

THE GOVERNING BODY OF HOWARD PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body held virtually via Microsoft Teams at 1:00 pm on Tuesday, 5 May 2020.

PRESENT

Mr G Muir (Chair), Mr R Jeffrey, Mrs J Leighton, Mrs H Blackburn, Mr O Bryden, Ms J Galloway, Ms V Farrell, Mr J Pickles (Head teacher), Ms V Edmondson, Ms M Peace

In Attendance

Mrs D Calverley (Minute Clerk)
Mrs S Mollett (Acting Deputy Head Teacher)

76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Mr J Ratcliffe with consent.

There were no declarations of interest.

77. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UP UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items notified to be brought up under any other business.

78. REPRESENTATION

Governors noted that the Governing Body currently have the following vacancies:

- 1 Co-opted Governor
- 1 Staff Governor (due to the appointment of Mr Pickles as Headteacher). The Governors noted that there would need to be an election within the School to elect a new staff Governor, but this would be deferred until September. Governors were encouraged to contact potential Governors.

RESOLVED: That the Staff Governor election be deferred until September.

79. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 FEBRUARY 2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2020 be approved by the Chair as a correct record and signed at a future meeting.

80. MATTERS ARISING

It was noted that many actions are currently on hold due to the current Covid-19 situation.

81. MINUTES OF THE HT RATIFICATION MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2020 be approved by the Chair as a correct record and signed at a future meeting.

82. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

83. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEESFinance & Premises

The minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting. Mr Bryden reported on this meeting verbally and Governors noted the following:

- The main focus of the meeting was the budget.
- Broadly it showed that the School would still be able to make a small contingency carry forward for 20/21 but there are still some unknowns around that and the staffing levels are far higher in terms of cost than the re-organisation target.
- The meeting recommended the budget for sign off by the Governors.
- The budget is currently very tight and it would be important to look for more savings if possible.

84. APPROVE THE BUDGET

RESOLVED: That governors unanimously approve the budget.

85. APPROVE THE SFVS RETROSPECTIVELY

It was confirmed that this had already been submitted and should not have been on this meeting agenda.

86. HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT AND GOVERNORS' QUESTIONS

The report was circulated prior to the meeting and the Head teacher gave a verbal summary section by section and invited questions from Governors.

Q: Are you just updating the website or revamping it?

A: Totally revamping so that it's easier to navigate. However, all the required information will remain accessible.

Q: How long will it take to get ownership of the website?

A: I don't know, the company are stretched at the moment with demand for other work. But I am able to update things if necessary in the old format.

Q: What is the new system that replaces Integris, what did it do and what is the difference?

A: Not much difference in terms of functionality. Integris is the database that holds attendance records etc but is a very clunky system. The one we are moving to is better presented. It will increase our ability to monitor attendance individually and in groups. Pulling off reports will be easier and it will be a much more integrated system in future, with real time reporting.

Q: If the system is online from 1 June, is everyone going to be trained up?

A: For the majority of staff all they would need to use it for would be their daily register, which is straight forward. The training will mostly impact Vicki, Emma, Sam and the Head teacher.

The Head reported that the School profile shows that Year 3 is now at 30 children and there is another child to come into Year 5 which would also be 30. 2 children with EHC Band A funding will be coming into reception starting in September. It was mentioned that there was a phone call last week from another parent for September reception start, who was on the autistic spectrum. The Head teacher explained the number of children with EHC plans in reception with similar issues and the parents would also be looking at other Schools.

Q: Are these children out of area?

A: There is only one who is in catchment and was allocated our School.

The Head teacher had heard that some other Schools had stated that they did not have all the resources available to support all of the children coming into School, although the Head teacher believed this should not be the case. The Head teacher had referred this matter to the LA.

Q: Is it that other Schools are recommending Howard Park?

A: No it is not the Schools, but they are potentially making the families less welcome by saying they are not equipped to meet the child's needs. The parent in question is now in a position where she does not have a School for her child in September. Until the Government criteria are changed, we will be judged against the same averages in those other Schools who don't have the same number of children with EHC plans.

Q: Is there anything in the Schools admission policy to say we are up to the limit?

A: No, admissions are dealt with by the authority. The additional child has spoken with Sarah but any more that come through we will need to challenge because of numbers and to make the point about admission levels for children with EHC plans.

ACTION: The Head teacher to feed back Governor concerns to the LA.

(a) Attendance

Prior to School closure figures had been updated and in the vast majority of cases there had been an improvement with the attendance of all of the families the School had been working with. Given the current situation, it was not relevant to comment further on attendance, although up to the Covid-19 lockdown, the RAG rating indicated measures that were put in place were having some impact on improving attendance.

(b) Staffing

Despite the School being closed there have been some current staffing changes. One member of staff effectively returned to work on Monday, 30 March 2020. Another member of staff has also given her 28 day notice period to return to work and will effectively return on Monday, 18 May. Both of these members of staff will continue to work in the same way as other staff during the current situation. It was mentioned that more of this would be detailed later on in this report.

Q: Are they both returning to their previous roles?

A: Yes, but it will be a bit different for one of those members of staff because if School had been open as normal, she would have come back to deliver interventions, but there will be stuff to do around curriculum and subject.

(c) Safeguarding

Since January the way in which incidents were reported on CPOMs have been re-classified to hopefully allow for a more effective analysis. The first set of reports run from the January to March 13th. Governors discussed behaviour and were pleased that this report indicated that behaviour was not disrupting learning. Pleasingly there were no forms of bullying reported on CPOMS during the period from January to closure.

Q: What is TAF?

A: Team around the family, a specific level of support.

The report showed the number of incidents recorded under the School's new 'Cause for Concern' category. Incidents are recorded under this heading when staff members are concerned by something that a child has told them, but this concern is not necessarily great enough by itself to trigger a higher level of safeguarding action.

Q: Does this show us that our children do speak to staff about their problems?

A: Yes, the incidents are only for about a 6 week period and the voice of the child is a significant part of the reporting. If there was a serious safeguarding issue it would go straight onto CPOMS and all safeguarding meetings are logged.

Staff have undergone level 1 training. A safeguarding audit has also been planned to prepare for Ofsted, but this has not been possible yet.

(d) Data

It was mentioned that this would be revisited with Governors once School is back in session. The information in the report is fairly self-explanatory in the meantime.

(e) Parent Survey

Survey responses were overwhelmingly positive with 80% plus agreement with the survey statements. Negative responses were received from a very small number of parents.

Q: Are any of the negative comments valid or justified?

A: All the comments have been included and all except one are positive.

Some parents did not know what SEN was and a suggestion was made to include a glossary in future surveys.

(f) School Development Plan

It was mentioned that there were no major changes, just slight amendments.

It was noted that at the last Governor meeting of the year, there would only be around 2 working weeks to the end of the School year and some things will run through to next year's plan, particularly around curriculum and quality of education.

(g) Activities

The few activities that did happen before closure were reported on, but most things were cancelled including the chocolate store in York, who unfortunately refused to refund the money.

Children enjoyed the opportunity to come into the School in their pyjamas and it was nice to see children sitting with their siblings. It was a good turn out in the afternoon for parents to come in and read with their children, it was also noted that the decorated doors looked lovely.

The Book Fair went extremely well. Over £1,000 worth of books were bought and £600 was raised to spend on books for the School.

(h) Curriculum

It was noted that a separate action plan is currently in place.

(i) Covid-19

Governors noted the following:

- The Head teacher has kept Governors up to date as the weeks have gone on, as the speed of change was very fast.
- There are around one third of families using the School work packs that have been sent out.
- A lot of other resources and advice have been sent out to families to help them structure their day, such as stories.
- A lot of families are struggling in different situations, trying to work from home, and sometimes finding it difficult to support their children with the level of work or lack of motivation.

Q: Are we able to check how much is being done at home and how much learning is taking place? Should we be checking with parents what they are doing?

A: No, not unless we integrated some sort of reply system. We accept that parents are doing the best they can and that learning will be taking place very differently in different homes. It is really difficult if you are working at home and trying to also home School your children too and any added pressure from the School is not helpful. It has been emphasised in all messages that go out to parents that they just have to work out a programme that works for their family. When the children do come back into School, staff will just assume that children have done very little, and will pick up where they were when they finished School. Doing the packs at home will not mean they have kept up with the curriculum. On returning to School it will take a lot of adjustment for some children to get back into learning.

Q: Do we have any parents who don't have access to internet?

A: No, not that we know of, even if it is just through their mobile phone which is not ideal. We have had quite a few who have asked for paper copies and we have supplied this on request. There is the Government scheme where you can apply for hardware but none of the children in School were eligible. We are trying to do a balance between practical and online activities so that not everything is online. There are about 30% doing the packs as they should and a few more who are dipping in and out.

- The School identified 40-50 families who it was felt fitted into a vulnerable category and those families were allocated to members of staff who are responsible for keeping in touch with these families. Some receive twice weekly phone calls, some less, some more. All those conversations are recorded in writing but not loaded onto CPOMS necessarily. Staff have a procedure to follow and on a couple of occasions it has been necessary to do a home visit due to concerns or lack of contact.
- Staff have had other jobs to do as well as maintaining contact with families and children. Class teachers are available at any time during the day to be contacted by parents and children.

Q: What about the curriculum plan, is this being done by staff? Can it be done remotely via Teams?

A: It would be possible to do something across Teams but I'm not sure how effective it would be. There are some subjects that lend themselves to it such as computing but others less so. It needs to be done collectively. It could be some time before work returns to normal. Staff will be getting an action plan today to write up for their subject and if it looks like we will not be back until September, then this will be stepped up.

- The system for the provision of free School meals during this time seems to be getting better, but the difficult time was about 2 weeks ago. It is taking about a week or so for orders to be fulfilled. There have also been issues with parents being able to download the system, so the decision was made to just get vouchers that School's can download and then distribute.
- The cleaning company have been doing really well, doing their normal cleaning system and the cleaning is very thorough. A very good deep clean has been done throughout school.

Q: With regard to the Three I's in the curriculum plan, is there something we can put on the plan that is a statement of intent?

A: We did a holistic statement of intent before Christmas in terms of the overall vision.

87. CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

This had been mostly covered by the Headteacher's report. It was mentioned that there is much speculation about Schools reopening, but this might be partial and there is no firm information as of yet. It may well be also that parents are reluctant to send their children back to School because of the uncertainty around a second peak.

The Chair initiated a discussion with Governors with particular regard to Health and Safety and what can be done to mitigate risk and provide reassurance for parents.

Various scenarios were discussed including:

- Reducing the number of children in School at one time and no assemblies.
- Monitoring drop off and picking up to ensure no congregation of parents outside of the School.
- Staggering pick up and drop off times and applying social distancing measures.

Q: How long do you think the School will need to be able to prepare for a return, partial or otherwise?

A: I think by the end of the week or on Sunday there will be some strong indications as to what is going to happen to allow Schools time to prepare. We continue to be mindful of keeping staff away who are themselves in a vulnerable category and so if pupils return in year groups then it won't necessarily be that year group teacher who is teaching them. We will still have to teach the children of key workers and the dependencies therein.

Q: What about supply of PPE?

A: We do need to ensure that staff are working in as safe an environment as possible.

- There is also the consideration that if parents are required to go back to work and children are still at home, there are major childcare issues. There is also the issue of parents wanting all of their children in School, not just one or two. Social distancing with very young children is nearly impossible without frightening them.

Q: Is it worth trying to distance the different classes so that they don't meet eg in assemblies? Keeping groups separate?

A: I see what you are saying but this would still be an issue at lunchtime, the hall would need to be deep cleaned before the next group went in.

Q: Is one option to finish the School day at lunch time?

A: It is an option if we are allowed to do it.

RESOLVED: To continue to explore options and suggestions so that the School can respond quickly and so that plans can be applied as appropriate once the Government have announced the plan for coming out of lockdown.

Q: I know a lot of children are missing a lot of things. Are there things like the swimming tuition that can be dropped altogether? I appreciate it can't happen at the moment but is it a requirement that children do it?

A: It is not mandatory but it is a scheme that is funded to ensure every child can swim. It is an expectation but these are exceptional circumstances.

Q: If we start in June, what would it look like?

A: I think when we come back in and if it is before the summer holidays it will be a case of managing their return into School as a priority and getting them back into a routine and normality, with picking up the learning as a secondary consideration. There will be a gradual return to learning schedules from September. It is unlikely that we will have the whole School back before September. Year 6 is a crucial year and it would be good to have them back in to do the transition work with them.

Q: If there is no return in June, is there any point to returning in July? Is there any possibility that the summer holiday will be scrapped?

A: There is no indication as to what may happen at this stage.

88. ADDENDUM TO SAFEGUARDING POLICY – COVID-19 UPDATE

This had been previously agreed via email amongst Governors and has now been formally agreed.

RESOLVED: That this was formally agreed by Governors.

89. LONG TERM STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This item has already been covered under the Covid-19 update.

90. SAFEGUARDING

This item has already been covered in the Head teachers report.

91. REVIEW OF POLICIES

(a) Charging Policy

The wording of the policy seems to suggest that if children do not bring payment to School they will not be allowed to take baking or other crafts home. Governors requested that this be amended, as it does not reflect reality.

RESOLVED: That the Head teacher amends the policy as agreed and reissues it to governors during the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Governors approved the policy subject to this amendment.

(b) Music Policy

It was confirmed that the references to Kirklees Music School are still current.

RESOLVED: That Governors approved the policy.

92. GOVERNOR TRAINING AND GOVERNOR VISITS

The Chair attended a Governor briefing just before shutdown and told Governors he would circulate the presentation from the briefing to them. The main topics were SEN, PSHE, and an Ofsted inspection update.

Governor monitoring visits have been put back to June but the Chair recommended that these be scrapped for now and Governors agreed.

RESOLVED: That Governor Monitoring Visits be postponed to September.

Q: Is it worth doing a Health and Safety visit at the moment to follow up from things earlier in the year?

A: We are wary of inviting additional people into the building and keep things as they are. A checklist can be supplied for Governors and any actions can be addressed by the staff coming into School.

Q: Is there any safeguarding monitoring that the Safeguarding Governor can do?

A: One thing that would be useful is for the Safeguarding Governor to be there when Ms M Hodges does the audit.

The Chair reminded Governors that there is still a duty to monitor and challenge and as things continue, it will be necessary to find different ways to do this rather than just deferring everything.

93. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) IT Platforms and Software

Q: Is the school taking full advantage of the technology available through Office 365 and Teams as this might be the way of working for quite some time and could mean that we do things differently in future?

A: The Head teacher has thought for a while about using One Drive through Teams for storage of all documents, so that they don't need to be emailed out to Governors, but are stored in one place for people to access.

RESOLVED: To take this further so that Teams can be used in a more integrated way to take full advantage of file sharing, chat and different channels etc.

(b) Coronavirus Testing

Ms Farrell confirmed that the School is registered for coronavirus testing through the referral portal.

The Head teacher wished to record his and the Governors thanks to all staff who have pulled together to willingly come into School, putting their own health at risk to care for children, and supporting their colleagues who are in vulnerable categories and cannot come into School. Thanks are also deserved for staff who have been working hard at home to support pupils and look after those in vulnerable positions.

94. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the following meetings take place:

Full Governing Body

Tuesday, 7 July 2020 – Time and venue to be agreed.
Tuesday, 15 September 2020 – 6:00 pm at the School.

Standards & Effectiveness

Tuesday, 23 June 2020 – 1:00 pm (Time to be confirmed)

Finance:

Tuesday, 23 June 2020 – 2:00 pm (Time to be confirmed)

95. AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

RESOLVED: That no part of this agenda, minutes or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the School, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The Chair closed the meeting at 3:25 pm.