



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING NESTON HIGH SCHOOL		
Date:	Thursday 14th January 2021, 17.00 – 18.30pm	
Venue:	Remote Meeting (Microsoft Teams)	
Present:	Kevin Mothersdale (KM) Kath Roberts (KR) Keith Simpson (KS) Paul Airey (PA) Duncan Haworth (DH) K Elizabeth Jones (KEJ) Ian Mellor (IM) Colin Randerson (CR) Paul Reilly (PR)	Community Trustee and Chair of Trustees Community Trustee and Vice Chair of Trustees Headteacher Community Trustee Community Trustee Community Trustee Community Trustee Community Trustee Staff Trustee
Apologies:	Kathryn Clarke (KC)	Parent Trustee
Absent:	None	
In attendance:	John Pilcher Kirsty Cunningham (KCH) Joe Vossebeld (JV) Karen McCarthy (KMC)	Clerk Deputy Head Teacher Deputy Head Teacher Deputy Head Teacher

AGENDA ITEM 1	WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
Discussion:	The Chair welcomed Trustees to the meeting, and noted the apologies of KC. The Chair also outlined the purpose of the meeting was essentially to hear from the school with regards to managing the current C-19 situation.	
Decision:	Resolved. To accept the apologies of KC.	
AGENDA ITEM 2	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
Discussion:	There were no new declarations of interest.	
AGENDA ITEM 3	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (PART 1)	
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To confirm accuracy of the minutes from the meeting of 9.12.20 <p>Trustees agreed that the previous Part 1 minutes represent a true and accurate record.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Matters Arising/Action Log <p>Carried Forward</p> <p>(5) KS to meet with Trustees to discuss 6th Form & Capital. Open.</p> <p>From 9.12.20</p> <p>(8) Dates for Teams training to be circulated. Clerk/TP. Open</p> <p>(9) Advertise for a Parent Trustee. TP. Open</p> <p>(10) Circulate dates for an early 2021 meeting (skills audit review for new Trustee appointments). Clerk/School Admin. Open</p> <p>(11) Four core groups to be established with a specific focus for monitoring KPIs. All/Clerk. Open</p> <p>(12) TP to circulate the latest policy schedule. TP/Clerk. Open</p>
Decision:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resolved. To approve the previous Part 1 minutes from 9.12.20 as a true and accurate record. - Resolved. To carry forward Actions 5,8,9,10, 11 & 12.
AGENDA ITEM 4	COVID-19 UPDATE BROUGHT FORWARD
Discussion:	<p>Test site.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed KCH to the meeting who informed Trustees that the Covid testing centre is set up in the most professional way possible. It is fully staffed, and all staff have undergone training. Today, the school tested the second cohort, each student has now been tested twice. There are no students with symptoms in school and all staff who have consented are being tested daily. KCH added that staff appreciate feeling safe in school and the system is up and running and working well.</p> <p>Question: IM asked what the implications are for staff that have not consented in relation to testing?</p> <p>Answer: KCH explained this is difficult, a small number of staff have not provided consent. This has been discussed by the SLT and the school are trying to understand what can be done, the testing process is, however, voluntary.</p> <p>KS added that it is a surprise that staff have chosen not to give consent. The school are actively seeking advice, in the absence of national guidance but there is guidance relating to students (i.e., they still have to be accepted in the building). KS clarified that if students do present symptoms, they have to go off site and ideally, they would also be tested.</p> <p>Staff are working in their own spaces and social distancing guidelines continue to be followed. The school encourages staff to work from home whenever possible. KS added that question of the small numbers of staff who have not consented for testing does raise some safeguarding concerns.</p>

Question: IM agreed it is a safeguarding issue and asked if staff are asked what the reasons are for not giving consent?

Answer: KS confirmed this is the case and added that conversations are being held and external advice is being sought.

Question: CR asked what kind of test are the school using?

Answer: KCH confirmed it is a lateral flow test.

Question: CR asked, how many test kits does the school have?

Answer: KCH explained the school has circa. 10,000 test kits.

KS added, the requirement to be a test site was announced on the last day of term in December. The school has had to significantly adapt to get the test site up and running. KS confirmed that nonetheless, the school has sufficient supplies to continue testing all staff and students. KS noted, TP, KCH and the site manager have led on this work. It is an extremely professionally managed process; the team have done a remarkable job and staff feel comfortable knowing they can have a degree of certainty with regards to their own health – also for the benefit of their families. Trustees noted other schools are yet to get up and running and KS added his thanks to the team for their incredible efforts.

Question: CR asked where the testing takes place?

Answer: KS confirmed testing is in the main hall, with a check in and separate exit route in place. There are sanitising points and the track and trace app is also used. Social distancing and infection control measures are also in place.

Critical workers and vulnerable students.

JV was introduced to the meeting.

JV noted, with regards to critical workers and vulnerable students the protocols from March are, to a large extent, still being used. Staff monitor the requests from parents to ensure they meet the criteria of a critical workers child. Each day, SLT staff are on site to ensure safeguarding leads are in place. Within every classroom there are two staff and students are met at the front door to ensure sanitizing takes place before a register is taken. The same classroom is allocated each day, and students follow a timetable. Staff are on duty at break and lunch times.

JV noted that Year 7, 8 and 9 also had a form of PE this week. Overall, lessons are shorter – and staff recognise that 5 hours screen time is too long; lessons are now 50 minutes each to ensure a 10-minute break between sessions. Students are socially distanced in class and use their own equipment. With regards to numbers of pupils in school this is slightly lower than in March. There are circa. 54 students in the building each day, but the school expected circa. 70. Year 7 is the largest cohort and Year 11 are the smallest cohort in school. Feedback from staff is that they feel very supported, and that the school environment feels safe and well organised. Briefings take place each morning, in addition parental feedback has also been very positive.

Question: The Chair asked, with regards to the split between vulnerable children and critical workers children, how many of the overall vulnerable children are attending and what

support is in place? Were there any noticeable changes in attendance and are we aware of children with no access to IT?

Answer: JV explained, in relation to the change in numbers, in Year 7 there were 28 attendees which has reduced to 18 currently. There were more requests for laptops, but this was not necessarily a decrease in numbers of students attending. JV continued to note, in Years 8-11, the vast majority of those attending are those who attended during the first lockdown, this has actually been beneficial.

Question: DH asked, in relation to live lessons, are those recorded?

Answer: KS explained there are a mix of formats. The school has worked with colleagues to move to a new form of blended learning utilising Teams. This is to deliver 'in time' lessons – to allow students to follow the timetable. KS added, the Government's request was for Year 11 and 13 to be 'up and running' in week one. The whole school were up and running by the first Tuesday of term.

Trustees noted that Staff are asked to ensure lessons are 45-50 mins, rather than the full hour. Staff also need to be able to move around and take breaks. As already stated, five hours screen time is exhausting, and staff are asked that there is a live element to each lesson. Students are welcomed by name to each class. Parameters and expectations are set at the beginning of the lesson and children are encouraged to complete the learning. Lessons are then closed, in a 'live' way so that children are able to say goodbye to their teacher. The school are finding that staff are overcompensating in some ways, potentially children are getting too much work. KS noted there has to be a balance, but staff are attempting to plan lessons, include live content, with Q&A sessions and a live welcome and goodbye. The school has to take a long-term view in relation to the approach to online learning. The situation is likely to be a 'marathon, not a sprint' and this has a bearing on what staff and students are expected to do. The school are working with trainers and continually review national best practice. KS also noted that staff CPD continues to take place.

Question: The Chair asked, what percentage of children are attending live lessons?

Answer: KS explained that 95-100% of pupils attend live lessons.

Question: DH asked, are the live lessons recorded?

Answer: KS answered no, due to safeguarding concerns. However, non-live lessons are being recorded.

Governors reflected on the fact that the issue of live lessons and safeguarding is being discussed at a national level, at present there is no central government directive in this regard.

CR commented that, to his knowledge, a local school is running a 3-lesson school day via four different platforms, CR added that the IT and systems in place at Neston are exceptional. KS explained that the process involved a difficult learning curve, and the school is still learning but he feels that the approach is best practice. Some of the more complex issues are around ensuring staff wellbeing. The school does have a state-of-the-art building and colleagues do not have the usual access to this, but the school is doing its best. KS added that he feels it is increasingly difficult to 'see the long game' in terms of how C-19 could impact upon the nature and provision of education.

JV added, staff are also engaged in learning, MS Teams training support has been provided and the whole team are adapting extremely well.

PR added, the first lock down was reactive but this time it has been much more managed. Two weeks into term and staff are still learning but live lessons are much better than expected. Attendance and engagement have been good and student feedback is also positive. Parents also appreciate the structure that is in place.

Question: IM asked, how are the school dealing with non-attendance?

Answer: KS confirmed, the school has developed systems, including Arbor, to ensure attendance can be tracked. Heads of Year are then able to contact families. All vulnerable students have a dedicated register. KS added, that follow up in relation to non-attendance will take place going forward. Robust monitoring and tracking systems are now in place. In addition, there has been some exceptional training provided for tutors.

Question. IM asked, with regards to vulnerable staff, how are they being monitored?

Answer: KS answered, the staff team are very robust but there are multiple support mechanisms in place. Allowing for some colleagues to be on site is 'personal' as well as 'professional' and staff have appreciated being able to attend school to deliver lessons.

Question: CR asked, are SLT members or network managers able to observe live lessons taking place, if so, is that recognised?

Answer: KS noted this has been discussed, but the school do not want to be putting additional or even perceived pressure on colleagues. Middle leaders are being asked to track quality and outcomes. Senior staff are using link meetings and discussion to monitor quality.

KCH added that there is an 'admin' overview of every class. Online notes and the quality of instructions are monitored, senior staff are also able to access lessons and this is taking place but in a balanced way.

KS asked Trustees to also note that critical worker children follow the same programme of learning as all students.

Data & Exams.

JV noted that a letter was sent to the Chief Regulator of Ofqual from Gavin Williamson, and a consultation process is taking place next week. JV confirmed that no algorithm will be applied over the next two months, but training will be rolled out for schools. Students can request a review and appeal grades that staff put forward. JV suggested a key point to note is that a consultation process is yet to take place, schools still do not really know what the requirements will be. The next two weeks will therefore be critical.

KS added, Year 11's completed mock exams before Christmas, Year 13's will use exam data so there is core evidence that marks have been secured via rigorous processes set by exam standards. JV confirmed that when students returned in September assessments were carried out to ensure a baseline set of data is in place.

The Chair commented that managing expectations of actual achievement is critical for parents and students. KS agreed, adding that this is a constant consideration for the SLT at present.

KMC informed Trustees that 20 students have Social Care status at present, a small number of these are on Child Protection registers and less than ten have additional needs, with the remainder being Team Around the Family (TAF) cases (i.e., one additional agency is in place). KMC added, all vulnerable students are RAG rated, this also indicates the frequency of communication required. Trustees noted that the definition of vulnerable includes EHCP pupils and young carers. A strong pastoral team is in place which includes family intervention workers. Some barriers have been identified with regards to online learning but generally speaking, Neston students are able to access online learning, IT, and devices. There are fewer social services cases now than in October but, KMC added, as a point of interest - there are more cases of domestic violence. In addition, a process to support LAC is still in place albeit remotely. Safeguarding training is taking place via the SCIE team.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL and Safeguarding leads, meet regularly and meet also with attendance officers to ensure the central register is up to date. A new safeguarding email has also been set up, one email has been received and the school were able to respond appropriately. Resources and information relating to mental health has also been sent to families with good feedback received from parents. This will continue to be updated.

Vulnerable children attending critical worker provision is approximately 5-7%. This is quite low, and the school has to make vulnerable families aware that places are available. There are, however, various reasons for vulnerable children being kept at home. The DfE are asking schools to record vulnerable children who are not in school as children with a 'c code' which means the child is recorded as absent. Trustees noted, this approach does not seem fair as such children could be engaging with online learning. Learning support assistants are able to follow up with individual children via Teams and staff are feeling positive in terms of SEND support.

Question: The Chair asked, how often do staff physically see vulnerable children?

Answer: KMC, explained that of the 20 that have social care involvement, the child protection cases will physically be seen by one of the agencies. The school are also ensuring that they hear the students voices online i.e., a 'trusted adult' speaks to the children in question. Welfare checks will be made to family homes if children cannot be contacted.

KS thanked KMC and the team for the continued pastoral and safeguarding work that is currently taking place. KS continued to note parents had provided extensive feedback, the Clerk confirmed this is available in the Trustee Teams channel chat and agreed to circulate the information via email.

Discussion moved on and KS advised that the new site manager will be invited to attend a future BoT meeting to provide an update. KS also noted updated Risk Assessments from TP will be on the school website from 15.1.21.

Trustees noted, Free School Meal (FSM) provision has been provided from day one, these are nutritionally balanced meals and the site team have been delivering fresh food to vulnerable families each day. The voucher scheme starts next week and is equal to a £15 weekly supermarket voucher. Current DfE advice is not to provide FSM over half term, Neston will however, provide lunch for FSM families.

	<p>Discussions moved on and Trustees noted that the cleaning team are currently working split shifts. The administration team are on 50% working time and maintenance schemes are also being carried out as required.</p> <p>The 3G Pitch is finished and ready to be opened. There is a 95% take up on bookings already – the school are simply waiting for lock down to finish.</p> <p>KS thanked all site staff for their continuous hard work and added recent weeks have involved a huge team effort, the BoT should be very proud of the work that is taking place.</p> <p>KS also thanked the Chair for allowing the meeting to be held earlier and advised that a key action is for the SLT and BoT members to meet to begin agreeing structures for monitoring KPIs (see Action 11 above).</p> <p>On behalf of the Trustees, DH thanked all staff members for their very informative reports.</p>
AGENDA ITEM 5	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Discussion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To approve the previous Part 2 Minutes (9.12.20) <p>Trustees reviewed the previous Part 2 Minutes and agreed they represent a true record.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governor Hub/S2N <p>The Clerk noted that information regarding Governor Hub and S2N will be emailed to Chairs shortly.</p>
Decision:	Resolved. To accept the Part 2 confidential minutes from 9.12.20 as a true record.
AGENDA ITEM 6	DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS
Discussion:	<p>Dates for future meetings are available via Teams (click here for link) and as below: Times and format to be confirmed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 25.2.21 ▪ 25.3.21 ▪ 13.5.21 ▪ 17.6.21 ▪ 12.7.21

There being no further items for discussion the meeting closed at 18:15 pm.