

GREAT CHESTERFORD [C. of E.] PRIMARY ACADEMY

LOCAL GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of the video conference meeting at 8:30am held on 29 May 2020

Membership		Office	Term
Vacancy	Foundation		
Alex Jeewan	Foundation	Incumbent	Ex-Officio
Bob Rust	Foundation		21/02/2021
Gary Benn	General Member		21/02/2021
Adele Peters	General Member	Chair	21/02/2021
Jan Menell	General Member		21/02/2021
Sarah Mitchell	General Member	Headteacher	Ex-Officio
Andrew Taylor	General Member		21/02/2021
Nicholas Rowe	Parent	Vice - Chair	21/02/2021
Laura Saunders	Parent		01/09/2023
Rachel Thackray	Co-opted		01/09/2023
Amy Sargeant	Staff	Deputy Headteacher	21/02/2021
* Natalie Starbuck	Staff		21/02/2021
In Attendance			
Tom Bennett		Clerk	

* indicates absence

The Rev. Alex Jeewan opened the meeting with a prayer.

Action

20/20 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Natalie Starbuck.

The Chair reported Jennifer Fullerty had decided to step down as a governor and that she and the Headteacher had contacted her to express their thanks for all the time she had given in fulfilling her responsibilities as a governor. She had been a very active governor.

21/20 Notification of business interests

Gary Benn declared that his wife worked for the Academy and he worked for Eddisons that provided services to the Academy.

No other governor declared a potential conflict of interest with any items to be discussed at the meeting or that they had given or received any gifts or hospitality that could or be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with the Academy's matters.

MAIN BUSINESS

22/20 School Phased Re-Opening

Update from the Department for Education [DFE] and Local Authority [LA]

The HT reported there had been no change in the information and guidelines received from the DFE.

Essex CC Education Services and the school's affiliated trade unions had provided support and help on interpreting government legislation and guidance. Essex LA continue to provide daily updates as well as practical advice and resources such as template letters for parents.

The approach taken by trade unions was that it was up to each individual school to assess its own setting and local circumstances such when making the decision when and how to

re-open based upon each individual school's Risk Assessment. The viewpoint of school's wider re-opening of different trade unions continue to have differences but all were united in decisions being made on the risk assessment.

Further staff meetings had been held to review the Re-opening Risk Assessment and Action Plan. Additional areas of risks had been identified and measures put in place to minimise those risks arising.

The government had provided information on the next phase of re-opening primary schools to all pupils.

Update from parents

The main concerns of parents were the number of children and staff in each classroom and maintaining social distancing.

The number of pupils returning, as advised by parents, would be:

- Reception - twenty in two groups of ten.
- Year 1 – twenty in two groups of ten.

These included a few parents who had advised they were flexible in sending their children back to school.

Parents were pleased the school had decided to stagger the return of Reception and Class 1 pupils to allow each group to settle in. They were also pleased that measures had been put in place to help and support children dealing with the transition from home to school.

Parents of Year 6 pupils appreciated being included and receiving a letter advising them of the arrangements for the return of Year 6 pupils. They understood the need to stagger the return of Year 6 pupils.

Risk Assessment

Nick Rowe highlighted a report on "Re-Opening Schools" published by the Independent Sage group. The report set out their views on the right circumstances when schools should consider re-opening that differed from the guidance provided by the government.

The group advocated schools should take account of local considerations such as infection, reproduction and mortality rates and testing and tracking capacity. They felt the risk of opening on the 1 June 2020 was low but would halve if the school opened two weeks later and reduce further if schools re-opened in September.

The meeting noted that if a member of staff or pupil within a "bubble" showed the symptoms of the virus, the whole group would go home to self-isolate and return when the person displaying symptoms had received a negative test.

The Headteacher reported that PPE had been ordered and was expected by the proposed opening date. It had also been agreed not to use the air-conditioning system until the engineers' report had been received.

The Headteacher advised she had considered the local context regarding COVID-19 which were very low when compared to some other parts of the country. She felt that with the measures being put in place, such as creating discrete, isolated "bubbles" and regular hand washing, as detailed in the comprehensive Risk Assessment, pupils and staff would be safer than the general public, may be, in meeting and social distancing outside the school.

It was felt it was not role of the governors and school to weigh-up and make judgments on scientific data. Governors and schools were required to follow government guidance, advice and legislation within the school's local context.

It was noted that the Government had delegated the responsibility for re-opening schools to the Senior Leadership Teams and governors who needed to consider and discuss all arguments and advice before agreeing when to open the school.

It was noted the school was already being cautious in opening a few days later than the governments guidelines and staggering the return of pupils.

The Headteacher reported it was likely that other risks may become apparent once the school re-opens and it was important to be able to change the provision quickly.

It was **agreed**:

- a) The Headteacher should take decisions without the need to seek approval from the full LGB in following the wider re-opening but should seek the advice of the Chair before taking a decision.
- b) The re-opening date should be as previously agreed.
- c) To approve and sign off the Covid-19 Risk Assessment and Action Plan.
- d) To close the school on Wednesday afternoons with all children having access to home learning activities for this session.

Communication and School Agreement

The Headteacher reported she had updated and completed a first draft of the Supplementary Home School Agreement for Summer Term 2020 using guidance from Essex CC.

The draft agreement included express provisions for Covid-19 including how the school would operate, the need for parents to provide up to date contact details and not to send children to school if they display symptoms of the virus.

The provisions also asked parents to follow the current government guidelines on social distancing and mixing with others outside school.

It was planned to send out the new agreement with a covering letter to all parents on the Tuesday following the meeting.

It was **agreed** to circulate the draft to the Chair before sending the final version to parents.

ROUTINE BUSINESS

23/20 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21 May 2020 were approved as an accurate and true record of the meeting.

24/20 Any Other Business

- **Succession Planning**

It was **agreed** to consider governor succession planning at a future meeting and to seek a replacement for Jenifer Fullerty from the Littlebury area.

25/20 Date/time of future meetings

- **Tuesday 30 June 2020 [TBC]**

Approved by the Local Governing Body on 7 July 2020