



Company No.: 08036395

## MINUTES

Non-Confidential Minutes of the Eden Academy Board of Trustees  
Held via Zoom on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020 starting at 6:00pm

Attendance:

Barry Nolan	BN	Trustee (Chair) & Academy Member
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

The meeting was declared quorate

Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
63/2019-20	<p><b>Welcome, introductions and apologies and the Board's acceptance or rejection for any absences</b></p> <p>BN welcomed everyone to the first, wholly virtual Board meeting.</p> <p>There were no apologies, all Trustees being present.</p> <p>BN briefed Trustees on the background to the current amended meeting arrangements. Following discussion with SD, KJH and the committee Chairs, it was agreed that Board, Finance and Audit Committee meetings would continue as scheduled but would take place using Teams/Zoom for the foreseeable future, as would the LAB Liaison meetings. The agendas for these meetings would be focussed on urgent business, the response to Covid-19 and complying with statutory requirements. Scheduled LAB meetings had been</p>	

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	cancelled but that these would be kept under review and rescheduled as appropriate. LAB Chairs and Heads had been asked to ensure that LAB members are kept updated.	
64/2019-20	<p><b>Declaration of interests</b></p> <p>No additional declarations were made for this meeting.</p>	
65/2019-20	<p><b>Board approval of the minutes of the previous meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 were <b>approved</b>.</p>	
66/2019-20	<p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p><u>Ref. item 53</u>: SD had written to Dame Caroline Allen but had not yet received a response. SD will follow up on this once we are through the current Covid-19 situation, along with the action re. the meetings between Senior Heads and the standards portfolio holders.</p> <p><u>Ref. item 62</u>: BN thanked MR for her analysis of the budget and subsequent Treasury announcements, which had been helpful.</p> <p>All other actions had been completed or are in progress.</p>	
67/2019-20	<p><b>The Trust's response to the Covid-19 pandemic</b>  <u>Confidential minutes also refer</u></p> <p>SD referred Trustees to the updates sent previously.</p> <p>Currently all our southern schools remain shut and we have had no requests from key workers to provide provision. In addition, we have agreed with the various social workers that there are no children who are more at risk being at home than in school. This position is reviewed weekly.</p> <p>We are providing daily educational content, including assemblies and SD noted the ingeniousness of our staff in all our schools in responding to these new challenges. Other provision includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new and regularly updated Parents' Forum on the website including signed stories, therapy suggestions and a wide range of other support material.</li> <li>• Therapy sessions via Skype, together with equipment delivered to home where required.</li> <li>• Provision of toys and play equipment, delivered direct to homes.</li> <li>• A recipe of the week, with the necessary ingredients delivered to our neediest families.</li> <li>• Support for families who now need to apply for Universal Credit for the first time.</li> <li>• Virtual coffee mornings for parents.</li> </ul>	

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	<p>The feedback we have received is that families have been thrilled with the offering. Whilst Trustees can access the Parent's Forum content, most of the provision is being made via other platforms such as Tapestry.</p> <p>A similar offering is also being made for the families in our northern schools. Here, there are a small number of children of key workers, who can manage the social distancing and the hygiene requirements, now coming into James Rennie and Hexham Priory on a part-time basis. This is being kept under review.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the provision of support for those families whose children are in receipt of free school meals. SD explained that the background to the issues encountered. Eden had put in place a system for providing food vouchers within a day of our decision to close, which had worked well. We now, however, need to use the government's Edenred system. This is resulting in a phenomenal effort by our school support teams to make it work and there are still issues with it. We are hopeful that we may soon be able to revert to our original, in-house arrangements. SD explained that we had also purchased some additional vouchers from the Covid response fund approved by Trustees, to support those families most in need, and were also liaising with local foodbanks in all our schools to deliver food parcels where they are needed.</p> <p>Trustees asked about staff morale. SD explained that morale is generally OK. Staff have understood our position, were clear about the decisions made and the rationale behind them. The staff have been providing enormous support for our families, with many going above and beyond what would be expected. We do unfortunately have some staff who have been touched by bereavement. Our creative therapists have developed a comprehensive bereavement pack for Heads and are available to all schools to assist with signposting for those in need. In addition, all our schools have access to an Employee Assistance Programme. £1,000 from the Covid response fund has been set aside for supporting staff in need of additional therapy.</p> <p>Staff, pupils and their families at Hexham Priory have also been dealing with the tragic news of Michael Thompson's death. Not being in school means that the staff and school community are not able to grieve together. Michael had been the heartbeat of the school and its community for many years, prior to his retirement last summer, investing in and supporting so many staff and pupils to achieve their potential. SD had written to all the Hexham Priory staff and had been touched by the large number of responses to her letter. Some sort of memorial will be arranged once the school is back in operation.</p> <p>Trustees discussed whether there were any additional running costs arising from the current arrangements. SD</p>	

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	<p>explained that whilst these are currently lower, some of the additional funds set aside for Covid response has been used as outlined previously. We have also bought some additional technology to support families who would otherwise have been unable to access the home provision. Under the government's IT provision, we are due to receive eight additional laptops for Year 10 pupils, two or each of our schools with such provision. These should be available in early June. Local authorities have taken different approaches to the funds allocated through them for additional equipment for children with an attached social worker.</p> <p>Trustees discussed whether we are likely to furlough staff. None are furloughed at present and we are not anticipating we will need to. The current scheme is not intended for public sector staff where budgetary provision is continuing as normal but can be considered where staff are employed wholly through additionally generated income.</p> <p>Office staff are currently coming into school on a rota basis, whilst all staff are doing mandatory training and additional CPD from home.</p> <p>Trustees discussed transition at post-19 and how this was being further complicated by colleges' current position whereby they are considering extending their provision for current students beyond this school year.</p> <p>Trustees considered the potential for further Covid outbreaks which might precipitate reintroducing school closures. This could mean that children will miss significant periods of education and highlighted the importance of maintaining our home support/provision and adapting our road-tested plans, as necessary.</p> <p>SD highlighted the development of the new national online 'Oak Academy' for whom Eden has supported the development of its SEND provision. In addition to its resource bank of online lessons, Oak Academy also provides CPD on how to run great online lessons.</p> <p>Trustees discussed potential reopening scenarios and plans and welcomed the detail in the guidelines prepared by Cabinet and Heads.</p> <p>The provision of PPE in time for reopening was discussed and Trustees were advised that new guidance is expected on PPE for SEND. Local Authorities are supposed to support the provision of PPE to schools although we had so far had a mixed response from our various LAs. We will not be able to open any schools without appropriate PPE and staff will also need to be trained. Use of PPE has implications for communication with some of our children, particularly those who are non-verbal and/or hearing impaired and has additional implications for safeguarding.</p>	

Ref.	Discussions and decisions	Action
68/2019-20	<p><b>Safeguarding</b>  <u>Confidential minutes also refer</u></p> <p>Nothing significant issues to report currently which had not been covered in the discussion on the Covid-19 response and the new Covid-19 appendix to the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy which has come to the Board for ratification.</p>	
69/2019-20	<p><b>Finance</b>  <u>Confidential minutes also refer</u></p> <p>JC confirmed that the minutes from the last Finance Committee meeting had been circulated with the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>All finance staff are currently working from home, although the Finance Assistants are going into the office at Moorcroft for one day per week, on a rota basis, to access paper files. This has necessitated some changes to our working practices which were indicated in the Finance Committee minutes.</p> <p>The financial reporting burden has been reduced slightly by the DfE and ESFA.</p> <p>Budget preparation has continued with Sudhi Pathak and the Heads. More work is required to achieve balanced budgets for 2020-21 across all schools and the central budget although since the Finance Committee meeting, we are now near balanced budgets at Alexandra, Hexham Priory, James Rennie and Moorcroft schools</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Update Trustees when more information on budgets is available.</p> <p>Changes will be required to the schedule of the internal assurance work due to the current school closures.</p>	<p><b>JC</b></p>
70/2019-20	<p><b>Board self-evaluation</b></p> <p>BN explained that as we approach the end of the school year, he will need to consider the composition of the Board and its committees and how best to utilise the skills of individual Trustees. As Chair of the Board of Trustees he is also required to report to the Members on Board performance. In doing so he will be having discussions with individual Trustees. A short self-evaluation will be issued shortly which will inform those individual discussions and the Members' report.</p> <p>The Board will be two Trustees down by the start of next year as KD is stepping down from the Board and SD will cease to be a Trustee, bringing Eden into line with current thinking on CEOs also being Trustees. The terms of office for three Trustees, including himself, are also due to expire in the summer; he intends to discuss their intentions with the</p>	

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	<p>remaining two individually. Any reappointments are subject to Members approval.</p> <p>These and the other recent changes to the Board will influence the allocation of Trustee portfolios and the composition of the Board Committees, particularly the Finance Committee where an additional Trustee to replace SD will be required to ensure that meetings remain quorate. BN will also need to consider how best to deploy the additional skills brought to the Board by the by ML, MC &amp; MR.</p> <p>BN explained that the Moorcroft LAB is currently the only one without Trustee or Member representation and has a small membership generally. Whilst plans are in place to recruit additional parent, staff and community members BN will also speak to Trustees about joining this LAB, potentially to Chair it either on a temporary or substantive basis.</p>	

Ref.	Ratification items	Action
R15/2019-20	<p><b>Covid-19 appendix to the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy</b></p> <p>Trustees <b>ratified</b> the policy.</p>	
R16/2019-20	<p><b>Protocol for virtual meetings or attendance at Board, committee, and LAB meetings</b></p> <p>Trustees <b>approved</b> the protocol.</p>	

Trustees noted the following information items:

Ref.	Information items	Action
I9/2019-20	<p><b>Notification of offline approvals, written resolutions, and Chairs' Actions</b></p> <p>Trustees noted the previous decisions in the table below overleaf.</p>	

There are confidential minutes for this meeting.

Meeting closed at 7:24pm

**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

## ACTION SUMMARY

Agenda item x/2019-20		Action	Who
69	Finance	Update Trustees when more information on budgets is available	JC

## SUMMARY OF OFFLINE APPROVALS, WRITTEN RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CHAIR'S ACTIONS SINCE THE LAST BOARD MEETING

Item	Decision type	Date agreed
Chair's Action	Written resolution	20th March 2020
Extension to CEO's contract hours	Offline approval	30 <sup>th</sup> March 2020
Covid-19 appendix to the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy	Chair's action	2 <sup>nd</sup> April 2020