

SFCF AQC Minutes, 5 October 2020 via Zoom

Present: Peter Eyre (Chair), Sue Myland (Vice Chair), Catherine Cole (Principal), Dawn Arnold, Angelo Dela Cruz, Andrew Freeman, Helen Manning, Justin Slater, Bob Wilde, Peter Williams.

In attendance: Simon Reigh (Assistant Principal), Rebecca Rhodes (Assistant Principal), Helen Ruxton (Assistant Principal), Kate Thomlinson (Clerk).

Meeting opened at 5pm

1. Standing Items

- 1.1 Apologies received from Rachel Holmes and Matt Smith
- 1.2 No further declarations of interests
- 1.3 Minutes of previous meeting were approved (22nd June 2020)
- 1.4 Councillors asked to consider safeguarding in all items on the agenda

2. Chairs Business

- 2.1 PE welcomed the new student councillors, Angelo Dela Cruz and Bob Wilde who introduced themselves to the AQC.
- 2.2 PE informed the AQC that Frimley Church of England School would hopefully join the Trust in January subject to due diligence, currently underway.
- 2.3 Helen Manning has agreed to be the SEND link councillor. Sue Myland agreed in the meeting to be the Equality and Diversity link councillor. PE's term as Chair and Safeguarding Lead will finish at the end of this academic year and a replacement will be required.
- 2.4 PE gave feedback on the councillor self assessment forms, noting that ideas on how to hold the SLT to account are welcome, as are items for the agenda. PE also agreed that items towards the end of the agenda were sometimes rushed.

Action: PE to forward governor responsibilities as listed on DfE website

Action: PE to look at roles within the AQC

3. Principal's Update

CC gave an update on the term so far, noting that attendance of both staff and students was similar to last year. Between 46-53 staff were self-isolating at any one time, with 2-3

staff. There had been one confirmed case of COVID-19 at the college, reported today, 5th October.

BW reported that initially there had been some overcrowding in the Quad but that the college had dealt with this quickly and effectively. **BW asked how the track and trace system worked at college.** CC responded that all classes have a seating plan and therefore it was easy to know who had been in contact with whom

ADC reported that there had been initial concerns over the exam seating plan but that it has worked well because the teaching style had not changed, helping to create a positive atmosphere for the students. He agreed the college had responded well to the overcrowding.

PE questioned the provision for those students self isolating. RR informed the AQC that all classrooms were equipped with cameras and lessons were being live streamed.

Catering is being provided through pre-order sandwiches. Arrowmark are currently considering how to expand this offering.

3.1 Level 2 Courses

CC explained why the college had made the decision to no longer offer Level 2 Courses. There had been concerns over space and staffing at the college. Discussions with Farnborough College of Technology (FCOT) confirmed that they would be able to accommodate all Level 2 students. SFCF had received one complaint over the withdrawal of level 2 courses but this had been resolved with the help of FCOT. SFCF had only offered three level 2 courses. SR confirmed that English and Maths GCSE were still being provided by SFCF and that students who took those courses also took level 3 courses or vocational courses. CC also noted that the Health and Social Care level 2 course that had been offered had been changed and so no longer was a natural lead into the level 3 course.

3.3 Early Start of Term

CC explained that staff had been asked to come back to college one week early, if they were able to do so. This allowed enrolment to start early and was in line with other local colleges.

This early return was compensated with an extra week at October half term. Staff who were not able to return early will receive the usual one weeks leave at half term. Those staff who did not return early are providing catch up sessions for struggling students (both year groups) over the additional week of half term.

HM asked how the staff feel about the diary change. DA said that staff weren't quite sure what to expect in the early week but that early return had been optional and because enrolment was online, staff were able to work from home. However, some staff had felt the request had been issued at short notice.

AF questioned the wellbeing of students having been out of the study environment for so long.

DA responded that students had been well supported throughout the lockdown. Although face to face 1:1s were not happening, 1:1s were taking place virtually. The college is aware of those who need extra support.

AF asked if students were struggling. DA answering that students were happy to be back and three hour lessons had been met with positively. The Student Voice Survey will be issued next week to get feedback. This is earlier than usual.

AF asked about levels of anxiety amongst the students. CC responded that there is anxiety among those students due to take exams in this academic year because of the uncertainty over what will happen in the summer.

PE asked if the college was confident they had picked up all struggling students, in particular those that don't respond to surveys. HR confirmed that those who had not responded to the tech survey would be chased. CC pointed out that very few first year students had left this year, fewer than last year. There is also a new dot in addition to the existing dot system to identify SEND students because there is a specific protocol for these students in the event of a lockdown. Teachers are also able to pick up issues with students far more easily in a three-hour lesson than a standard length lesson.

JS pointed out the difficult task of the tutor body. SR responded that SFCF has a large, professional personal tutor team with a wealth of knowledge and experience.

4. COVID 19

4.1 CC reported that the academic curriculum is on course. Some sport has started. The enrichment programme is online as is the Prospect Diploma. PE commented on the comprehensive nature of the contingency plan which will be sent to AQC members this week.

Action: KT to forward contingency plan to AQC members.

4.2 With regards to gaps in student knowledge this is being addressed in Y13 through assessment and in Y12 with diagnostic testing. There is an increase in students who are underperforming who have been identified through this testing and they are being provided with catch up sessions. An audit of all students is due to take place over the next two weeks which will include students identified as struggling through diagnostic testing, students who came to college with a low maths or english grade, those previously identified by their school as struggling. Structural and subject specific support will then be provided for these students. First years were also asked to complete a 15 minute written task on starting at college. This helped to identify those struggling with literacy but also helped to identify anxieties. Study support will be

attending vocational classes to assess which students need exam support. This has not been done before.

4.3 The updated eSafety policy has been drafted and is with CC for approval before it comes to AQC. The policy on cameras has now changed and students have the choice on whether to turn their camera on or off. DA pointed out that it had been a difficult start to the term for staff who have their own anxieties but that staff were often consulted through surveys.

HM acknowledged how difficult the start of term must have been for the staff, especially with three hour lessons. HM asked how staff with greater health risks had been accommodated. SR reported that those at the greatest risk were working remotely. Directors of faculties had summarised feelings within departments. Also, 140 staff had now received laptops and Ipads with stylus to enable digital marking. This initiative had been greatly welcomed by staff. Staff are also able to request from HR their own individual risk assessment if they so wish.

Action: RR to share minutes from Director of Faculties with AQC

The AQC gave a unanimous vote of thanks to all staff at the College for everything they had achieved over the previous difficult six months, noting the hard work and adaptability that everyone had shown under particularly difficult circumstances.

5 Exam Results

5.1 The CAGS had been heavily scrutinised for discrimination before submission.

5.2 With regards to grade appeals, PE asked the SLT if there had been enough support from the Trust. SR reported that Vince's support with the appeals had been very helpful.

PE asked what lessons had been learnt and how were the college preparing for a similar scenario next year. RR reported that students were being regularly assessed and were aware that these assessments could count towards their final grade. BW and AD confirmed students were aware that these assessments were significant to their final grade. BW said students were aware there was a ranking system in place which deterred students from passing on details of the assessments to other students who may be taking the assessment at a later date.

JS questioned the impact of this increased assessment on student wellbeing. AD reported that he finds the assessments motivating and beneficial. RR informed the AQC that the assessments are generally short and low key.

JS noted that it would be important to take lessons learnt once the appeals process had been dealt with. It was noted that it would be important to be more prescriptive across departments.

Action: CC to circulate parents communications on grade calculations.

6 Safeguarding

6.1 CC pointed out that the audit is a live document. AF commented that the audit is thorough and reassuring.

6.2 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

PE asked how would someone contact the DSL if they were worried. CC replied that there were 6 DSLs (including herself). People could phone, email, speak to student services or a DSL. That generally the method of contact would depend on the issue. PE asked how the college was sure an email would not be missed. CC replied that the DSL email is picked up by 5 people.

AF asked if the Policies are fit for purpose when they are so long. CC pointed out that the policies demonstrate that the DSLs know the procedure.

HM stated that the policies refer to under-18s and queried if the older students would be covered by such polices. CC confirmed that all students attending the college signed an agreement to abide by all college policies.

Subject to a few minor changes to the policy were agreed and the policy was approved.

6.4 SEND Policy

HM asked how the SEND policy had changed from last year. RR replied the main changes were related to COVID and support in the event of a lockdown. PE encouraged all members to pay particular attention to p4.

Subject to the addition of HM as SEND AQC lead, the policy was approved.

6.5 KCSiE

PE reminded all members of the importance of this document and encouraged all to confirm to the clerk that they had read it.

7 Enrolment

7.1 HR reported that there had been a higher number of places accepted but a lower conversion rate. The enrolment number was still high. A small number of first years had left in the first month, often transport had been the reason.

7.2 The Music Scholars section needs to be removed from the policy. The closing date for admissions has been brought forward to allow for all interviews. PE asked what the filtering policy would be if the college was over subscribed. HR stated that it had never been used. Students from Hampshire would receive priority and then first come first served. PE pointed out the importance of transparency on the filtering system.

Subject to minor amendments, Admissions Policy was approved.

Any Other Business

Virtual open days are due to be held 21st and 22nd October. There will be a virtual certificate evening and a virtual christmas concert.

Meeting closed at 19.52

Signed_____

Peter Eyre, AQC Chair

List of Actions

Action: PE to forward governor responsibilities as listed on DfE website

Action: PE to look at roles within the AQC

Action: KT to forward contingency plan to AQC members.

Action: RR to share minutes from Director of Faculties with AQC

Action: CC to circulate parents communications on grade calculations.