



Company No.: 08036395

## MINUTES

Non-Confidential Minutes of the Eden Academy Board of Trustees  
Held via Zoom on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020 starting at 5:00pm

Attendance:

Angela St. John	ASJ	Trustee
Brian Eaton	BE	Trustee
Collette Stone	CS	Trustee
Helen Milner	HM	Trustee
Jamie Clarke	JC	Trustee (Deputy Chair)
Karen Deacon	KD	Trustee
Mari Ladu	ML	Trustee
Mary Canavan	MC	Trustee
Mirvette Russo	MR	Trustee
Susan Douglas	SD	Trustee & CEO
Vicky Collis	VC	Trustee
Also present		
Keith Holroyd	KJH	Governance & Policy Officer; Clerk
Sudhi Pathak *	SP	Director of Finance & Operations

\* For items 71 to 73 (part)

Apologies:

Barry Nolan	BN	Trustee (Chair) & Academy Member
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The meeting was declared quorate

Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
71/2019-20	<p><b>Welcome, introductions and apologies and the Board's acceptance or rejection for any absences</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from BN. In Barry's absence, the meeting was chaired by JC as Deputy Chair.</p> <p>JC welcomed SP to the meeting.</p>	

Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
72/2019-20	<p><b>Declaration of interests</b></p> <p>No additional declarations were made for this meeting.</p>	
73/2019-20	<p><b>Consideration of the Trust’s response to ministerial announcements and planning for wider school reopening</b></p> <p>JC referenced the papers which had previously been circulated.</p> <p>SP briefed Trustees on the health and safety and cleaning aspects of the school reopening plans. The H&amp;S requirements ahead of reopening had been circulated to all schools and SP had spoken to all site managers; where any issues have been flagged, these had been noted and an action plan prepared. There are currently no outstanding issues which would prevent the reopening. Trustees discussed the different format of some schools’ written responses. Whilst SP had spoken to all site managers who in turn had confirmed in writing that all checks have been completed, they had responded in different ways. It was <b>agreed</b> that a more consistent approach of written confirmation should be applied.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Follow up with site managers to obtain written confirmation for each item on the H&amp;S requirements plan.</p> <p>Each school has put together a cleaning regime against a template provided by the Trust, including what will be cleaned, how, when and by whom, together with the monitoring arrangements. There are currently no issues getting access to cleaning staff. Routines and escalation procedures have also been prepared in relation to any incidence of Covid within a school.</p> <p>Trustees questioned the cleaning controls in relation to controlling infection and what training cleaning staff have received in respect of requirements in the current circumstances. SP explained that contractors have specified the level of cleaning, the solutions used, and the training given for a ‘deep clean’ and the arrangements for normal cleaning. Training for those cleaners we employ directly and who will be doing additional hours will receive the required training in their first week back. As much as possible has been covered in the risk assessments. Trustees also questioned the steps being taken to ensure that cleaning materials are allocated to individuals to prevent the chance of cross-contamination.</p> <p>It was noted that in the event of any decision not to open, then the associated cleaning requirements would be deferred.</p> <p>Trustees noted that risk frameworks have been provided which all schools have used to prepare their reopening plans.</p> <p><i>SP left the meeting at this point.</i></p>	<p><b>SP</b></p>

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	<p>SD took Trustees through some of the key points from the papers previously circulated.</p> <p><b>Reopening strategy and creating a Covid secure environment</b></p> <p>SD explained that it had been more challenging for our schools than getting mainstream pupils back to school. Schools are working through these documents and it should be recognised that things will need to be different in each of the schools due to the different cohorts of pupils and the physical constraints of the buildings.</p> <p><b>Operational plans</b></p> <p>These are available for each school; the one for Grangewood had been circulated as an example.</p> <p>Our original intention had been to partially reopen schools more widely in the first week of June for children of key workers and children deemed to be at risk; this hadn't been necessary previously at the southern schools. A partial reopening would provide some space and respite for our families.</p> <p>The Government's announcement to reopen schools more broadly had created some issues with the unions, particularly in our southern schools, leading to a withdrawal of support for reopening planning which has ultimately put our plans back. As a result, we are not able to reopen all schools in the first week of June as intended. The advice to special schools doesn't prescribe which groups of children should be readmitted immediately but recognises that this will happen more slowly than in mainstream schools. Following further discussions with the unions, they have reopened discussions about reopening plans.</p> <p>SD informed Trustees that she had been invited to sit on the government's advisory group on school reopening.</p> <p><b>Risk assessment framework</b></p> <p>The framework document prepared by Eden considers the requirements from all the unions, our various local authorities, and the Health &amp; Safety Executive model. The unions have now been consulted on this.</p> <p>In addition, there will be an individual risk assessment for every child we are considering for readmission; these have not been shared with Trustees but have been shared with staff who would be working with those children.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the arrangements and planned number of pupils returning in the schools in addition to the detailed plan for Grangewood School which had been circulated.</p> <p><b>Sunshine House School</b></p> <p>Currently there are 48 pupils on roll. However, a significant number are shielding and are therefore unable to return to</p>	

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	<p>school. Sunshine House hopes to offer 8 places to pupils who are able to return. There is a high degree of anxiety amongst parents; Mark Fuell has done a virtual tour of the school which also covered off the working arrangements to try and reassure them.</p> <p>There remain some issues around PPE where the RNIB are taking a slightly different stance to Eden and the DFE. Eden is following the PHE guidance that where intimate care is required, PPE will be used, and we have asked school nurses to review this for each individual child where it would normally be worn. Trustees discussed how some children might be uncomfortable with staff wearing PPE, particularly face masks. SD explained that our approach to reintegration encompasses making pupils as comfortable as possible in the new environment. Trustees questioned the position in other schools if a member of staff wants to wear a mask where we are not recommending this; it was explained that we would then get that member of staff to discuss their concerns with a nurse.</p> <p><b>Moorcroft School</b></p> <p>Moorcroft is currently planning to open on 8<sup>th</sup> June with 7 pupils. A shift pattern may be required to increase that further if we are able.</p> <p><b>Alexandra School</b></p> <p>Alexandra is planning to reopen next week (w/c 1<sup>st</sup> June), running 2 separate sessions a day; a long morning session and a smaller session in the afternoon for children with more complex needs. It is planned to start with c. 15% of pupils,</p> <p><b>James Rennie School</b></p> <p>James Rennie has already been providing for a small number of children of key workers and is planning to open more widely from w/c 1<sup>st</sup> June for c. 6% of pupils,</p> <p><b>Hexham Priory School</b></p> <p>Hexham Priory has also been providing for a small number of children of key workers and are also planning to open more widely from w/c 1<sup>st</sup> June, moving in increments from 4%</p> <p><b>Pentland Field School</b></p> <p>Pentland Field will be opening for 1 child w/c 1<sup>st</sup> June, increasing to 10% the following week.</p> <p>Trustees acknowledged and agreed the importance of continuing to provide our home school offer which parents have been extremely happy with and supportive of.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the wider view of parents to their children returning, whether there may be a view amongst the parent body questioning the value of sending their children back for a few weeks prior to the summer holiday and whether Trustees should take that on board. Trustees heard that</p>	

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	<p>discussions with parents had indicated they fell into 3 broad groups: (i) those wanting their children to return, perhaps because they need respite and/or are returning to work, (ii) those who are saying their children will absolutely not return, and (iii) a group who are conflicted, seeing the benefit but are worried. It was confirmed that whatever the individual parental decisions were, no fines would be imposed, and no sanctions applied for keeping their child out of school in the current circumstances.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the proposed home school contract and what the Trust's position would be if a parent wants to send their child back but doesn't want to sign a contract. SD explained that this was not currently the case; indeed, parents have been reassured by the details around not sending children in who have symptoms etc. Trustees heard that the transport team at LB Hillingdon have put in place arrangements whereby checks are made with parents/carers before a child boards transport to school.</p> <p>Trustees discussed staff training. The PDSS team have prepared 3 training modules which all staff are required to complete. These are (i) infection control, (ii) handwashing, and (iii) PPE. In addition, there is specific PPE training from medical professionals for those who will need to use it.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the planning for reintroducing staff into schools. A questionnaire has been sent to all staff asking if they (i) are currently shielding, (ii) are themselves or are living with/caring for someone who is in the extremely vulnerable groupings or (iii) have other personal circumstances which they wished to be considered. SD explained that we are currently in a good position to offer people flexibility, which has reduced anxiety amongst staff. Those who are shielding or living/caring for someone who is shielding or those in the extremely vulnerable, will not be expected to return to school at present. We are also offering as much flexibility as possible in relation to childcare and public transport. At present, one member of staff has said they are not willing to come back and has agreed to take unpaid leave for the last 6 weeks of term. Trustees considered the declaration of commitment from staff and were reassured to hear that this has been implemented and staff are happy with it; most schools have now added this to their electronic entry systems.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the risk assessment issued today by the BAME network of educational professionals which SD will review and respond to appropriately in relation to staff. This is also being considering as part of the risk assessment arrangements for children.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the balance between managing the perceived and the actual risks around schools starting to reopen more widely, and the steps required to build confidence in advance of September including perhaps, live</p>	

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	<p>streaming of lessons taking place in school to show the arrangements working. It was agreed that the current arrangements are a good balance.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the relationships we have with the various local authorities we are dealing with.</p> <p>Trustees questioned the arrangements for maintaining distancing as people move around the schools and how any significant physical adaptations would be paid for. No significant physical adaptations have been required, but all schools have a range of measures in place including one-way systems, markings on the floors, and the use of different entrances. Trustees considered whether there were any likely changes in the guidance on social distancing, e.g. reducing the 2m distance to say 1.5m or 1m, though it was accepted that this was unlikely at present. Trustees also considered how our arrangements compared to schools in other countries.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the activities for preparing children to return to school, both prior to their arrival and what we will do once they are back in. It was recognised that given the diverse needs of our children they will need to have a very individualised curriculum.</p> <p>Trustees also discussed the bereavement support available for children and staff should it be required.</p> <p>Trustees complemented and commended the executive and school teams on the immense amount of work in preparing schools to be in this position and noted that the Heads have been working very collaboratively. Trustees felt reassured and confident in the arrangements. Trustees also discussed what other Trusts have been doing and the collaboration work undertaken by the executive team with the Confederation of School Trusts and the MAT CEO group.</p> <p>KJH briefed Trustees on the legal context around any decision to reopen schools more widely. Such a decision in these specific circumstances (i.e. a global pandemic as opposed to 'snow days') covers both operational areas of responsibility, typically delegated to the Executive Team and/or Heads, and the strategic responsibility and liabilities of the Trust Board as the employer. Such a decision is a matter that is best decided jointly between executive leaders, who are responsible for the detailed operational planning, and the Trust Board, which holds the liability. Ultimately this is a matter for the Board as the legal entity and employer. Under Company Law, Trustees (as the Directors) have a duty to exercise reasonable care, skill, and diligence.</p> <p>Trustees discussed what happens if a school needs to revert to admitting lower numbers. SD explained that the plans and arrangements will be reviewed weekly by the Heads and their SLTs and the executive team. These would be dynamic reviews and could roll back plans and pupil numbers if</p>	

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	<p>required. The plans had been based on starting with low numbers, then expanding but it was agreed that the Trust will reduce numbers or close a school again if necessary. Such circumstances might include, for example, insufficient PPE or a lack of available staff. Trustees considered how best they could support and participate in the review process. It was <b>agreed</b> to establish a Board sub-group who would meet at the end of w/c 8<sup>th</sup> June, comprising a minimum of 4 Trustees; ASJ, BE, KD &amp; ML were nominated as the core group with other Trustees invited to attend as they wish.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the potential for a spike in infections, (or a 2<sup>nd</sup> wave) locally and the impact on current plans with contingencies to step back as necessary.</p> <p>Trustees also discussed the arrangements should any of the senior leaders need to shield or self-isolate.</p> <p><b>Resolution:</b> Having reviewed and <b>approved</b> the reopening strategy (<i>Reopening Guidelines for Eden Academy Schools</i>), the principles which schools will adhere to in finalising school-based plans (<i>Making Eden Academy schools 'Covid secure'</i>) and the Trust's Covid-19 risk assessment framework (<i>EAT Covid-19 reopening risk assessment</i>), the Board <b>ratifies</b> the decision to allow Heads and the Executive Team to readmit pupils slowly with further increases in time provided that school-based plans reflect the principles and risk assessments set out in these documents. Any re-opening of schools will be done in a phased and controlled manner that gives school staff and school leaders the maximum opportunity to assess, review and amend where necessary the new systems that have been put in place and reduce numbers where necessary.</p> <p>This resolution was carried unanimously.</p> <p>It was further <b>agreed</b> that these assessments will be reviewed by the Executive Team weekly and shared with a sub-group of Trustees on 15<sup>th</sup> June. This sub-group would consider, with SD, whether the Board needs to reconvene again before its next scheduled meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> June.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Convene a Covid sub-group meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June to be attended by ASJ, BE, KD, ML &amp; SD plus other Trustees as they wish.</p>	KJH
74/2019-20	<p><b>Board approval of the minutes of the previous meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were <b>approved</b>.</p> <p>All actions had been completed or are in progress.</p>	

There are confidential minutes for this meeting.

Meeting closed at 6:42pm

**The Eden Academy Trust** is a charitable company, limited  
by guarantee, registered in England and Wales  
Register number: 08036395  
Registered office: Grangewood School, Fore Street,  
Eastcote, Pinner HA5 2JQ

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## ACTION SUMMARY

Agenda item x/2019-20		Action	Who
73	Consideration of the Trust's response to ministerial announcements and planning for wider school reopening	Follow up with site managers to obtain written confirmation for each item on the H&S requirements plan	SP
		Convene a Covid sub-group meeting on 15 <sup>th</sup> June to be attended by ASJ, BE, KD, ML & SD plus other Trustees as they wish	KJH