

## The Federation of Abbey Schools Academy Trust

### Governing Body Minutes

**Date:** Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 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 J Scott, 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><b>Apologies for Absence and Format of Meeting</b></p> <p>There were no apologies for absence and all 12 Directors 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. A recorded response to all questions was then provided with an 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><b>Notification of Items of Other Business</b></p> <p>There were 2 items of other business (Please refer to Minute 19) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairs' Action</li> <li>• Risk Register</li> </ul>	
3.	<p><b>Declarations of Interests:</b></p> <p><b>Declaration of personal or pecuniary interests in any matters arising from the Agenda of the current meeting.</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of personal or pecuniary interests declared.</p> <p><b>Declaration of any updates for the Register of Business Interests.</b></p> <p>There were no updates for the Register of Business Interests.</p>	

<p>4.</p> <p>CQ</p> <p>5.</p>	<p><b>Approval of Minutes</b></p> <p><b>a) Approval of Minutes – Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record by the Chair.</p> <p><b>b) Matters Arising –</b></p> <p>With regard to Minute 8, the Board questioned whether there was any feedback on the Wellbeing Day activities? The Head Teacher advised that the Wellbeing Day had been very positive. Children, staff and Director R.Hall took part in lots of activities and many of these were shared with parents via Seesaw. Director R.Hall had also forwarded some information to the Northern Echo which was published.</p> <p><b>Reports of Committees:</b></p> <p><b>Leadership &amp; Management Committee – Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020.</b></p> <p>It was proposed to defer consideration of this item to a future meeting of the Board.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That consideration of this item be deferred.</p> <p><b>Teaching &amp; Learning Committee – Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020.</b></p> <p>It was proposed to defer consideration of this item to a future meeting of the Board.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That consideration of this item be deferred.</p> <p><b>Audit &amp; Finance Committee – Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020.</b></p> <p>It was proposed to defer consideration of this item to a future meeting of the Board.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That consideration of this item be deferred.</p>	
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<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Chair's Report</b></p> <p>The Chair advised in her report that 2 formal complaints had been received since she last reported to the Board. One was being investigated by the Vice Chair, with a response provided to the complainant. The other was being investigated by the Chair and was ongoing, with an agreed extended timeframe for review due to the ongoing Coronavirus situation and the Government lockdown.</p> <p>The Chair has been in regular contact with the Head Teacher, Vice Chair and Clerk to the Governors during the current Coronavirus crisis.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the report be noted and a further report, with regards to progress in the investigation of the complaints be brought back to the Board when applicable.</p>	<p><i>Chair</i></p>
<p>7.</p> <p>CQ</p> <p>CQ</p>	<p><b>Head Teacher's Report</b></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. It was noted that the School had taken very sensible measures to reduce staff exposure on site and support staff and pupils at home. Senior leadership and the business team have been very proactive in communications with parents/cares.</p> <p>A comprehensive summary of the term's events/activity (before the school's closure) was also provided in the Head Teacher's report. It was noted review findings are positive and the Board looked forward to seeing how the recommendations are implemented.</p> <p>The Board questioned how do teacher's hope to monitor pupil's progress going forward? Also, how effective is feedback to children? The Head Teacher advised feedback is quite effective using Seesaw because teachers can make comments when children upload work. Work set is more consolidating learning and not as much new learning so there may be a dip in progress.</p> <p>The Board commented that new government guidance on safeguarding for schools during the Coronavirus outbreak, advises schools to "review and revise" policies as the epidemic evolves. There is a lot of information and detail in the Head Teacher's report which is very welcome, however the Board requested that they receive confirmation that the policies have either been updated, or don't need to be updated because other action has been taken? The Head Teacher advised that at the</p>	

<p>CQ</p> <p>CQ</p> <p>CQ</p> <p>8.</p>	<p>next Board meeting key policies would be identified and amendments that need to be made. Any other policy review will be postponed until the school is back to normal functioning arrangements.</p> <p>The Board questioned if the School is closed for 4-6 months what plans are there for recruitment of new staff? The Head Teacher advised on the staff that were leaving at the end of this academic year and also maternity leave cover that would be required. He advised that plans were in place to replace staff that were leaving, which would be through a mixture of changes to the current staffs' hours and making some staff fulltime where appropriate. Also supply staff may be employed for maternity cover if necessary.</p> <p>The Board questioned is contacting vulnerable/SEND families once a week frequent enough to ensure they have the support they need? The Head Teacher advised some parents are contacted more often and are assessed when they are phoned. Places in school are offered if it was felt a family may benefit.</p> <p>The Board questioned with regard to the whistleblowing incident, whether it was possible to comply appropriately with the whistleblowing policy procedure in this situation of school closure? The Head Teacher advised that in retrospect it was not a whistleblowing incident and it had now been resolved through further training.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the report be noted and key polices be identified at the next meeting of the Board that may require amendments during the coronavirus response period.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding</b></p> <p>Safeguarding information was contained within the Head Teacher's report.</p> <p>The Board posed the following questions in relation to issues relating to social and emotional wellbeing of pupils: how will this be monitored whilst school is closed to most pupils? Do we have anything in place to support parents with these issues/ identifying behaviours that may be worrying them? What is the process for parents who wish to seek help for their children? How will this be communicated?</p> <p>The Head Teacher advised vulnerable families are contacted at least weekly. The School Councillor and Primary Welfare Practitioner contact families who have contacted school. There is also lots of information about mental health and the Coronavirus on the school website. Mental health is also referred to on communications from the school.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher</i></p>
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	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p><b>9. Current numbers on Roll</b></p> <p>The current numbers on roll for each year group was considered.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p><b>10. Management Accounts</b></p> <p>The January management accounts were considered by the Board.</p> <p><b>CQ</b></p> <p>The Board questioned how will the Coronavirus restrictions effect the school's financial viability and how will loss of income from lettings affect the budget? The Head Teacher advised that some money will be saved, however the school will have to pay a number of suppliers and we will have reduced income from the After School Club and school meals. The budget is continually monitored closely. Monthly accounts will continue to be uploaded to the Governors' portal.</p> <p>The Head Teacher reported that the budget is healthy for next year. The school will set next years' budget as late as possible so that adjustments can be made to reflect any change in government policy.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p><b>11. Governors' Learning Day</b></p> <p>The Governors' Learning Day had been due to be held on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020, however due to Government restrictions under the current Coronavirus situation this would have to be postponed.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That consideration of this item be deferred.</p> <p><b>12. Raising Governors' Profile in the School.</b></p> <p>As this was not an urgent item, it was proposed to defer consideration at this time.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That consideration of this item be deferred.</p>	
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<p><b>13.</b></p> <p><b>CQ</b></p>	<p><b>Summer Term Meeting Dates.</b></p> <p>The Clerk sought approval to the next meeting of the Board to be held after the Easter holidays on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020. This may be via e-mail depending on current advice at that time with regards to school closure and social distancing. It was proposed to suspend the Sub-Committees during the next Summer Term due to the current situation and focus on Board meetings where all urgent business will be reported and considered for approval. After the 7<sup>th</sup> May meeting another Board meeting date sometime after the half term would be agreed, to ensure a total of two Board meetings during the Summer Term both of which will include management accounts.</p> <p>After reflection the clerk asked if the Board would agree to move the date of the next Board meeting to 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (instead of the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020), as it would provide more time after Easter to annotate the agenda and ensure the reports are all in place for the Boards' considerations.</p> <p>The Board questioned whether video/telephone conferencing had been considered, rather than email? The Clerk advised it was the first thing considered regarding the possibility of doing video or telephone conferencing. Having spoken to the School's IT staff they advised we did not have the correct telephone system to undertake a telephone conference. There was also a concern that we had a short time frame (as we wanted to keep the urgent school business moving and keep the 30<sup>th</sup> March meeting to ensure we have all the necessary permissions in place during this time of uncertainty) in which to help support, perhaps those Directors who were less familiar with the kind of software which facilitate virtual meetings that require downloading to each Directors' electronic equipment. All Directors are now contactable via email.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) That the next Board meeting be held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (via email if the corona virus restrictions still remain in place).</li> <li>b) To suspend the Sub-Committees during the next Summer Term due to the current situation and focus on Board meetings where all urgent business will be reported and considered for approval.</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>14.</b></p> <p><b>15.</b></p> <p><b>16.</b></p> <p><b>17.</b></p> <p><b>18.</b></p>	<p><b>Health &amp; Safety Accident Statistics.</b></p> <p>It was proposed that consideration of this item be deferred until the next Board meeting.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That consideration of this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Board.</p> <p><b>Admissions – permission for the Local Authority to allocate and refuse places accordingly.</b></p> <p>Permission was sought to allow Darlington Borough Council to allocate or refuse places on the Academy Trusts’ behalf with regard to admissions. This item is a standing item at this time of the academic year.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That permission be given.</p> <p><b>Gritting Policy</b></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Gritting Policy.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the gritting policy be approved subject to the gritting checklist being included in the appendix of the policy.</p> <p><b>Keeping Children Safe in Education</b></p> <p>This item was scheduled for this meeting, however the Board had been previously provide with the latest updates at the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019 meeting.</p> <p>(Note: Interim Safeguarding Guidance for the Covid 19 period is to be considered further at the next meeting of the Board, including the updating of the School’s Child Protection Policy which had been completed after this meeting of the Board.)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p><b>Board Structure.</b></p> <p>The Board were asked to note that there are some Directors whose terms of office (4 years) are due to expire in the Autumn Term, however the Directors can continue subject to them being happy to do so and under Article 64 – ‘subject to remaining</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher</i></p>
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<p>19.</p>	<p>eligible to be a particular Director, any Director can be re-appointed or re-elected.’ This is something the Board can consider in the summer term and is only to note at this point in the academic year. The Directors affected were requested to please advise the clerk that they are happy to continue in order to facilitate planning later in the Academic Year.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p><b>Any other business raised under Minute 2 above:</b></p> <p><b>Chairs’ Action</b></p> <p>To seek approval (to a resolution which was attached on the Governors’ Learning Platform) for delegation to be given to the Chair and Head Teacher for a temporary period during the current Coronavirus crisis, to act upon any critical issue that would require immediate action that would normally be agreed or approved by the Board, subject to a decision log being kept and reported back to the Board at the next possible opportunity. This power would only be used in an emergency or where failure to act immediately risked bringing the school into disrepute or compromising individuals within the school community.</p> <p>The Board requested that the Deputy Head Teachers also be added to the resolution, should the Head Teacher become unwell and be unable to exercise this function.</p> <p>A copy of the schools’ current Scheme of Delegation was also attached to the Governors’ Learning Platform, for Directors to consider whether there are any other delegation issues that should be addressed at this time. There were no other amendments felt necessary to delegation at this time. Some small changes to text and reference to the Academies Handbook 2019 (including reference to the School’s’ joint Audit and Finance Committee) were however updated in the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>a) That the Chair’s Action resolution be approved subject to the addition of the Deputy Head Teacher’s, should the Head Teacher become unwell and be unable to exercise this function.</p> <p>b) That no further amendments be made to delegation at this current time in the school’s response to the Coronavirus period (although it was noted at Minute 13 above that approval had been given to the suspension of the Sub-Committees during the next Summer Term due to the current situation and focus on Board meetings where all</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>
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	<p>urgent business will be reported and considered for approval.)</p> <p><b>Risk Register</b></p> <p>The Board was asked to consider and approve the new Coronavirus section at section 12.2 on the Risk Register. It was noted that 12.2 should be added to the high level risk table at the front of the register</p> <p><b>CQ</b> The Board asked a number of general questions in relation to risk involved with the Coronavirus including on the Risk Register should something be included relating to the health and wellbeing of staff ? Possible effects of economic disruption to contractors? Consideration of ongoing safety and maintenance requirements within the confines of the current situation? The Head Teacher advised he would will take these considerations into account and update the Risk Register for the next Board meeting in May.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>That the Coronavirus section at 12.2 be approved and further updates be brought back to the Board meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020.</p> <p><b>20. Proposed Agenda Items for the next meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any urgent business that cannot be delayed during which the school is closed and is providing reduced provision.</li> <li>• Management Accounts.</li> <li>• Policies that require updating in relation to the School's response to the Coronavirus period.</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety Accident Statistics.</li> <li>• Risk Register</li> </ul> <p><b>21. Approval of Documents for Public Inspection</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></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 10 above: Management Accounts due to their commercial sensitivity in accordance with article 125 c.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher/ Clerk</i></p> <p><i>Clerk</i></p> <p><i>Clerk</i></p>
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<p><b>22.</b></p>	<p><b>Date &amp; Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>That the next meeting of the Governing Body be held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020.</p>  <p>Approved by the Governing Body</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Signature (Chair): _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>
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Note: the **CQ** abbreviation stands for – Challenging Question by the Board.