

St John Chrysostom Federation Governing Body Meeting Minutes

Quorum: 6 (not met at this meeting)

Chair: Tayo Adebowale

Clerk: Andrew Crosbie

Date of meeting: 17 July 2020

Venue: via Conference video call

Attendance

Name	Governor type	'End of Term of Office' date	(P)resent / (Ap)ologies / (A)bsent
Tayo Adebowale	Foundation	18/12/20	P
Gareth Elswood	Exec. Headteacher (EHT)	N/A	P
Sam McVaigh	Co-opted	09/01/21	P
Sandra Palmer	Foundation	18/12/20	P
Iqra Choudry	Parent	18/12/20	P
Nazia Arfin	Co-opted	09/01/21	Ap
Dr Husseyn Salem	Co-opted	31/03/24	Ap
Syed Murtuza Baker	Parent	18/12/20	Ap
Fr Ian Gomersall	Foundation	N/A	Ap
Miranda Hall	Local Authority	18/12/20	A
Joanne Cleaver	Staff	18/12/20	A
Walid Omara	Co-opted	09/01/21	A

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Others present

Name	Role
Andrew Crosbie	Clerk, One Education

Agenda Items

1	Welcome and apologies		
<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the 'remote' FGB meeting via conference video call, as a result of Covid-19 lockdown, and thanked everyone for taking the time to attend.</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Dr Husseyn Salem, Nazia Arfin, Fr Ian Gomersall and Syed Murtuza Baker. Miranda Hall, Joanne Cleaver and Walid Omara were all absent.</p> <p>Although these apologies and absences meant the FGB was not quorate, it was decided to proceed with the meeting to enable governors present to review the Risk Assessments and question EHT on Covid-19 challenges and preparations for September return to school.</p>			
	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

2	Declaration of interest in an item on this agenda		
There were no pecuniary interests expressed by the governors in regard to any of the items raised on the agenda.			
	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

3	Risk Assessment – St John’s		
<p>EHT advised that there have been a number of drafts of the Risk Assessment documents produced for both schools and the most recent one has been shared electronically with FGB.</p> <p>The process that has helped to deliver the latest Risk Assessments has involved bringing all staff back into school to carry out their own risk reviews and ensure they feel comfortable with all procedures within the school setting. Staff have worked in their own departments, i.e. Early Years, KS1 and KS2 to address the implications for their own year groups, and a total of 6 meetings have been held across both schools.</p> <p>The standard LA Risk Assessment template was used as a guide for staff to come up with their concerns that needed resolving, and this level of direct staff engagement worked well.</p> <p>For many of the staff involved it was the first time they have been back in school since the start of lockdown and so at the heart of EHT’s presentation to staff was reassurance on three key areas: robust hand hygiene; Test, Trace and Track, and enhanced cleaning procedures. Test, Trace and Track included advice on how to pro-actively seek testing, either at the Etihad Stadium or the Airport, or requesting test kits through the post and the deadlines for completing and returning tests.</p> <p>Staff were invited to imagine their return at the start of the school day and then chronologically work through a typical day, identifying all potential issues that may be faced, before arriving at solutions that ensure safe protocols for all staff and students. This open, shared approach created a very positive atmosphere and enabled staff to arrive at a Risk Assessment very much centred on their personal concerns.</p> <p>The latest Risk Assessment documents have been submitted to the Local Authority and will be the live, working documents used between now and the schools’ re-opening on 2nd September. Behind these documents, individual departments within both schools also keep their own specific notes.</p> <p>EHT was satisfied that involving the staff in this way also helped to alleviate any concerns they may have had and everyone, include previously ‘shielding’ staff, returned to participate.</p> <p>Chair thanked EHT for his update and agreed that the participation of all staff was a very positive step in these challenging circumstances.</p> <p>Q. What is being done to share the Risk Assessments with parents and children, in order to reduce anxiety and make them feel more safe and comfortable about returning to school? Starting with the youngest children in Nursery, transition activities have continued apace. 60 children have been offered Nursery places and they have been contacted with letters and phone calls, and 1-2-1’s with their new teacher took place last week. For many parents and children this was their first time in the schools and the response was very positive. These meetings involved Teaching Assistants, office staff and Nursery teachers in both schools.</p>			

The return to Nursery in September will be a staggered start anyway because some children will not be toilet trained, others have not yet met their teachers.

In Reception, there have already been 4 separate face to face meetings with children, attended by EHT. Socially distanced Teddy Bear Picnics and play-based activities have helped Reception children and their parents meet their new teachers.

At St Chrysostom's no Covid-19 issues were raised by parents. At St John's one parent did raise a question about lunchtime arrangements. It was explained that lunches will be prepared and brought to each class in their 'bubble' to avoid mixing. Reception children will remain in their own bubble and not have any interaction with, for example, Y1 children.

Parent attendance at the Reception events was almost 100% at St John's, and mainly mothers, whilst parent numbers were slightly less at St Chrysostom's but still a good number.

For the rest of the year groups, the main communications offensive will start from September via online messages, text and letters. A handy bullet point leaflet has been produced which is EAL friendly and will also be translated. The Heads of School have posted end of term letters to all families.

Q. Have all parents had a letter from the Heads of School, summarising the past year and looking ahead to arrangements for September?

Yes, over 1,000 letters have been posted out from both schools. On the Friday before the schools re-open in September, office staff will return to start texting information to all parents and will follow up with an early morning text on the day the schools re-open. Text messages have proved to be the most effective communications method for parents.

Q. Did the Parent Governor present today receive a copy of this letter?

Yes a lovely letter was received which highlighted the name of her child's teacher for next year. She would, however, have liked to receive more reassurance and information about how the school will look in September, and what specific measures will be in place in terms, for example, of bubbles and staggered start and break times.

EHT agreed that no amount of information and clarification for parents can ever be enough at present. However, most of this will be communicated to parents in the week before schools return and documents have already been drafted in preparation for this. There will also be a text link issued directing parents to more information on the school websites. By then, many of the families that have already gone abroad for summer will hopefully be back in the country.

Foundation Governor felt that concerned parents really need more information now, rather than wait until August and September and enquired whether a holding position at least could be included on the website immediately.

EHT advised that schools were limited in what they could do within the next couple of hours before they close for the summer but will try to get some reassuring information published on the website immediately and which signposts more information coming later this summer.

Chair said she'd welcome any simple message that can be added to the website to provide additional reassurance to parents.

Co-opted Governor advised that, as a teacher, he has reviewed many risk assessment documents over the past couple of months and is therefore confident that the risk assessments presented by EHT represent a very robust piece of work. He wished to recognise on record the

amount of work that has already gone into their creation and the work that will be needed going forward to ensure all actions are delivered. Governors agreed that, come September, it will be important they support EHT and his team throughout what will be a very busy period.

Chair reiterated that the process of involving staff in the Risk Assessment, and the amount of work involved had been very impressive.

EHT advised that document has now been forwarded to LA and they have confirmed they are happy with it. There was a query from Simon Taylor on when schools were planning to re-open and he was reassured to learn that both schools will be open from day one on 2nd September for all families and with a full weekly timetable.

Whilst staff were in school assessing risk they took the time to prepare and tidy classrooms and they are now looking very good and ready for classes to resume. EHT acknowledged, however, that re-start could still be a 'slow burn' as families decide when to return children and schools will need to be patient throughout this initial period.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter to parents to be added to website pre-summer. 	EHT	17.07.20

4	Risk Assessment – St Chrysostom's		
	See item 3.		
	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

5	Chair's Action		
	<p>Chair advised that, following discussions with EHT and having taken advice, it has been agreed not to have any additional FGB meetings during the summer holidays. Should any urgent matters arise which require a governing body decision, Chair has the authority to make a unilateral decision as long as this is reported back to FGB. It is unlikely to happen. If any governor requires any further information on this legality, Chair can forward a link to relevant section on The Key.</p> <p>Chair advised that The Key continues to be a very valuable training resource for governors and encouraged governors to start referencing The Key more in order to stay abreast of changes to governance, monitoring, measurement and challenges such as increased mental health and wellbeing issues. A similar link re NGA will follow once received from school/NGA.</p>		
	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online link and password details for NGA to be re-issued to all governors. 	Chair.	

6	Summary of Covid-19 key challenges going forward		
	EHT provided a brief verbal summary of activities upcoming over the summer.		
	<p>The schools are now at the stage where they are going into closure and enhanced cleaning procedures will now be implemented. The schools have already had two deep cleans involving sanitising and fogging premises throughout to ensure a high level clinical clean.</p>		

Some routine planned maintenance already scheduled for the summer will proceed, including important cleaning and health and safety measures. Earlier this morning there was an impromptu handover of one of the refurbished classrooms and this concludes all major capital building work projects that needed completing.

There is some development work to take place over summer involving the quad at St John's, where there has been a drainage issue. Raised flower beds will now be installed ready for seeding and planting by the pupils in September.

Q. Is it common practice for staff to come into the schools during the holidays or in the week before re-opening?

The summer schedule involves very intense cleaning and maintenance programmes at both schools over the next fortnight. Caretakers will then be given a break during which time the schools will be completely closed down. The week before re-opening, end August, administration and caretaking staff will return to school and on Thursday 27th and Friday 28th August it will be safe for staff to return to school to prepare for the new year, if necessary. Again, because staff have recently been in school reviewing risk assessments, they have already ensured all classrooms are ready to receive pupils.

Q. How are the schools supporting vulnerable children during the holidays?

Technically, the schools do not have any obligation to support vulnerable children unless there is a safeguarding crisis, in which case EHT would be on call to get involved, along with the safeguarding team and, usually, other multi agencies.

The government's decision to provide Free School Meal (FSM) pupils with food vouchers worth £15 per week throughout the holidays is obviously a very positive and welcome step.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

7 Any other business

There was no other business.

On behalf of the Full Governing Body, Chair took the opportunity to thank EHT and his entire staff team for all their outstanding work and for overcoming the many challenges throughout this unprecedented period. Chair also repeated her thanks to all governors for their time and support across the year, and hoped that everyone can find time to relax over the summer and return fully refreshed to face the challenges ahead in September.

EHT echoed those sentiments and was able to confirm that, following governor suggestions in item 3, a letter to parents and carers has now been drafted and uploaded onto the website. Parent Governor confirmed this offers precisely the reassurance she'd been seeking and thanked EHT for his prompt response.

	Actions or decisions	Owner	Timescale

Date and time of next meeting:

Wednesday 23 September 2020 at 4.00pm via Zoom.

