



Minutes

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING OF PEGASUS ACADEMY TRUST

Monday, 18th of May 2020 at 4:00 pm

Virtual meeting (Google Meet)

Directors		
Richard Hill	Director	Present
Ian Patterson	Director	Present
Gary Griffin	Director	Present
Nina Pogossova	Director	Present
Fiona Fearon	Director	Present
Shelley Davies	Director	Present
Emma Whapham	Director	Present
Jolyon Roberts	Executive Principal	Present
Lynne Sampson	Executive Principal	Present
Trust Staff		
Jo Ridge	Chief Financial Officer	Present

Clerked by:	Ciara Carroll
Supporting documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Considerations for a June 2020 reopening • LBC – supporting education settings to develop their own Covid-19 transition plan • Letter to parents re return to school 16May20 • NG email regarding Covid-19 crisis • PAT return action planning and principles 15May20 • Return to school week by week v2
Meeting closed at:	5:50 pm

1. Apologies for absence and confirmation of quorum

No apologies for absence were received.

2. Declaration of conflict of interest and annual update to register of interests

There were no conflicts of interest declared and no changes made to the register of interests.

3. Brief overview of schooling during lockdown

The EP explained that all vulnerable and key worker children have been invited to attend school since March 23rd when lockdown began. 60 places were offered in total and 20 were taken up. The Trust has utilised a hub model up until now but key worker provision will return to separate schools after this half term. Hot takeaway meals are still being provided at Whitehorse Manor. Home learning is proceeding apace and is considered to be of a high standard thanks to the co-operative element across the schools. As an example, 50 narrated PowerPoint presentations have been uploaded this week.

4. Principles to be adopted when opening schools – on/after 1 June

The board reviewed principles one to five in detail in the return action planning document. The EP advised that a decision will be communicated to parents on the 20th of May.

Principle 1: The Directors expect a judgement on a safe opening date to be made by Exec Principals and SLT according to London and Croydon risk factors. Croydon has been one of the worst affected boroughs in London and is not comparable to others areas in the UK.

The EP stressed that the reopening decision had to be taken with a focus purely on PAT's schools and community, rather than what the outer world is doing. PAT schools have a high proportion of BAME pupils, who have a higher risk of adverse outcomes from Covid-19.

The directors agreed that they were confident this decision can be made by SLT.

A director queried the BAME percentage at PAT schools and was informed that in some classes in Whitehorse, it was 100% and the figure was very high across the other schools as well. *A director asked how other local schools are proceeding.* It was explained that the LA are having locality meetings with all primary heads over the next few days to determine each school's plan to move forward.

A director asked what the predominant response is from parents in relation to returning to school and the EP said that the feedback received so far indicates that many parents will not be returning their children to school before the summer holidays. Some schools in Croydon have taken a decision not to reopen at all.

The Board considered whether Trust schools should open at all; some felt that they should not open and should focus on the home learning offer, others felt that it was necessary to consider the needs of vulnerable children and those who were falling behind while the schools remained closed. The EPs both felt that a balance needed to be struck between the government's guidance, the Trust's liabilities and the fact that

children should be in school to learn. It was felt that the proposal put to directors found that balance.

Directors discussed the quality of home learning and were informed that this will continue for all year groups who were still at home. Teachers are frequently calling pupils and parents by phone; some parents are invited to school during the hot meal distribution for a socially distanced meeting. 40 laptops have been loaned out to children who do not have access to technology at home. Parent teacher consultations will be facilitated in some way once school has reopened.

Principle 2: The Directors judge that when the first classes return to their schools the Trust will proceed with invited numbers of no more than 10 children each day from their class of approximately 30 irrespective of key stage.

The EP said that the figure of 10 children is an overestimate and will have to be reduced slightly in order to accommodate a group of children safely in a classroom. The proposal is to have one group of children in for two days at the start of the week and the other group of children in for two days at the end of the week, with the school shut for a deep clean on Wednesdays. Children will therefore learn in school for two days and at home for three days.

A director asked how children with additional needs would be accommodated. The EP explained that the plan is for one teacher plus one TA to be responsible for one bubble. There may be one further person to provide cover if necessary. Individual plans are being made for children with additional needs. However, it was explained that it was necessary to minimise the number of adults in each room. This means that, in some cases, it may not be possible to invite back every child with additional needs. However, the children may already be attending the key worker provision, in which case they will remain in that provision and will not return to their class group.

A director challenged the Trust's decision to bring back different year groups to the government guidance and asked whether legally the Trust would be able to do this. It was explained that Trusts have to do their own risk assessments and should be able to back up their own decisions, as they know their school(s) best. It was noted that the government's guidance was just that, not a directive. The Trust is planning to bring Year 6 children back but not until the end of term, in order to provide them with a week of socially distanced events.

4:57 SD left the meeting.

Directors asked the EPs their opinion on whether the Trust should reopen. The EPs said their feeling is that, even when the Trust's schools are open, not all parents will send their children to school due to their own concern and scepticism about the government's guidance.

The EPs focus is to strengthen the Trust's online learning offer which they believe will be in significant demand until at least the end of the summer term 2020. A director believed that some children should be provided with laptops in order to give them the same learning opportunities as others while they are at home and EPs confirmed that the Trust have already loaned out approximately 40 laptops.

The EP noted that there is still a long way to go before the 8th of June and that many things could change between now and then as well as in the second half of the summer term. It was explained that the key worker provision will be moved back to separate schools from the 1st of June and that the capacity in this provision will be increased in order to offer more spaces to parents who may now be required to return to work.

Directors discussed whether a survey of parents would be helpful for planning; EPs had discussed this with SLT and all felt that since there was no binding commitment to stick to the answers chosen in a survey it probably would not give accurate numbers of children who would return. Also timescales were very tight. Parents and carers could respond to a survey with the options that favoured their particular year groups whereas the SLT was taking a view on what was possible given the staff numbers returning and the continuation of keyworker provision. It was suggested that the Trust consider other countries and their plans for returning to school. However, their circumstances would not really apply to PAT's schools in Croydon.

Principle 3: Given [1] the Directors believe that the staff numbers on site at each school should, at present, be no higher than 50% of the number that would be present on a 'normal' school day.

The EPs explained that Risk Assessments are to be completed tomorrow, Tuesday 18th May, for staff, prior to the letter to parents being issued. Each staff member will be assigned to one 'bubble' for the period until the end of term.

Principle 4: The Directors of the Trust will begin the return to school, whenever that takes place, with pupils in Year 1 and Year 5. Other year groups will follow as judged appropriate by SLT with reference to [1].

Principle 5: The Directors agree that for the remainder of the summer term 2020 the hours offered will be 8:45am to 3:15pm (normal school day) only with no 'wraparound' care. 'Critical worker' provision and that for our most vulnerable children will continue to be 8:00am-4:30pm. All schools would be closed for cleaning and PPA on Wednesdays.

A director asked whether staff were going to be given a break during the day as the working hours were longer than six. The EP explained that staff will not be able to go to the staffroom to take a break but they can go to the bathroom and take small breaks as required.

A director queried whether the provision of hot meals will continue as before. The EP confirmed that the take-away meals provision would continue alongside the FSM vouchers for the time being. He also explained that the children will eat in their classrooms, rather than the lunch halls. Not all kitchens will be open; WH will provide meals to BINF, EPS to BRIG and only one CYP kitchen will open.

A director asked what Beulah Juniors is doing and it was confirmed that at the moment it appeared that they would not be reopening.

RESOLUTION: Principles 1 to 5 were agreed by the directors. The Trust can proceed with its reopening plans.

Letter to parents

The letter to parents was written with a view to explaining the Trust's thinking behind their reopening plan. It is understood that anxiety could be an issue; but hopefully this will lessen going forward. Directors suggested that it would be a good idea to emphasise that the home learning would follow the same lesson plan as those being taught at school. Directors felt that it was not clear what parents should do once they received the letter; the EPs explained that the letter stated the school will be in contact with those year groups that are returning separately.

Directors asked that the letter be amended to state that if a child is unwell, they cannot come to school and the school must be informed about this as soon as possible.

A director suggested that the Trust consider using UV light cleaning which is becoming increasingly popular and the EPs said that they would look into this. Temperature checking was trialled at the start of lockdown with electronic thermometers but this was not successful as three different pieces of equipment failed.

Return to school week by week

The EP emphasised that he had shared the plan for the first four weeks only as the situation changing so rapidly and it was felt that the plan could change significantly. He believed it was very likely that many children will not return to school before September but that it was necessary to have an offer in place.

The EP confirmed that the Risk Assessment is due to be completed shortly; once it is done, the RA and the letter to parents will be shared with MACs and staff.

A director asked what the feedback was from the unions in relation to reopening and was informed that the unions wanted the Risk Assessments released to them when the proposals to reopen were published as well.

A meeting for MACs was requested as several MACs had registered a feeling of being left out of the process. It was agreed that a presentation and Q&A session would be the most appropriate way to communicate this information. Questions would be invited in advance in order to get an idea of what would be raised at the meeting.

5. Brief overview of action plan for reopening

This item was discussed in item 4.

6. Wellbeing of staff and pupils during lockdown

This item was discussed in item 4.

7. Future meeting dates

The next board meeting will take place on the 10th of July 2020 at 1:30 pm.

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting

Chair's signature

Chair's name

Date