

Peterborough Diocese Education Trust
Board of Directors
Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th May 2020, 2.00pm
VIRTUAL MEETING

Attendance Key: ✓ = present; A = apologies received and accepted; ApN = apologies received but not accepted; Ab = absent; R = resigned									
Name	Committee Member Category	24/09/19	26/11/19	17/12/19	28/01/20	24/03/20	28/04/20	27/05/20	
Cathy Armstrong (CA)	Director	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Kevin Binley (KB)	Director	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Peter Cantley (PC)	Director	✓	✓	✓	A	✓*	✓*	✓	
Greg Cracknell (GC)	Director Vice Chair	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Margaret Holman (MH)	Director and Chair of the Board	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Natalie Howes (NH)	Director (Appointed 26/9/19)		✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	
Jan Martin (JM)	Director (Appointed 12/19)				✓	✓	✓	✓	
Duncan Mills (DM)	Director/CEO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Andrew Scarborough (AS)	Director (Appointed 26/9/19)		✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Anup Sodhi (ASi)	Director (Appointed 8/04/20)						✓	✓	
Dr Gordon Temple (GT)	Director	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Andrew Weatherill (AW)	Director	A	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Attendance %: this meeting		62.5%	90%	90%	91%	91%	100%	100%	
Attendance %: year to date		62.5%	82%	82%	85%	88%	89%	91%	
In attendance: Helen Buckley,(HB) Director/ Legal Advisor and Governance, Admissions and Safeguarding Lead, PDET Kirstin Howarth, Headteacher Representative PDET, Executive Headteacher, Isham CE Primary and Weldon CE Primary Lee Hughes (LH), Director Business & Finance Ruth Walker-Green (RWG), Director of Learning & Achievement Maxine Ward, Independent Clerk and Governance Professional, Hallam Learning Consultancy									

1. WELCOME AND PROCEDURAL

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.
- 1.2 GC led the opening prayers
- 1.3 **Declarations of Interest**

The following Directors/attendees have interests as members of AGCs:

- Greg Cracknell: Freemans and Pytchley
- Helen Buckley: Mears Ashby and Cranford
- Gordon Temple: Spratton and Welford
- Cathy Armstrong: St Andrew's
- Jan Martin: St Luke's
- Natalie Howes: Freemans and St Barnabas

- Peter Cantley is the Director of the Diocesan Board of Education

2. Wider Opening of PDET Schools with effect from 1 June 2020

A number of papers were circulated in advance including:

1. Covid-19 Measures Update Report (May 2020)
2. Covid-19 Health & Safety Risk Assessments
Example Risk Assessments: May 2020:
3. Towcester Risk Assessment
4. WSES Risk Assessment

In addition, written questions from ASi (attached, Page 6) and responses from the Executive Team, together with a PowerPoint presentation showing photographs of how social distancing and other measures would be implemented in a Trust school were circulated prior to the meeting start.

The Chair reminded Directors that the decision to open schools more widely was a matter that should be decided jointly between executive leaders who were responsible for the detailed operational planning and the Trust Board which holds the liability. The Board sought assurance that risks were being assessed, mitigated and managed.

Directors requested clarification on the protection that the Trust's insurers would provide should a staff member or pupil contract COVID-19 and bring a claim against the Trust or Directors. The Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA), the Trust's insurance, had confirmed they would defend a claim and indemnify the Trust should there be any liability to pay compensation or damages to an injured person. The CEO confirmed that this required the government guidelines to be followed and risk assessments ensuring proper mitigation to be in place.

Directors commented on the high quality of paperwork which it was noted was very comprehensive compared to what some other Trusts and Local Authorities were producing.

Directors challenged on the following aspects:

- Was there sufficient reference in the guidance to schools for children with SEND and in particular those who required personal care to be provided or a physical disability where there would have to be contact between the pupil and staff?

HB advised that Natalie Packer, the Trust's SEND consultant had circulated a risk assessment for SEND to all schools. This had been updated on 26 May following the changes in emphasis in Government guidance that all children with EHCPs should be in school wherever possible. Additional guidance would be sent to Headteachers. It was noted that SEND did not feature in the Risk Assessments circulated with these Board papers and it was agreed that this would be rectified so that the SEND guidance was incorporated in the overall Risk assessments.

Action 1: HB to update guidance to Headteachers and ensure SEND is incorporated within the overall Covid 19 Risk Assessments

- Covid Measures Update Report. Directors asked about staff mixing with different groups of children and it was explained that this was where a Teaching Assistant might support different groups on different days. The executive would discuss with Headteachers on Monday 1st June and if necessary issue instructions to reduce the risk.
- Why was 'no further action' proposed where one group of children might have more than one staff member in a week. The Board was advised that this was in line with Government guidance and had been left in the risk table as it was considered important to flag it up to the Board. It appeared counter-intuitive, but it was acknowledged that the guidance indicated schools could bring in supply cover if necessary.

The CEO drew Directors' attention to what was driving children's return to school and whether it was the need to ensure children were educated and/or to enable parents to return to work. Rotas would be essential in some smaller settings where there was less flexibility in staffing and the only way to deliver the government's ambition to bring different year groups back was to have some form of rota system. The challenge was what would be safe without extending the risk.

Headteachers were considering the risks in just bringing in one year group or splitting the week and having different groups in school.

The executive would be continuing conversations with Headteachers from Monday 1 June. Numbers of expected children had been assessed as far as possible but there would be a more accurate indication when schools knew how many had accessed the provision at the beginning of next week. Most schools had modelled provision based on full year groups attending in line with guidance. If families chose to keep children at home there could be more flexibility at the outset.

Staffing – The government guidance to Headteachers about staff with pre-existing health conditions or those who were increasingly vulnerable through anxiety about Covid-19 and had mental health conditions was not very clear. The CEO explained that this was high on the agenda when the government announced on 11 May that plans should be made for the wider opening. The CEO acknowledged the contribution made by teachers and staff. Many had demonstrated a willingness to continue to be in school throughout lockdown. There was also a vulnerable group, including some Headteachers who needed to shield but were keen to support and work from home.

Consideration was given to 29 pregnant members of staff. The executive has been clear that if these staff had any doubts about being in school they should continue to work from home for the time being. There was also a group of staff who had a genuine high level of anxiety.

Headteachers had been asked to draw up risk assessments to cover both children and staff, consulting with staff taking a 'share and listen' approach; sharing what the Trust and Headteachers were doing and listening to staff concerns and whether there were things to be added to the risk assessment. Concerns were still coming through to the centre, for example, staff wanting to wear face masks when this went against government guidance. Headteachers were continuing a dialogue with staff and explaining that government guidance was being followed and why they were taking certain approaches.

The HR responsibility for dealing with staff concerns was delegated to Headteachers. The executive was in the process of drawing up a Trust-wide list of vulnerable staff to ensure that where necessary, to support their well-being, they could be signposted/referred to the Employee Assistance Programme, the professional support paid for by the Trust.

The Trust had recognised the pressures and risks facing staff and taken these seriously from the outset.

A Director highlighted the importance of creating a clear narrative of the underpinning educational rationale of why the Trust was doing what it could to ensure the safe return of children and staff to school. There had been no shortage of staff in school to support provision during the 'lockdown period' but the emphasis moving forward should acknowledge the role staff have in the education of children and not just getting the country back to work.

The CEO said that he had written to all staff to thank them for their contribution and agreed that now would be a good time to set out the Trust's educational narrative and purpose for children and staff returning to school and articulate the importance of the role staff play in this.

Action 2: CEO to draft a letter to all staff to be circulated beginning week of 1 June 2020

Directors discussed the difficulties Headteachers were grappling with in setting up effective provision for Reception children. Removal of shared resources and soft fixtures took away what they needed for social development and learning. A big question was whether it was possible to deliver quality Early Years Foundation Stage Provision and meet government guidance. The EYFS learning environment was meant to be a 'safe place' for children to learn and it was difficult to understand how this could be provided. It was essential that young children were not put off learning at 4 and 5 years' old. It was a challenge to understand what an appropriate curriculum for this age group might look like. A focus on well-being was essential.

A Director highlighted the work of Oxford Brookes University on delivering a recovery curriculum. Some special schools were accessing this as a starting point to provide a meaningful curriculum for children who would not understand the concept of social distancing.

There was a discussion about the increasing diversity of data being collected as a result of online working and different approaches in schools. HB advised that new policies had been circulated on using online resources such as Zoom. Data collected for this would be covered by legitimate interest as part of GDPR. It was acknowledged that data lists in schools should be updated.

Action 3: HB to ensure risk registers were updated for GDPR Compliance and relevant advice shared with schools

There were no further questions or issues arising from the Health & Safety Risk paper and assessments that had been circulated.

ASi confirmed that he was satisfied with the responses to his written questions (Attached as an Appendix.)

GT reported that in his role as Chair of an AGC, he felt that the schools and staff had been supported in their preparation and the approach, depth, thoughtfulness, clarity and logic, had been demonstrated in the Headteacher's ability to respond to all the questions raised by the AGC.

He also advised that he had asked the Vicar to write a prayer for the schools' re-opening so that could be shared on Sunday 31 May. Others might like to do this.

CA said she had attended a staff meeting and reported that staff felt supported were reassured and satisfied that their well-being was taken into consideration.

DIRECTORS RECEIVED THE PAPERS CIRCULATED AND ACKNOWLEDGED THE QUALITY OF DOCUMENTATION AND THOUGHTFULNESS THAT HAD GONE INTO ENSURING THAT THE TRUST'S SCHOOLS WOULD BE AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE TO ENABLE WIDER OPENING. DIRECTORS CONFIRMED THAT THEY WERE ASSURED THAT RISKS HAD BEEN ASSESSED, MITIGATED AND MANAGED EFFECTIVELY TO ALLOW FOR THE WIDER OPENING OF SCHOOLS IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE.

THANKS WERE GIVEN TO EVERYONE IN THE CENTRAL TEAM WHO HAD SUPPORTED THE PROCESS.

The meeting closed at 14.32

Chair _____

Date _____

Appendix

Response to questions received in advance from Anup Sodhi

- How many schools have been shut, or are they all providing some form of key worker opening? My feeling is that it will be easier for an open school to get to grips with this emotionally than one that has been shut.
 - 22 of the 31 schools have remained open.
 - 7 additional schools have shared provision (joint staffing on one site).
 - Of the other 2 schools, 1 school shared with a local secondary school and the other did not need to open as no key worker provision was needed initially; the latter has opened in the last few weeks.
- Do you know how many pupils are coming back? What are parents saying? What are teachers worried about?
 - Headteachers have surveyed parents when planning provision.
 - Initial figures indicate that we will see approx. 45 - 50% of children returning in the year groups that schools have planned provision for, following DfE guidance. It is generally slightly higher for the older children. Headteachers have planned provision for the return of full cohorts so that they do not have to adapt arrangements as parental demand grows.
 - Parents' views range from wanting to see children back in school to others feeling that they will wait until September as they are not yet reassured it is safe for their children to return. Headteachers have reported that some parents have felt they were unable to commit to sending children back to school until the arrangements were published by the school – which is understandable.
 - All Headteachers have carried out a staff audit. Where staff have verbalised concern about returning, Headteachers have tried to reassure by consulting (sharing and listening) regarding risk assessments and sharing provision plans. They have also taken Trust HR advice where appropriate and have been able to signpost our employee counselling service.
 - Headteachers have also had to manage situations regarding teacher union advice e.g. reassuring members that the necessary checklists have been carried out.
- If I read this correctly the educational content will be available to those at school or those that remain at home. Is this correct?
 - Remote learning will continue for those year groups not yet being offered on-site provision. In small schools where teachers teach a double year group, this has been factored in. This is why the vast majority of our small schools have had to offer part-time provision rather than full-time provision for year groups returning, as teachers are managing remote learning for another year group not yet accessing on-site provision. (PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) time for teachers has also been built into teachers' hours.) Teacher workload has therefore been taken into account.
 - Some schools are using 'live streaming' of lessons for children who cannot access the on-site provision for their year group. Others are providing the same educational content both in school and remotely e.g. using Seesaw tasks both in school and out. Some schools are reducing the amount of remote learning for those year groups where on-site provision is in place and advising the use of e.g. the Oak Academy resources, a government initiative to help schools provide remote learning.
 - Schools are also providing hard copies of learning resources for those children who have limited or no access to the internet.

- What will be the cleaning frequency in school? Is there a plan B if the on-site cleaner is sick? I presume there is extra cost in all of this – is the Government helping to fund this?
 - Many schools have factored in planned closure times for cleaning on a weekly basis. Schools are either carrying out a ‘deep clean’ mid-week or on a Friday afternoon with provision ending at lunchtime.
 - We have advised schools that they need to draw up clear expectations regarding a regular clean and a ‘deeper clean’.
 - If a cleaner becomes ill, many schools will have to contract an external provider. Schools are keeping a record of additional costs incurred, as suggested by the government, in the hope there will be reimbursement.
- It says in the risk assessment computers should not be touched within 72 hrs – why are computers different to door handles etc?
 - Recommendations are that door handles (and other resources) which are easier to clean are wiped throughout the day and at the end of the day. Computer keyboards are more difficult to clean.
- Is there enough PPE if needed?
 - Orders have been placed for 31 PPE kits (1 per school) from the local authority (£110 per kit). These are to be delivered to our offices this week in preparation for 1st June. We have a plan to deliver these to each school by the end of this week. We will need more anti-bacterial hand wash and hence, we are making arrangements to acquire this. We will monitor the use of other items in the kit and replace accordingly.
 - The guidance is to use PPE when there is a risk of a child being symptomatic of Covid-19. We have also advised for staff to use PPE when they are in close contact with children e.g. administering first-aid.
- Which schools had the most risky assessment and what were they worried about that others may not be. Also, what are you worried about?
 - Small schools with limited staffing or schools with many part-time staff have had to ensure risk assessments address the potentially increased risk of (i) staff being in contact with more than one group of children or (ii) children being in more than one group (e.g. in the key worker group and in their own year group provision).
 - The aspects that we feel may need further mitigation are listed in the table in my report.
- What happens if someone breaches the 2m? Is there a register or anything that needs to be done / kept? Or is it just try your best
 - We have issued guidance regarding writing addendums to behaviour policies and circulated examples. The government recognises the difficulty with social distancing in primary schools and we have issued advice regarding this with the very youngest children. Duncan took part in a webinar with our lawyers last week; Stone King reported that social distancing was not a ‘requirement’ in the government’s guidance for primary schools, however, every effort needs to be taken to appropriately mitigate risks.
- What happens if a teacher is off sick – is there any cover available or will be the class be cancelled?
 - The DfE guidance states that schools can use supply teachers. However, we have issued Trust guidance not to do this. Therefore, if schools do not have the capacity to use another teacher (who has not been teaching groups and who has been providing remote learning), then the provision offered will need to be reduced. The likelihood of this is increased in our small schools where staffing capacity and flexibility is reduced.

- It says several places to encourage outdoor teaching – what happens if it is raining?
 - Provision will take place indoors. Schools have put in place social distancing arrangements internally.
- Where do the children and staff have lunch ? I guess I am asking how staggered does it need to be to get everyone through at social distancing and therefore how long will lunch need to be?
 - Schools have altered lunch provision and only packed lunches are being served so that they can be delivered to children's work stations or outside to designated places to reduce the time needed for staggered lunches.
 - Headteachers have also shortened lunch breaks so e.g. children are not playing outside for long periods of time with no shared play equipment. Fixed external play equipment shouldn't be used.
 - Staffing arrangements have taken into consideration staff lunch breaks, hence, schools have factored in two members of staff for each group to ensure cover is provided, without the need for additional staffing.
- If someone develops symptoms what, if any, notification of parents etc, does the school need to comply with
 - Specific guidance has been issued to schools (see attached)
- What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in a setting?
 - As above (see attached).
- Are there any videos / photos we as the Board can look at to satisfy ourselves that things have been done correctly? Could we visit a school pre 1 June to check the set up?
 - Duncan is collating some photos to meet your request.
 - Advice has been provided to schools regarding visitors on site (see attached). Therefore, it would not be appropriate to visit school sites at this time.

