

Minutes of Academic Planning and Quality Committee Meeting

Monday 11 May 2020

Held Virtually using Microsoft Teams from 5.30pm

Min No **Governors Present:** Mary Tighe (Chair), Barbara Barratt (Vice-chair), Yuqi Cao (Student Governor), David Griffin, Jonathan Langdon, Nikki Lewis (Staff Governor), Matt Morgan (Staff Governor), Caitlyn Shortland (Student Governor) and David Tomaney (Parent Governor).

Also in attendance: John Abbott (Principal), Xanne Blythe (Clerk), Emma Fielding (Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality), (Saffron Lee (Assistant Principal, Business and Creative Industries), Matt Nolan (DSL and Director of Student Services).

Apologies were received from Joe Bennett (Assistant Principal, English, Science and Mathematics) and Becky Flower (Assistant Principal, Humanities and Social Science).

The Chair congratulated Richard Jones (Progression and Learning Centre Manager) on being shortlisted in the Outstanding Personal Contribution category of the Somerset Education Business Partnership Awards 2020. The Chair congratulated both Matt Nolan on his Director of Student Services appointment and Becky Flower on her Vice-Principal Student Services appointment. The Chair thanked the Director of Apprenticeships for the high level of work already implemented with learners, the Apprenticeship Team, CIS and employers.

APQ **Declarations of Interest (agenda item 2)**

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No declarations of interest were received.

APQ **Minutes of the Previous Meeting (agenda item 3)**

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RESOLVED: that the Academic Planning and Quality Committee minutes dated 20 January 2020 be agreed as an accurate record and be duly signed by the Chair.

APQ **Centre Assessed Grades (CAG) Guidance for Final Year Students (agenda item 4)**

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The Deputy Principal discussed the Nine Step CAG guidance booklet with the College's procedure and timeline. The document provided guidance for teachers and course managers on proposing the most likely grade a student would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment.

The RHC Senior Curriculum Group had developed the step-by-step procedure document in consultation with the SFCA Six Dimensions project lead. The document had been written to follow the Ofqual and Awarding Body guidance closely, as well as that produced by SFCA, in an attempt to achieve some sector-wide consistency. Further clarity was awaited on further details from Ofqual about CAGs in relation to Vocational and Technical Qualifications.

At the request of the Chair the DP provided an example of the CAG rating for one of the College's largest subjects - Psychology - to understand how the newly-assessed grades were arrived at, and the inherent problems which these larger subjects entailed, compared to those which were studied by much smaller groups. Governors commented on the improvement made by last year's Psychology learners and the evidence to support this upward trajectory. Exam boards would be applying a moderation process, there was a suggestion that they would be looking at colleges' performance at subject level over the last three years. For consistency, the exam board's reference point would be on what institutions had achieved previously.

Great care was being taken to communicate regularly with students and parents affected by this process to keep them up to date and answer any questions. There was understandably a lot of anxiety and worry amongst final year students and all staff were doing their very best to support and reassure. The Progression and Learning Centre Manager and his team were fielding any progression questions, especially in relation to UCAS and the implications for offers in relation to CAGs. Tutors had been in touch with final year students in recent weeks to check in and offer support where required. The Senior Team continued to respond to individual concerns that came in to the College centrally.

The Centre Assessed Grades (CAG) Guidance and procedure for final year students was NOTED.

APQ 32 Teaching and Learning Newsletter for Continuing Students (agenda item 5)

The T&L Newsletter dated April 2020 had been circulated for Governors' information from the AP for Business and Creative Industries. This issue included team updates, remote learning surveys, CPD and video resources.

The Teaching and Learning Newsletter for Continuing Students was NOTED.

APQ 33 Admissions/Prospective Student Support & Planning (agenda item 6)

The DP updated the meeting with a verbal update on the work to keep in touch with Year 11 students to reassure prospective students and their families that the College was able to support them and was looking forward to them joining in the next academic year. Emails had been sent to all offer holders shortly after the GCSE exam cancellations, subsequently the College had developed guidance and materials on its website to help answer any questions and provide students with pre-work to help them prepare for Post-16 study.

Course Managers were working on developing further preliminary subject work (Huish Head-start) ready for publication on the website from the start of May. The College had been in touch directly with partner schools Head Teachers to let them know how the College was supporting prospective students and what developmental and subject work they could access to help them get ready for the next academic year.

Active student applications, conditional offers and unconditional offers to date were provided. 80 new applications had been received and all students had been offered a telephone meeting with a Progress Tutor, Admissions staff or an Assistant Principal in the coming weeks to discuss their course choices and make them an offer for Huish. Marketing continued on social media and last week we were able to use a free 20-second message for Apple FM to further reassure offer holders and encourage new applicants.

Discussion centred on how to get Year 11 students involved via online forums and the Student Governor provided a number of forum examples using student mentors alongside a staff member. Student Governors recommended areas of focus for prospective Year 11 students during the COVID-19 lock down restrictions, and iterated the heightened importance of providing reassurance to Year 11 students to enable their smooth transition from school to College.

The Admissions, Student Support and Planning update was NOTED.

APQ 34 Oak House and International Students (agenda item 7)

The DP provided the meeting with a verbal update on Oak House and International Students. Plenty of work and projects were being set for Oak House and Homestay students with online face to face contact with tutors; although time zones continued to be a challenge. Students' academic progress was being closely monitored. International students' applications had not been overly affected for 2020-21 and international students were waiting to take their International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as part of their visa process. IELT test centres in Hong Kong were expected to reopen in June 2020.

The Oak House and International Student verbal update was NOTED.

APQ 35 Student and Staff Support and Wellbeing/Staffing Update (agenda items 8 and 9)

The DP and Chair of the Staff Wellbeing Committee (Staff Governor) provided a verbal update on student and staff support and wellbeing, and made reference to the Governors' April update and a communication posted on all platforms with a collage of messages from staff, as previously circulated. The Marketing Team had plans to develop this further with short welcoming videos from staff for new learners.

Work was underway to ensure that the College was fully, but efficiently staffed for the next academic year. Currently recruitment processes were in place for an additional Psychology Teacher and Senior/Progress Tutors all required for September 2020. The increased College safeguarding capacity was covered. The Chief People Officer would be formally in post from on 31 August 2020.

The DP thanked Governors for their involvement with various panels during the Vice Principals recruitment and appointments with successful candidates in post for the start of the next academic year.

The Student /Staff Support and Wellbeing and College Staffing update was NOTED.

APQ 36 Annual Safeguarding Audit Summary 2019-20 and My Concern Update (agenda item 10/11)

(a) Annual Safeguarding Audit 2019-20

The Somerset Governors' Safeguarding Audit had been completed by the DSL in conjunction with the Safeguarding Lead Governors. A report with the overall score had been circulated with an action plan, there was one action. Although RHC had trained staff and volunteers in Prevent/radicalisation, including FGM, the College needed to update the now defunct Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training and provide whatever its replacement would be in September and train all staff and volunteers on this fully. The updated 2020 Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory document would be available in September 2020 and documents/policies would be updated accordingly.

(b) MyConcern Report 19-20

At the request of the Committee, a termly report was provided to illustrate the number and nature of safeguarding and wellbeing concerns raised to date. An update was provided on the high-risk individual cases discussed at the previous meeting. The DSL confirmed that the majority of these students were lower sixth learners. The anonymised report summarised students' outcomes as very positive and students were being carefully monitored. External agencies were involved to ensure that these students had the correct support within and outside College with careful home liaison. Members of staff were still recording any concerns using the systems, and referrals were being triaged with support offered remotely. All Progress Tutors were still in regular contact with students.

Student Governors commented that students were anxious about university applications, especially drafting personal statements and early UCAS deadlines. Discussion centred on whether some students could be disadvantaged if they had not completed extra-curricular activities prior to their university application. Project Access was recommended to assist with students applying for Russell Group universities and the DP agreed to talk to the Student Governors offline to further research online possibilities such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) free, open, online courses designed to offer a taste of higher education to learners.

The 2019-20 Safeguarding and My Concern reports were NOTED.

APQ 37 Draft 2020-21 Calendar of Committee Meetings (agenda item 12)

RESOLVED: that the 2020-21 APQ Committee calendar of meetings be deferred to the June Committee meeting.

APQ A.o.B
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The Chair praised the staff for their incredible efforts in supporting both students and staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown period.

The next Committee meeting date of Monday 29 June 2020 was noted.

With no further business the meeting concluded at 7.00pm

Chair (signature)..... Date:.....