

The Federation of Abbey Schools Academy Trust

Governing Body Minutes

Date: Thursday 14th May 2020

Directors who took part in Governance via email Board meeting:

Mr J Briggs, Dr L Bryant, Mrs E de la Motte, Mrs V Folkes, Mr M Fryer, Mrs R Hall, Mr N Little, Mrs R Kershaw, Mrs C Marley, Mrs C Stow Smith and Mr P M Willson.

Also facilitating the Board meeting: Mrs L Hawksby (Clerk to the Governing Body).

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF DISCUSSION</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence and Format of Meeting</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted for Director Mrs J,Scott. The 11 remaining Directors all participated in the governance via email meeting. All Directors were provided with a set period of time in which to comment or ask questions in relation to an annotated Agenda and relevant reports. Two recorded responses to all questions were then provided with opportunity for all Directors to comment/question further. This set of minutes was then produced in which to record the Board's resolutions.</p>	
2.	<p>Notification of Items of Other Business</p> <p>There were 3 items of other business (Please refer to Minute 20 below) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-opening of the School Recovery Plan and Operational Plan • Appendix to the Health & Safety Policy Covid 19 • Business Continuity 	
3.	<p>Declarations of Interests:</p> <p>Declaration of personal or pecuniary interests in any matters arising from the Agenda of the current meeting.</p> <p>There were no declarations of personal or pecuniary interests declared.</p> <p>Declaration of any updates for the Register of Business Interests.</p> <p>There were no updates for the Register of Business Interests.</p>	

<p>4.</p>	<p>Approval of Minutes</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes – Monday 30th March 2020</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on Monday 30th March 2020 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record by the Chair.</p> <p>b) Matters Arising –</p> <p>With reference to Minute 6 the Chair confirmed and it was noted that both formal complaints had now been concluded satisfactorily.</p> <p>With reference to Minute 13 it was suggested and it has been agreed that the next meeting of the Board should be held via ‘zoom’.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Reports of Committees:</p> <p>Leadership & Management Committee – Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th February 2020.</p> <p>Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the Leadership & Management Committee from the meeting held on Tuesday 13th February 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the issues considered and recommendations made by the Leadership & Management Committee held on the 13th February 2020 be noted.</p> <p>Teaching & Learning Committee – Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5th March 2020.</p> <p>Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the Teaching & Learning Committee from the meeting held on the 5th March 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the issues considered and recommendations made by the Teaching & Learning Committee held on the 5th March 2020 be noted.</p>	

	<p>Audit & Finance Committee – Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12th March 2020.</p> <p>Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the Audit & Finance Committee which was held on Thursday 12th March 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That the issues considered and recommendations made by the Audit & Finance Committee held on the 12th March 2020 be noted. b) That it be noted in relation to Minute 5, the Audit & Finance Committee had agreed to the principle of employing the services of a project management company to oversee potential schemes, subject to obtaining quotes and recommendations which would then be further considered by the Board. However due to the current Covid 19 situation and issues arising from the lockdown, in consultation with the Chair of the Board and Audit & Finance Committee Chair, it was agreed to proceed with the employment of D3A as Project Managers without further quotes given time constraints. <p>6. Head Teacher’s Report</p> <p>Consideration was given to the Head Teacher’s report, which also included important updated information for the Boards’ attention with regards to how the school is meeting the operating expectations set out by the Government and monitoring the wellbeing /welfare of pupils and staff in relation to the Coronavirus. Safeguarding information, communication, lettings, business continuity, curriculum /home learning, staffing, special educational needs and disabilities information and attendance information during Covid 19 were also reported upon.</p> <p>CQ The Board advised that they wanted Parents’/Carers’ of the relevant year groups and key worker groups to feel confident with their children returning after the 1st June 2020. The Board enquired about the plans for the reopening at the beginning of June.</p> <p>The Board were referred to the recovery plan and operational plan (Please also refer to Minute 20 below), which had been circulated to all Directors along with a letter sent to parents’ carers advising of the schools plans and relevant risk assessments which had been placed on the Governors’ Learning Platform. The Head Teacher advised that the school has done all it can to comply with all the guidance and to reduce the risks. He also advised that with the schools’ plan it should only be the ‘bubble’ that would need to isolate for 14 days with the schools’ plan if a pupil were to test positive for Covid 19. He advised that staff</p>	
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	<p>were supportive of the plans, although there were natural anxieties regarding the Covid 19 situation.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>7. Interim Safeguarding Guidance for the Covid 19 Period from the Department for Education.</p> <p>Interim Safeguarding Guidance for the Covid 19 had been attached to the Agenda for Directors' information and was duly noted. Further safeguarding information during the Covid 19 period was also contained in the Head Teacher' Report at Minute 6 above and the updated Child Protection Policy at Minute 15 below.</p> <p>CQ The Board enquired whether there any additional steps outside of seesaw that might help identify any newly vulnerable children at home? The Head Teacher advised that SLT have phoned parents/carers that were identified as vulnerable before COVID19 and also phoned parents/carers whose children aren't engaging, which has highlighted more families that need contacting.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>8. Management Accounts and budget management during this period</p> <p>Management Accounts for both February and March were carefully considered by the Board. A briefing report also provided an update for Directors on the financial impact on the Trust of the partial closure of the school in response to the current Covid 19 crisis and any actions that need to be considered.</p> <p>There was also a benchmarking report for Directors' considerations which is an annual benchmarking report produced by Avec Partnership. The ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) recommend that benchmarking data is used by the Board and senior staff to review financial performance and identify potential areas for further examination in terms of improved efficiency.</p> <p>CQ The Board posed the following questions :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the school considering reviewing any other payments to suppliers ? The Head teacher advised the school is currently following guidance. • Going forward how many additional cleaning staff will be required to attend to requirements for Covid 19? The Head Teacher advised the school are training staff from 	
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	<p>before and after school provision in COSHH (Control of substances Hazardous to Health) training to support cleaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The benchmarking report was noted as being very useful. There were a couple of areas that stood out where Abbey were outliers. Was there anything surprising in this benchmarking or anything that should be looked at as a result of the exercise? The Head Teacher advised that a further report would be brought back to the next meeting of the Board on the 2nd July 2020. <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the accounts/budget management report be noted and a further information regarding benchmarking be brought back to the next meeting of the Board scheduled for the 2nd July 2020,</p> <p>9. Letter to Academy Trust Accounting Officers – April 2020 DfE.</p> <p>The above letter was considered and noted by the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>10. Internal Audit / External Audits</p> <p>It was noted there have been no external audits undertaken to report back on. The internal assurance audit by Clive Owen LLP was due to take place just as the Government’s required lockdown occurred, however the planned programme of internal scrutiny by Clive Owen LLP is proposed to continue on a remote basis and a report will be duly brought back to the Board. Directors’ are asked to note that the internal scrutiny programme is continuing and approval was sought that this will be conducted remotely during the current Covid 19 response period.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted and approval be given to the internal scrutiny being conducted remotely during the Covid 19 period.</p> <p>11. Premises Report</p> <p>Consideration was given to the premises report for the period March to May 2020.</p> <p>CQ The Board asked that presuming the summer school holidays will proceed as normal, what works are planned during that time to catch up on work not done during lockdown ?</p>	<p>C. Hurworth</p> <p>Head Teacher/ Clive Owen LLP</p>
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	<p>In response the Head Teacher advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIF bid application results have been put back until the end of May 2020. • Due to the fact that the Juniors has been closed the school have been able to do some mainly decorating work. • D3A associates have been contracted (Minute 5 above refers) and will provide tenders to school by the end of June with the aim of starting work in the holidays. <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p>Risk Register.</p> <p>The current Risk Register was considered by the Board. It had been further updated in relation to the schools' response to the Covid 19 situation from when it was last considered at the 30th March 2020 Board meeting (Minute 19 Board meeting 30th March 2020).</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the current Risk Register be approved.</p>	
<p>13.</p>	<p>Current numbers on Roll and new starters numbers</p> <p>The current numbers on roll for each year group and new starters numbers were considered by the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
<p>14.</p>	<p>Health & Safety Accident Statistics.</p> <p>Consideration was given by the Board to the Health & Safety Accident statistics.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
<p>15.</p>	<p>Child Protection Policy</p> <p>The Child Protection policy had been updated in response to the Covid 19 current situation and the updates were carefully considered by the Board. It was noted that this document had also been published on the school website.</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the updated Child Protection Policy be noted and approved.</p> <p>16. HR policies</p> <p>Directors were asked to approve a Bereavement Policy and to note that there are no further updates currently required to the Academy's other Human Resources policies at the present time in relation to Covid 19.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Bereavement Policy be approved subject to a small amendment in relation to a typographical error regarding Appendix A and B.</p> <p>17. Financial Procedures</p> <p>Directors noted that the financial procedures are currently being reviewed in relation to any necessary changes required specific to Covid 19 and that these will be uploaded to the learning platform once complete and brought back to the next Board meeting later in the Summer Term.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That a further report be brought back to the next meeting of the Board on the 2nd July 2020.</p> <p>18. Policies: Home School Agreement</p> <p>Directors noted that no changes have been made or are required for the next academic year to the Home School Agreement from when it was last approved by the Teaching & Learning Committee on the 19th June 2019.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>19. Directors re-appointments update</p> <p>An update report was considered by the Board and Directors were requested to note that Directors N. Little and C. Stow Smith have indicated they wish to continue after their term of office expires in December and R. Kershaw would advise as soon as possible to confirm. A further report will be brought back to the next meeting of the Board on the 2nd July 2020 to consider the structure of the Board in the next Academic Year.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher</i></p>
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<p>20.</p>	<p>The Board were also requested to note that Director J.Scott will be stepping down as a Parent Director at the end of this academic year with the relevant papers and appropriate acceptance to be actioned at the next meeting of the Board scheduled for the 2nd July 2020.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted and a further report be brought back to the next meeting of the Board on the 2nd July 2020.</p> <p>Any other business raised under Minute 2 above:</p> <p>(Note: In addition to the two items of other business on the Agenda the Chair raised an additional item of business regarding the re-opening of the school to key worker children, Years 1, 2 and Year 6.)</p> <p>Item of AOB- Re-opening of the School Recovery Plan and Operational Plan</p> <p>The school's recovery plan and operational plan were circulated to all Directors and given careful consideration by the Board. A copy of a letter from the Head Teacher to parents which set out the school's plans and National Governance Association guidance for Governing Boards regarding the re-opening of schools were also circulated for information and to aid in the Boards' considerations.</p> <p>Relevant Risk Assessments were also placed on the Governors' Learning Platform (under the 14th May Agenda) by Monday 1st June 2020 which also helped provide Directors' with more information on the schools' plans.</p> <p>The Head Teacher advised that the recovery plan and specific risk assessments have been worked through with the school's Health and Safety Partner AVEC. Vulnerable and Key Worker groups have increased considerably so the school will be unable to open for all year groups following Health & Safety advice.</p> <p>He also advised that following advice from AVEC plans will be monitored and provision is in place to be able to keep every bubble separate. Staff who now have extra cleaning have been trained in COSHH (Control of substances hazardous to health).</p> <p>He reported that if the school was in a phased return in September another plan would be set out after consultation with the Trust Board and the school's Health & Safety advisors.</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>
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<p>CQ</p>	<p>Some of the questions posed by the Board included the following:</p> <p><i>Are classrooms able to accommodate proper social distancing between everyone, with 15 children and staff?</i></p> <p>The Head Teacher advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bubbles are a maximum of 15 but the most the school would have in 1 class is 9 with 2metres distance between each pupil. • Early Years would be slightly different because there is a double classroom with space for a maximum of 16. • Lunches and breaks are all taken in the class bubble. • Priority – Key workers and vulnerable are the priority, Year 6 are on a rota system and Year 1/Early Years will be in school for 3 weeks each. At present with the current guidelines the school would be near capacity. This is the only means by which the school can accommodate all 3 year groups with pupils in full time. 	
<p>CQ</p>	<p><i>With regards to Appendix 2 what changes will be made to buildings or classrooms, e.g. barriers put in place to physically isolate bubbles, contents of classrooms checked so everything can be easily washed/wiped clean?</i></p> <p>The Head Teacher advised:</p> <p>Cleaning rotas for classrooms and other areas have been created. There is signage in the school and floor tape has been ordered. There are entry and exit points for each bubble. Desks will be spaced 2 metres apart in classrooms, desks will be moved out of classrooms where necessary. Each bubble has their own toilet area.</p> <p>The school will deep clean after each cycle. (Year 1/Early Years are 3 week cycles. Year 6 are 2 week cycles.)</p>	
<p>CQ</p>	<p><i>Will the school advise parents who have chosen not to send their child back to school that the teaching will be similar?</i></p> <p>The Head Teacher advised learning in school will be the same subjects and topics as home learning. There have been a number of communications with parents/carers and he would ask teachers</p>	

<p>CQ</p> <p>21.</p>	<p>to also do this through SeeSaw/Tapestry. Communication with pupils will also be regular through Tapestry and Seesaw. There are resources that are signposted to support family wellbeing at this time with links from the school's website</p> <p><i>Has any consideration been given by the school with regards to using any other spaces (other than school buildings) locally , for example :sports halls, gyms, conference rooms, unused offices, church halls or even churches etc. to teach children in?</i></p> <p>The Head Teacher advised not at the present time and there would be risk assessments/safeguarding issues that would require consideration if this was implemented. The school will await government guidelines for September.</p> <p>Item of AOB - Appendix to Health & Safety Policy – Covid 19</p> <p>Consideration was given to the appendix of the Health & Safety Policy which detailed relevant Covid 19 actions.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>Item of AOB - Business Continuity Update.</p> <p>Consideration was given to the Business Continuity update on critical school activities in relation to the current Covid 19 situation.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>Proposed Agenda Items for the next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Structure and acceptance of resignation of Parent Director J.Scott who is stepping down. • Benchmarking – Directors questions answered. • Financial Procedures. • Covid 19 Response Updates • Terms of reference Teaching & Learning Committee and Leadership & Management Committee 	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Accounts (including 3 year budget forecast) • Audit & Finance Committee Directors to consider their annual audit report to the Board of trustees • Risk Register • Chair's report <p>22. Approval of Documents for Public Inspection</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Agenda, supporting documents and approved Minutes be made available for public inspection with the exception of any papers relating to Minute 8 above: Management Accounts due to their commercial sensitivity in accordance with article 125 c.</p> <p>23. Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>That a virtual meeting of the Governing Body be held on the 2nd July 2020 via zoom video and audio.</p> <p>Approved by the Governing Body</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Signature (Chair): _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p> <p><i>Directors/ Clerk</i></p>
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Note: the **CQ** abbreviation stands for – Challenging Question by the Board.