

HODGSON ACADEMY (02502)

Governors Meeting

ACTION

Minutes of the meeting of the full governing body held via zoom on Monday 13th July 2020 at 4.30pm.

Present:

Mrs N Galloway (Chair)
Mrs H Benwell
Mr C Feeney
Mrs J Harvey
Mr C Jackson
Mr I Lindsay
Mrs A Preston
Mr T Rimmer
Mrs J Vila
Mr A Walker
Mr I Siddall (Headteacher)

Also Present:

Mrs E Wallace (Clerk to Governors)
Mr P Marsden (Observer – Deputy Headteacher)
Mr M Pickles (Observer – Finance Director)

Apologies:

Apologies were received and accepted for Mrs S. Benson.

The meeting was conducted via the Zoom platform. The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting and asked all to note the following guidance which had been issued with the agenda

Please note the Department for Education ‘urges governing boards to be pragmatic in what they cover in meetings during this time, and to be proportionate in the decisions that they are planning to take’. They expect governors to focus on ‘urgent, time-bound decisions’ and understand boards will want to ‘defer non urgent decisions/agenda items until future meetings’.

In addition, the National Governance Association (NGA) has advised that paperwork be scaled back and verbal updates be provided wherever possible during this time.

20.23 Governing body matters

a) Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest regarding the agenda items.

b) Membership of the Governing body

The outstanding vacancy for a Parent Governor remains. The post will be advertised in the new academic year 2020/2021 to enable parents of the new Year 7 to submit an application.

c) DBS Checks

Mr Pickles confirmed all DBS checks are up to date.

20.24 Minutes of the previous meeting and any matters arising

It was resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 19th May, having been circulated, be approved and signed by the chair.

The Chair had investigated the matter of the governing board operating a second vice chair during the current pandemic. Governors discussed this matter and it was agreed a second vice chair was not required at the current time.

Mr Pickles had looked into financial neglect and whether this was needed to be included within the Academy's safeguarding policy. The current policy was based on Lancashire guidance and as such was considered to be in order at the present time.

20.25 Chair's action to be reported

Key points from the report included:

- The Chair, Vice-Chair, Mr Siddall and Mr Pickles had met to discuss, amend and initiate the Risk Assessment for the return of the Year 10's and considered the pastoral support required.
- Interviews had taken place for the Assistant Head of RE and the appointment of Mrs Shaw had been confirmed.
- The Chair had attended the Chair of Governor briefings for Lancashire Schools, which had been held virtually.
- The Governing body thanked Mr Siddall and Mr Marsden for their hard work, team work and support for the Academy over the past year.

The Chair explained the Academy would be back at full capacity in September and discussed the principles of minimising contact and social distancing between students and staff. The Chair continued to discuss planning a contingency for a local lockdown and engaging with track and trace. She discussed the difficulties in planning for staff and students return in September and understood the possible anxieties from students and staff in doing so. The Chair continued, discussing mental health and well-being of students and staff who may need support and the importance of ensuring the school was ready to provide the necessary support..

20.26 Closure update and forward planning

The Headteacher explained attendance had been pleasing for the Year 10's and many successful pastoral appointments with the students had been made, to ensure their well-being.

A Governor sought clarification on contact with Year 10 students who had not attended school. Mr Siddall explained that a letter was sent to Parents requiring a response and confirmed all Year 10 students had been in contact with the school. Mr Siddall explained upon their return, students will be kept in year group bubbles. Government guidance issued has stated students should not have a compromised breadth of curriculum and to enable that to work specialist

subject teachers would have to move between bubbles. He continued to explain the main principle of minimising student contact with different year groups. Year groups will be allocated 9/10 rooms to be used by that year group only. Rooms will be reconfigured to allow social distancing and more didactic teaching will be in place. He explained there are specialist rooms not included in the allocations per year group and these will be bookable and deep cleaned after each allocated lesson.

Mr Siddall advised that the assembly hall will be repurposed as a staff room, to enable staff to work at non-teaching times and be able to socially distance. He continued to explain the school day will be staggered, to keep students safe and enable social distancing. Staff will be asked to be in their teaching room 15 minutes before the start of the school day to allow students to go straight into their classroom.

Mr Siddall explained the Academy is considering a staggered start for the re-admission of students. The starting point for this is year 7, as they have missed numerous transition activities.

A Governor asked about school PE lessons. Mr Siddall replied he is meeting with the Head of PE to discuss which options can be delivered. He explained that after-school activities are likely to be year group specific.

A Governor questioned whether there is guidance to cover next year's GCSEs. Mr Siddall explained OFQUAL had issued information of proposed changes to GCSEs including no changes to core subjects. OFQUAL have suggested the following changes:

- The start of the GCSEs to be moved to after the May 2021 half term.
- OFQUAL have removed the requirement of recordings to be submitted for English Language.
- Greater question choice in History.
- Geography fieldwork to be removed.
- Art to be portfolio only.
- Language speaking to be reformed.

A Governor asked whether students are able to sit GCSEs in the November prior to May/June, to minimise workload. Mr Siddall explained this option whilst once available, is no longer available across the board.

A Governor asked whether Year 10 students entered for GCSEs this year will be graded. Mr Siddall explained the grades for the Year 10's will operate in the same way as the Year 11's, by the Academy submitting a centre assessed grade.

A Governor commented about extra-curricular activities. Mr Siddall explained the Duke of Edinburgh scheme had issued guidance which will now be followed. Mr Siddall continued to advise governors that the Academy will be offering Y11 students due to finish their Silver award the opportunity to complete this with the modified rules from September.

Mr Siddall discussed hygiene for students and staff. He explained outdoor sinks will be added to the main entry points around school allowing easy access for students. Year group bubbles will

have designated toilets they are able to use. He continued to explain students will be staggered during break and lunch times, to allow for social distancing. The school canteens will be in operation, allowing one year group at a time in a specific dining room, with cleaning in between the year group change overs.

Mr Siddall explained the bus service for students is expected to run as normal and a survey is being issued to parents regarding this. Government guidance states that a school bus carrying school students only, is not expected to follow social distancing rules.

Mr Siddall informed the governing body of a letter being sent to parents outlining plans the Academy has for the return of students. He discussed offering all parents information briefings for the final week of the summer holidays, allowing parents to book in and explain how the Academy plans to open. Included will be discussions of how the curriculum will be delivered and allowing parents the opportunity to ask any questions or details any concerns they may have.

A Governor questioned whether students will be taught in their sets. Mr Siddall confirmed that all students will be taught in their sets.

The Chair explained the main purpose of the year group bubbles is to efficiently identify any possible positive cases of Covid and close the bubble down to minimise risk and spread.

A Governor asked whether form time will remain operational. Mr Siddall confirmed that form and reading time will remain.

A Governor queried how bubble closure would operate if a student in the affected year group bubble, had a sibling in another year group. Mr Siddall explained that although there is guidance already in place for this eventuality the Academy would contact Public Health England and follow their direct advice.

A Governor asked whether students would still receive a weekly assembly. Mr Siddall confirmed all students will continue to have assemblies, these will be in year groups as opposed to houses and situated in the Sports Hall.

A Governor questioned the risk of Legionnaires disease with the lack of water usage during lockdown. Mr Pickles explained the Academy had carried out a regime of flushing the systems each week. He continued to explain an outside contractor had visited weekly to test temperatures and will continue their work over the summer holidays, undertaking any necessary work.

A Governor asked what percentage of teaching staff were expected to be in a position where they may not feel able to return in September. Mr Siddall replied that at the present time, he was unaware of any staff unable to return.

The Chair discussed revising the Behaviour Policy to include rules and regulations on social distancing. Mr Siddall explained that this policy had already been amended in preparation for September.

The Chair asked whether there was a plan for a year group lockdown. Mr Siddall explained there are 3 situations to consider:

- Individuals are told to self-isolate – The Academy is using Microsoft Teams for students to access resources and contact teaching staff.
- Full Year group is sent home – Work would be issued through Microsoft Teams as close to the structure of the school day as possible to minimise curriculum loss.
- Full Local/Country Lockdown – Microsoft Teams would be accessed to deliver lessons to students and this would be through a collaborative departmental basis.

A Governor asked about any students who may not have access to Microsoft Teams. Mr Siddall stated that over 90 laptops had been issued to students needing support, to enable lessons and resources to be accessed.

A Governor discussed whether staff would need to be sent home if a year group bubble was closed and if so, would remaining staff manage to deliver those lessons or would the Academy temporarily close. Mr Siddall explained that the Academy would seek advice from Public Health England. He continued to explain staff would be expected to cover those lessons and if this was not a possibility, only then would the Academy consider the possibility of a full / partial closure.

A Governor queried the Academy's position on non-attendance of students from September. Mr Siddall explained the Academy was still awaiting guidance from Lancashire County Council.

The Chair agreed Lancashire's guidance needed to be looked at to ensure that any policy that the school formulated was legally sound as well as appropriate to the situation.

A Governor asked whether some students will require additional learning. Mr Siddall explained there would be some students identified as requiring additional learning, which would be identified in the first month on return in September. The deployment of learning will be based on the individual needs of the student. He continued to explain there is capacity to create extra learning and is awaiting guidance from the Government regarding interventions.

The Chair discussed the well-being of staff and ensuring support is there for staff who may require it. Key points of the discussion included:

- The Chair explained staff will be consulted regarding risk assessments.
- The Chair, Vice Chair, Mr Siddall, Mr Marsden and Mr Pickles will reconvene once the risk assessments are provisionally completed so that they can be analysed before ratification in readiness for publication.

20.27 Finance Director's update to include presentation of MIS proposal

Mr Pickles discussed the proposal of a new management information system (MIS) within the Academy. He outlined the difficulties with the current system and the potential benefits of a new system. Mr Pickles explained that the new MIS would work more effectively with current software packages that the Academy were currently using. He added the Academy had received demonstrations and proposals from two companies to compare with the current provider.

Mr Pickles asked for Governor approval to implement a new management information system with Arbor on a 3 year agreement effective from 1st April, 2021.

ACTION

All Governors agreed with Mr Pickles' proposal and it was duly approved.

The Chair queried whether the Academy budget had experienced excess financial costs due to the current climate. Mr Pickles explained whilst there had been some additional costs, there were savings on for example energy and certain expenditure items such as ICT improvements had been postponed. He continued to add that there was an expectation for the Academy to stand in a healthier financial position than expected by the end of the year as had been indicated at the previous meeting. Mr Pickles stated the Academy holds a healthy reserve, for investment in the school to continue. He added the Academy has investment works planned for the next academic year, which will be going ahead.

The Academy will also be receiving the recently announced Catch-up Premium to support intervention with those students needing it the most. Full details were awaited.

20.28 Governor Arrangements 2020/2021

a) Review the constitution

Governors discussed the structure and composition of the governing body and were content with the number and experience levels of governors as it currently stands. The vacancy for a parent governor, was acknowledged which governors agreed would be advertised in the new academic year.

b) Review committee membership

Governors were satisfied with current committee appointments. Mr Pickles to confirm details at the next meeting.

Mr Pickles

c) Confirm appraisal and pay committee arrangements

Mr Pickles to confirm details at the next meeting.

Mr Pickles

d) Review appointments/reporting arrangements for nominated governors

The Chair confirmed attendance at a Prevent and Anti-Racism online training courses. The Chair will confirm Safeguarding arrangements at the next meeting.

The Chair

e) Any Other Business

Discussions were deemed to be of a confidential nature and minuted as such.

20.29 Confidentiality

Parts of item number 20.28 were deemed to be of a confidential nature and were minuted as such.

20.30 Dates of 2020/2021 Meetings

Mr Siddall asked governors for preferences of meeting days and times. Governors were satisfied with the current format. The Chair suggested an additional governors meeting for the first week of return in September. Further meeting dates to be confirmed by Mr Siddall.

Mr Siddall
