

Board of Trustees Extraordinary Meeting

Minutes: 28 May 2020

T/26/20

Conducted using the online platform MS Teams due to the Covid-19 pandemic

Trustees/Directors:

Isabel Cherrett – in the chair	Dominic Course	Jane Collings
Nicola Dunford	Mike Fisher	Roy Gillard
Jason Hayward-Jones	Cheryl Mathieson	Fiona Walters

In attendance: Matt Matthew, Business Manager
Rachel Hill, Clerk to the Trust

Welcome

The Chair welcomed Trustees and officers to the meeting and thanked them for agreeing to meet at short notice. There were no apologies.

Declarations of Business Interests

The CEO and Dominic Course are Trustees of South Dartmoor Academy until 31.08.20.

1. Introduction and Context

The meeting was convened under Clause 110 of the Articles of Association to review the arrangements in place and preparations for the re-opening of all schools from 1 June 2020 after a period of 'lockdown' from 23 March 2020 to control the global Coronavirus pandemic, Covid-19.

The Board of Trustees had received at its routine meeting on 18 May 2020 a summary of the arrangements in place for those six schools which had remained open throughout for the children of key workers and vulnerable pupils. The Board had approved four Coronavirus related policies on 18 May 2020:

- Covid-19 Safeguarding Policy 2020
- Covid-19 Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children during Covid-19
- Covid-19 Schools First Aid
- Covid-19 Safer Working Practice

The Government had announced in mid-May that schools should prepare to open from Monday 1 June 2020 for those in Early Years settings, Reception, Years 1 and 6. All fifteen of the Trust's schools were following advice from the Department for Education, *Coronavirus (COVID-19): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings*, from which the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) had prepared a checklist for Executive/Academy Heads to complete.

The process adopted, summarised in the CEO's weekly update issued on 26 May 2020, had been:

- Executive/Academy Heads had completed the Risk Assessment checklist which covered the following headings:

- Movement of persons around the school
- Premises related matters
- Cleaning and reducing contamination
- Staff related issues
- Pupil related issues
- Transport
- Finance
- Provision of food
- Communications with parents and others
- Once completed, the CEO had conducted an independent review of the checklist, referring back to the E/AH where any action was outstanding or it was unclear.
- The Chair of the Standards & Curriculum Committee and the Vice Chair of the Board had conducted a separate, independent review of the checklists
- In parallel, the Academy Trust School Improvement Lead (ATSIL) had worked with E/AH and the respective Local Boards to support the latter's full understanding of the arrangements to ensure social distancing within schools, the safety of staff and pupils and service providers.

It was expected that full cohorts would not return immediately as the decision remained with parents. Some pupils may not return until September 2020 and for those in the EYFS, Reception, Years 1 and 6, those remaining at home would continue with home schooling.

Each school was provided with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for those children who already required intimate care plus a stock which would be needed if a pupil or member of staff should show Covid-19 symptoms.

In order to provide an auditable process for future review, the Board dealt with each school in turn.

The CEO reported that most of the Risk Assessments had been sent to Trustees Jane Collings (JCO) and Jason Hayward-Jones (JHJ) for evaluation. The seven outstanding Risk Assessments will be received and evaluated within 48 hours. A video from Bishop Fleming detailing the rewards for opening schools has been circulated to all Trustees.

2. **Bearnes**

Premises: The floors have been marked up and a one way system is in place. A new hot water boiler has been put in the boys' toilets. After half-term building of the classroom will commence. The architect has been dealing with contractors regarding Covid social distancing provision. Ongoing monthly meetings will take place. The TBM added that the school has been open continuously. An in depth clean has taken place.

Staff: Two TAs will not return at present.

Training: All staff have been sent two website links to go to for information and all Academy Heads will provide PPE information on the first day back at school. This information applies to all schools listed in these minutes.

Likely number in school: 26 in total including key workers. The CEO drew Trustees' attention that on Fridays the KS2 bubble teacher led group has only one staff member on as the TA who releases that teacher to have lunch is not there. The school will use the supply teacher if possible.

3. **Broadhempston**

Premises: The Village Hall has been booked until the end of term as an additional venue. Risk Assessments are checked. A deep clean has taken place at the school and Village Hall. Whilst

closed the school water system has not been flushed despite being asked. The TBM is dealing with this. Churchills will be undertaking a legionella test. Bottles of drinking water will be provided for children.

Staff: Two teachers are not returning for family or medical issues.

Likely number in school: A total of 21.

4. **Cheriton Bishop**

Premises: The premises has been operating as a Hub. A deep clean has taken place in the last two days. A general clean will take place on 29/05/20.

Staff : One member of staff is not at school.

Likely number in school: Total of 25 in total. Children will not be able to move schools until September.

5. **Diptford**

Premises: A deep clean has taken place this week.

Staff: One Doctor's absence letter has yet to be received.

Likely number in school: A total of 28.

6. **Drakes**

Premises: A deep clean has taken place. The premises has been closed throughout lockdown.

Staff: Some staff have child care issues. They have been told they can bring their children to school with them as long as they are within the age range. Some staff will work at home on specific projects.

Likely number in school: Total of 6.

7. **Harbertonford**

Premises: A deep clean has been completed.

Staff: No issues to report.

Likely number in school: Total of 19. Nursery numbers are not available.

8. **Hennock**

Premises: A deep clean has been completed.

Staff : One TA will be absent but she is aware she might have to come in if required.

Likely number in school: Total of 17.

9. **Illesington**

Premises: A deep clean has been completed.

Staff: Two TAs are absent.

Likely number in school: Total of 27.

10. **Landscope**

Premises: A deep clean has taken place.

Staff: There is some anxiety in Reception.

Likely number in school: Total of 27.

11. **Moretonhampstead**

Premises: A deep clean has taken place.

Staff: One member of staff is anxious. There are no other issues.

Likely numbers in school: This has yet to be confirmed but the Chair of the Moretonhampstead Governors suggested it is over 20. Later information placed numbers at 23.

12. **Ottertton and Drakes**
Premises: A deep clean has been undertaken. A dual risk Assessment has taken place.
Staff: there are some childcare issues that are being managed through cover across the two schools.
Likely number in school: Total of 10.
13. **Stoke Gabriel**
Premises: A deep clean has been undertaken.
Staff: No issues to report at present.
Likely number in school: These have yet to be received from the Academy Head. Later information put the numbers at 23 -27 depending on the day.
14. **Tedburn St Mary**
Premises: A deep clean has been undertaken.
Staff: One member of staff will remain at home
Likely number in school: Total of 30.
15. **Widecombe**
Premises: A deep clean has been undertaken.
Staff: There are no issues.
Likely number in school: A total of between 10-15.
16. **Yeoford**
Premises : A deep clean has been undertaken.
Staff: There are no issues
Likely number in school: Total of 35.

17. Trustees' Questions & Answers

The Chair invited Trustees in turn to ask questions of the CEO and TBM.

Fiona Walters: What provision is in place if there is poor attendance at one school?

CEO: If numbers are low not all staff are expected to come in; this will be managed by Academy Heads on a daily basis. The Trust has taken legal advice. We expect staff to come in to ensure the Trust's approach is equitable.

Jane Collings: In some Risk Assessments there was some concern regarding space. Can you highlight schools where extra numbers and social distancing is a challenge?

CEO: The situation is manageable at present. Broadhempston Primary School was the most challenged for room size but the hire of the Village Hall has helped greatly.

Jason Hayward-Jones: Was there any new information given at the Prime Minister's briefing today? **CEO:** There was nothing new at the briefing today. They confirmed that they are going ahead with opening schools on 01 June.

Mike Fisher: Will breaks and lunchtimes be staggered?

CEO: Yes.

Mike Fisher: How has staff distancing been managed?

CEO: Each school is different and has been managed carefully.

Mike Fisher: Do we have lidded bins?

TBM: Yes most are lidded and double bagged as well.

Dominic Course: I note doors required to be wedged open includes fire doors. Is this a risk we are happy to be taking? Can we get an amendment to say that they are shut at night? MF advised that fire doors must not be propped open as it makes insurance null and void. MF suggested an acoustic opener.

CEO: Yes we can get an amendment. I will check to ensure fire doors are closed at night. Many children will be learning outside as much as is possible. **Action CEO**

Cheryl Mathieson: What happens if you can't get enough TAs to cover playtimes and breaks?

CEO: The only issue at present is at Bearnas on a Friday morning. Diptford will amalgamate Reception and Year 1.

Jason Hayward-Jones: What about potential staff anxiety? How will you handle this?

CEO: We will stay within the government guidance. We are a set of key workers. We will support the staff in whatever way we can. We have to be equitable. We are also following legal guidance.

Jane Collings: Staff can access counselling supervision. We have done all we can do.

Dominic Course asked about the unions and how the Trust would deal with any potential response from them?

CEO: The unions are being sensible. Numbers going into hospital are also low.

TBM: What happens if the PPE listed has not arrived by the due date?

CEO: Schools will share any surplus stock until each school has its full order.

Mike Fisher: What procedures are in place if a pupil or member of staff tests positive?

CEO: The Risk Assessments explain the procedures with a separate room identified for this.

Mike Fisher: If someone does have to isolate do we have staffing contingency?

CEO: Yes. The Central Team can back up as well.

Mike Fisher: Do we have a Visitors' Policy?

CEO: Yes - no visitors are allowed onsite. Deliveries are by sign in and request only.

Mike Fisher: What happens when Y6 numbers are edging towards 15 pupils?

CEO: We can split them.

Mike Fisher: When schools came across from the LA did you inherit asset management plans?

TBM: No but we did have a list for some

Jane Collings: What about administrators? Are they returning to school?

CEO: Administrators are working with the HR Manager on this. The likelihood is that they are needed in school. There is no reason why they shouldn't work from home, but they do provide back-up support for Heads. Most are anxious to stay in school.

Jane Collings: If the Government says all pupils should return to school will some have to be part-time?

CEO: The children that have started will have priority. If we have 15 in Year 6 we might have to say we need to think about how to accommodate them. But we need to start planning now. I think this will be a gradual building process.

Dominic Course noted that in the government guidelines there has been a subtle change of language. Where it said children were encouraged to return to school it now says that unless children are known to be vulnerable they are expected to come into school.

CEO we will continue to keep in touch on a weekly basis with vulnerable families. Academy Heads have been keeping in contact. They are a dedicated team. DC added that staff should be congratulated for their support of parents at this time.

Fiona Walters: Have we had any indication of staff or children and/or their families with Covid?

CEO: We have not been advised of any cases of the virus within families or staff

Fiona Walters: Have you asked the question?

CEO: Yes of course. The **Chair** added the CEO should advise Trustees if any pupil or member of staff is identified as having Covid-19.

Jane Collings: I know of 3 parents and 1 support member of staff who have had it. None of their partners got it. No children have had it.

Roy Gillard: I have nothing to add. It has been a comprehensive report. I would like to extend my thanks to the team and look forward to receiving the CEO's weekly reports.

18. **Trustees' vote as to whether the Link Academy Trust Primary Schools should re-open on 01 June 2020**

The Trustees agreed unanimously for the Link Academy Trust to re-open all schools from 01 June 2020.

AGREED

The CEO thanked the TBM for his support and hard work in the preparation for the re-opening of schools.

The Chair added that the Link Academy Trust wished all staff in all schools the best for next week.

19. **Date of next meeting**

The Board would meet for its scheduled meeting on Monday 13 July 2020 (T27/20) and for the Annual General Meeting on Monday 20 July 2020.

The CEO would continue to provide weekly reports to the Trust and Local Boards

First copy issued 29/05/2020 to CEO/TBM. Version 2 to Chair on 31.05.2020 – agreed 31.05.20.
Issued: 02/06/2020