormous support the Chaplaincy team had provided to students, staff and the community during the peak of the pandemic.

Mrs Coyle was thanked for her attendance and left the meeting.

101 SAFEGUARDING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. Mr Turner was invited to present his report, copies of which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Single Central Records: Mr Painter, the LA's Safeguarding Manager had checked the SCR on 14 September 2021. He had reported that the record had met statutory requirements and was well maintained. Half termly checks had been arranged and training had been completed to identify and share excellent practice.

Staff Training: all staff would have completed the National Online Safety Certificate in safeguarding by the end of October 2021.

It was reported that St Mary's College was an accredited school to provide this training; this provided a mechanism to react to incidents as they arose.

All staff had completed safeguarding training. In addition, staff would be directed to specific elements of training each half term.

Members were informed that Mr Painter had taken samples of systems used at St Mary's College to present as examples of best practice to other organisations.

Child Protection Policy: had been updated, shared with Mr Painter and presented to all staff.

Members asked how leaders could be sure all staff were familiar with the policy. In response, Mr Turner advised that the policy had been presented at the beginning of term and staff had been quizzed on the content. In addition, regular bulletins had been issued.

He added that new elements of the policy relating to harmful sexual behaviour and sexual harassment had been key features of the training.

Referrals to LADO and Social Care: one case had been referred to LADO and subsequently closed; the details presented had been considered to be an excellent example which would be used as a case study.

Seven cases had been referred to Social Care.

The Head of School explained the way in which EHASH was used as an early mechanism for reference and referral.

Members asked if decisions made by external organisations could be challenged. In response, it was reported that it was not unusual for staff to challenge decisions if they disagreed.

Child Protection Plans: an overview of numbers was presented by year group. It was reported that the position was fluid and meetings were held daily to discuss individual students and support their needs.

The Head of School commended Mr Turner's proactive approach to arrange meetings, to ensure provision for the most vulnerable students was as good as it could be.

Members were informed that one Year 11 student had been badly let down by Social Care and this had been challenged. The student continued to attend the college and received significant pastoral support; this allowed him to access all the curriculum except science. **Members asked what would happen to the student after Year 11.** In response, Mr Turner advised that discussions had commenced with his Social Worker in relation to this. The Head of School added that the student had been invited to attend low level work experience opportunities; this would keep him engaged with the school. Regardless of whether he agreed, visits would continue to ensure he was safe.

Children in Need Plans:

Staff had needed to pursue the LA for information which should have been readily available. It was hoped lines of communication would be improved following the appointment of a Social Worker in School.

Looked After Children:

There had been an increase in numbers in Year 12 due to admission of asylum seekers. Staff had attended virtual school training; this had emphasised the need to ensure their time at St Mary's College was accurately recorded.

The Head of School reported that there had been a significant increase in looked after children across the city; it was planned to present all LAC students with a Christmas box.

It had been emphasised to staff, the importance of ensuring they knew the LAC students and able to identify their needs which could be supported, especially during social time.

Members asked how many of the LACs received additional funding. In response, it was confirmed that they all received additional funding; staff were very resourceful in ensuring all funds were received to make certain students were fully supported both academically and emotionally. National tutoring funding received would also be targeted towards the cohort.

In terms of mental health support, hope was expressed that a mental health nurse could be recruited in the new year to enhance the team.

Tea and talk sessions had been introduced across year groups; these had been very popular and well attended. The sessions would be held half termly to encourage students to talk.

In response to a question relating to the Year 12 cohort, it was reported that the majority of LACs were boys who had travelled unaccompanied from various countries.

Operation Encompass:

There had been nine incident alerts since the last meeting. Information received was not detailed; it was conveyed to year teams and tutors who made others aware.

There had been an increase in the number of incidents during lockdown.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour:

All staff had received training as required.

My Pledges had been launched in September 2021; these highlighted expectations of conduct; they had been published across the college and printed in planners.

Incidents were carefully logged on CPOMS; meetings were held with parents, as appropriate.

It was emphasised that the subject maintained a high profile and PSHE sessions had focussed on acceptable behaviour.

The Head of School outlined an incident recorded on 17 September 2021. She advised that concerns had been raised following a PSHE video which had been shown to a group of students. Meetings had been held with parents and a special assembly had been held with girls of the year group to explain the actions taken. Students had reported they had felt listened to and had been satisfied with the sanction imposed. The student involved had accepted the sanction, engaged with learning and settling into new routines; the situation would be reviewed again in the spring term.

Members asked if there was comparative data available to establish if concerns raised were higher at St Mary's College. In response, it was noted that national data was not available although the level of incidents reported had reduced as the term progressed and students responded to the expectations set.

Safeguarding Team

Members were asked to note changes to the safeguarding team which was led by Mr Turner (DSL) and Miss Flanagan (Assistant DSL). Ms Boulton, Social Worker in Schools worked directly with the team three days each week.

Safeguarding Training

Mr Turner had completed all relevant training.

All staff had completed Keeping Children safe in Education training.

Staff were expected to complete a learning pathway each half term.

Newsletters were circulated each month; focus of the information differed and responded to trends identified on CPOMS.

Safeguarding Audit

The outcome had been very pleasing and had instilled confidence in systems and procedures in place. An action plan had been developed and would be reviewed by the auditor in January 2022.

Headstart

Peer mentors had been recruited following a robust recruitment process.

Members sought clarification on the impact of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Officer. In response, it was explained that the time spent meeting and speaking with students had resulted in four Headstart referrals.

Members asked if the wellbeing of staff was also supported. In response, it was explained that safeguarding and wellbeing systems and procedures applied equally to staff and students. The Head of School advised that she would email all staff to remind them of the support available which included fitness sessions, staff football, the choir and Friday talk lunches.

Members conveyed thanks to Mr Turner for his comprehensive report which had answered a number of questions they had prepared prior to the meeting. They asked that thanks be conveyed to staff for the proactive work undertaken which was underpinned by good relationships and effective communication.

Mr Turner advised that he would share the training plan with Mr Gallagher and Mr Sargeant (Trust links for safeguarding); he would meet with them half termly to ensure they were kept updated.

102 COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES. Members received a report which outlined actions on key areas.

Attendance and Persistent Absenteeism

It was noted that recently received information from the DfE had provided national attendance data comparisons; this had been useful to identify how the college was performing: national = 90%; SMC = 97%.

It was highlighted that the system for recording absence had changed significantly after 15 October 2021. Students who tested positive for Covid had to be recorded as absent, despite them not showing symptoms and continuing to access learning via the virtual platform. A tracker had been introduced to identify the number of days absent as a result of Covid; to date 400 days had been lost since September 2021.

The Head of School reported that despite the challenges, and not being at the level aspired to, attendance continued to exceed the national average.

The EWO met regularly with Miss Flanagan to review individual student absence. Current areas of focus included:

- Year 7 LAC cohort – this was due to one student who was refusing to attend the Sullivan Centre;
- Year 11 EHCP cohort – due to a student hospitalised with a serious condition.

Members' attention was drawn to a report which outlined current attendance levels, persistent absence and actions to address concerns.

Members asked if there were issues with parents refusing to send their children due to concerns relating to Covid. In response, the Head of School confirmed that all students had returned; this had been testament to the confidence the community had in the safeguards taken to protect their children. Staff continued to work directly with families of clinically vulnerable students to ensure their needs were met; this work had been extended to include families with members in hospital who needed to isolate.

The Head of School concluded that attendance would remain high profile and rewards offered; ways to improve further continued to be explored.

Behaviour (including sanctions and rewards)

Analysis of behaviour data was presented for information. It was noted that:

- Years 9 and 10 received the highest number of yellow cards;
- yellow cards had been issued to 81 males (56%) and 63 females (44%);
- the gap between the genders was reducing;
- 43% of yellow cards were issued to Pupil Premium students; staff had identified the individuals and would assess how they could be better supported;

- Six students across years 7 to 10 had received 4+ yellow cards; students were being tracked and parents contacted; many were vulnerable who found normal classroom routines challenging;
- Staff within subject departments were being supported to take ownership of behaviour incidents as they occurred and contact parents.

Bullying

Two incidents had been reported in Year 7. The students involved had started the College with warnings from their primary schools and their behaviour had not been surprising.

The Head of School pointed out that 380 students had been admitted from over 70 primary schools; given the challenges they had faced during Years 5 and 6, the manner in which they had settled into normal routines had been commendable.

Racism

There had been one incident involving a Year 8 student. There had been no repeat of the incident.

Bag Checks

Bag checks were conducted randomly and based on intelligence received.

Bus Incidents

There had been far fewer incidents on the bus following reorganisation which allowed students to sit with their peers.

One Year 10 student had been banned from using the bus until the end of November.

Mobile Phone Confiscation Levels

There had been 79 incidents of confiscation since the start of term; only eight students had their phones confiscated more than once.

Exclusions

It was reported that the level of internal exclusions had increased. The Head of School advised that the use of exclusion was justified and applied in a measured way which reflected the restorative ethos of the college, whilst sending a message, certain behaviours were unacceptable.

PCSOs were invited to speak to students when appropriate, to highlight the severity of their behaviour and potential impact on the community.

There had been no repeat offenders and those excluded were issued with reports to monitor their reintegration and provide positive feedback.

Cluster Board members commended the work of staff and the detailed information presented which reflected the level of support provided to students. They asked that thanks be conveyed to staff.

103 ACADEMY WEBSITES. The Governance Professional was asked to circulate the updated website checklist.

Members acknowledged the transition from the old to the new website.

104 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS.

RESOLVED: that the next meetings be held on 24 March and # June 2022 (date to be confirmed) at 2.00pm.

Mrs Ward conveyed thanks to staff, past and present, who had supported her during her term of office as a governor and Director.

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signature of Chair

Minute No	Action	By Who	By When
99	Directors to be invited to attend the staff retreat planned for January 2022	Mrs Coyle	16.12.2021
103	Circulate website checklist	Governance Professional	16.12.2021