

**BOW COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**FULL GOVERNING BOARD EXTRAORDINARY MEETING**  
**Minutes 21 May 2020 - 6pm - Virtual Meeting via ZOOM**

**Present:** Melanie Bishop; Erin Blake; Richard Drake; Anna Fay; Lesley Hodgson (Head); Anita Jellings (Chair); Tamsin Kilner; Tony Neal; Kathryn Tayler; Megan Heath (Clerk)

E.1	Apologies
E.2	Governor Responsibilities
E.3	School Reopening Plan
E.4	Communications
E.5	Date of the next meeting

The chair confirmed that all governors had received relevant documents: Agenda; draft minutes from Extraordinary Resources Meeting 19.05.20; Letter to parents; DCC Reopening Guidance.

The chair thanked all governors for their attendance at short notice.

E.1 No **apologies** received.

**E.2 Governor Responsibilities**

- The DCC guidance recommends having a COVID-19 Lead Governor.
- TN is the COVID-19 Lead Governor for Hayward's Primary School, and is able to transfer these skills between the two schools.
- No other governors were nominated for the role.

TN to become the COVID-19 Lead Governor.

Proposed by AJ. Seconded by KT. Agreed by ALL.

- The chair thanked TN for agreeing to take on the role.

**E.3 School Reopening Plan**

- The Resources Committee discussed LH's School Reopening Plan Proposal in great depth, at the extraordinary resources meeting on 19.05.20. All governors have since received a draft copy of the minutes.
- It was noted that there is an ongoing risk associated with this plan. The guidance from both the government and County are always changing, the R number of the virus is not reducing and the school has only been asked to prepare for reopening, not to actually reopen.
- The Resources Committee agreed to recommend the proposal to FGB with it being the best possible solution to reopening; noting that no reopening plan can be zero risk.

**Staff**

- *Governors asked how staff are feeling about reopening.*
  - LH explained that staff are feeling wobbly. There are currently 6-7 children in school each day, with staff being in once a week/fortnight. When school reopens staff will be in as normal, which increases their risk of infection.
  - The risk assessment is making the school as safe as possible; however, it is challenging to meet many of the criteria within the small setting.

- Some SEND children will need a separate risk assessment before a decision is made about whether they can return.

#### Pupil Numbers

- *Governors asked how many SEND children are likely to be refused to return based on individual risk assessments.*
  - LH explained that this could possibly be 3 or 4. This is due to them being unable to: wash their own hands; maintain distance; follow instructions; or the potential for them needing to be restrained.
  - There will potentially be 20 key worker/vulnerable children in school. The distance required between desks and the need for a sink in the room means that these children will be spread between two classrooms. The other 3 classrooms will be in use by the 3 returning classes. Robolab cannot be used as it does not have a sink.
- *Governors asked if the initial returning to school questionnaire numbers are likely to be accurate.*
  - LH explained how many parents are undecided about whether or not to send their children back to school, with some parents changing their initial plans. If a child is in a 'key worker/vulnerable bubble' then they will not be transferred into their year group bubble, when created. This is affecting parent decisions.
- *Governors asked how fixed the numbers need to be.*
  - LH explained how there are still a lot of unknowns. The keyworker/vulnerable children are enjoying being in school. LH will be in school tomorrow where she will continue to firm up numbers.
- *Governors asked if we can push for a decision from parents in order to obtain firm numbers.*
  - LH stated that she is going to contact parents with undetermined answers tomorrow. Parents who have said their child will not be returning are not being contacted.
  - The school already has determined year 6 numbers, there are only 3 not returning, these are due to medical and shielding reasons.
- *Governors asked when the school intends to say they can accommodate pupils from other year groups.*
  - It was explained that there needs to be a clear review process built into this. The phased reopening will enable us to see what is and is not working.
- *Governors asked if there was any alternative to one staff member working with 2 different bubbles, in order to reduce potential cross-contamination.*
  - LH explained that the only way would be to reduce the number of bubbles. Ideally, if numbers allowed, you would put all the children in one year group into one bubble.
  - It was discussed that should pupil numbers decrease after reopening, then 2 smaller bubbles could be merged. However, if numbers increased then more bubbles would need creating.
  - The only other solution would be to employ 3 new teachers, but this is not a viable option.

- It was pointed out how there was at least a day long gap between a staff member being in contact with each bubble, which is not ideal, but it is better than nothing.
- LH stated that one of her main concerns is having to split a merged bubble group (where 2 smaller bubbles form due to a reduction in numbers), should numbers begin to increase.
  - Governors stated how parents should be told that if their child has attended school since reopening, and they then decide to remove their child, that their child will not be allowed to return to school, until normal operation resumes.
- *Governors asked if the school are allowed to refuse a pupils return to school.*
  - LH explained how this scenario is a health and safety concern, and therefore she would have legal power to refuse the return.
  - Governors agreed that there is enough power given within the guidance for this to be allowed.
- *Governors asked if a parent has decided to not initially return their child to school, but then changes their mind, will this child also be refused entry.*
  - LH explained that if the child has not been in school since before the closure, then they would be allowed to return.
- *Governors questioned whether this would be a confusing message to convey to parents.*
  - LH explained how it will not be conveyed to parents. It will not be directly offered, however, it would be considered should a parent ask.
- *Governors asked if the current confirmed numbers for the reception year fit into one bubble.*
  - LH explained that they did not. Currently 2 bubble groups would be needed. Social distancing is key. The tables need 1m between them.
- *Governors asked if the current confirmed numbers for the reception and year 1 classes would fit into one bubble.*
  - LH stated that they would not.
- *Governors asked why the first group of year 1s are not in on the Thursday, in line with the year 6s start date being brought forward.*
  - LH explained that they want a full week with one year group in school to be able to adequately address any potential issues.
- *Governors asked if they could potentially invite the first group of year 1s back earlier, that same week, assuming everything is running effectively.*
  - LH explained how they would know one day before, which is too short notice.

#### Reopening

- *Governors asked how likely the school is to actually reopen, due to a general ill feeling, particularly on social media.*
  - LH explained how there had been more refusals in the Reception and Year 1 group, compared to just 3 in Year 6.
  - It was noted that the Year 6 returnees could be for reasons relating to this being their last term in primary school.
  - LH explained that it will be a very different experience, compared to what they are used to.

- *Governors asked whether it was likely that Devon County Council (DCC) would refuse to open following many other councils being named in the media.*
  - LH explained that it was unlikely.
- *Governors asked if the school will ultimately decide whether to open.*
  - It was explained how the governors need to approve the risk assessments, however, reopening is ultimately an operational decision.
  - The importance of parent and staff understanding that the proposed timetable, outlined in the parent communication, could still change.

#### Procedures and Guidance

- *Governors asked if the 1m between tables was recommended.*
  - LH explained how it is part of the guidelines.
- *Governors asked about the idea of children wearing face masks.*
  - LH explained how the guidelines state this is not recommended and could be frightening for the children.
  - It was also discussed how incorrect use of face masks can actually aid the spread of infection. It is unlikely that young children would adhere to the strict guidelines for correct face mask use and it would encourage more touching of the face.
- *Governors asked what the procedure would be if a 4 year old should get symptoms (following the recent government announcement that everyone aged 5 and above is now eligible for testing).*
  - LH explained how they would have to self-isolate for 2 weeks. The rest of the bubble would be subject to government guidance which is not clear at this moment.
  - LH was able to confirm that there is currently only one 4 year old in the school and they will be 5 before the reception class start date. Therefore, no procedure will be required.

#### Risk Assessments

- *Governors asked what needs to happen in terms of the risk assessments.*
  - The COVID-19 Lead Governor explained how, upon completion, the risk assessments will be circulated around governors for comment/approval, either via email, or another meeting.
- *Governors asked if the risk assessments were RAG rated.*
  - LH explained that it is not. Typically school risk assessments are not. These risk assessments will be reviewed weekly, with data gathered from early morning and late afternoon daily briefings with staff.
  - It was suggested that we could RAG rate them ourselves to aid governor reviews.
  - Governors agreed that the cross-contaminating of bubbles is one of their biggest concerns and would be marked as 'red'.
- It was noted how the schools design does not lend itself to meeting the stringent guidelines.

FGB to approve the School Reopening Plan as proposed by LH, and recommended by the Resources Committee, and for the work on the risk assessments to continue, with governor approval sought upon completion.

Proposed by TN. Seconded by MB. Agreed by majority.

- 1 objection noted, due to number of risks and contradictory advice from the government. This governor made it clear that this is not a reflection on the school or the lengths to which the school is going to in order to meet the guidelines.

**ACTIONS: 1. LH and TN to complete risk assessments and circulate to governors for final approval.**

**2. TN to convert the risk assessment results into a RAG rating.**

**3. LH to communicate to parents about their child not being able to return to school if sent back then removed.**

#### **E.4 Communications**

- The Resources Committee agreed that the parent communication needed to be circulated ASAP and prior to this meeting.
- Governors discussed the advantages of sending communications for specific year groups to all parents. They agreed that it would keep parents aware of what was happening around the school. Parents governors stated how there is a lot of unease among parents and communication from the school alleviates this.
- It must be reiterated to parents and staff that this plan is all subject to the government confirmation at the end of May, with potential alterations due to updated guidance and risk assessments.
  - The idea of incorporating this fact into the email signature, or on the website banner, was discussed.
  - There is a fair chance that this might not happen. There are a lot of strong councils opposing reopening schools. The Department for Education and the LA are carefully monitoring attendance during the closure.
  - Governors stated how we must not underestimate the importance of school for children who do not have a happy home life, but do not class as vulnerable. We must balance medical with safeguarding/away from home advantages.

**ACTIONS: LH to reiterate to parents and staff that the plan is subject to government confirmation of school reopening.**

#### **E.5 Date of the next meeting**

- Governors agreed to postpone the next FGB meeting, scheduled for 2 June.
- TN, as COVID-19 Lead Governor, and AJ, as chair of governors, will keep in regular contact with all governors, providing updates as necessary.

**ACTION: AJ and MH to arrange new date for FGB8 or plan to combine with FGB9**