



Extraordinary Governors Meeting – Minutes

Meeting Date: **Tuesday 26 May 2020**

Meeting Venue: ***Via Zoom***

Meeting Time: **5:15pm**

Governors: Julian Mace, *(JM)*, Chair
Louise Baxter, *(LB)*, Vice Chair
Alison Allart, *(AA)*
Paul Amos, *(PA)*
Marilyn Benzing, *(MB)*
Selene Edwards, *(SE)*
Glyn Freeman, *(GF)*
Sara McKenna, *(SM)*
Gabrielle Mace, *(GM)*
Joel Newman, *(JN)*
Joyce Swann, *(JS)*
Martyn Ashley Taylor, *(MT)*
Fiona Walker, *(FW)*
Matt West, *(MW)*

Ex officio: Stuart Reeves, *(SRv)*, Head Teacher

Also in attendance: Catherine Geldard, *(DLS)*, Director of Lower School
Jemma Graffham, *(DSF)*, Director of Sixth Form
Janice Logan, *(DFA)*, Director of Finance & Administration
Danny Simmonds, *(AHT-B&A)*, Assistant HT - Behaviour & Attendance
James Towner, *(AHT-A&C)*, Assistant HT - Assessment & Curriculum

Clerk to Governors: Steve Quayle, *(SQ)*

Apologies: Trevor Scott, *(TS)*

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Item	Discussion	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and apologies for absence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair welcomed all Governors to the meeting and explained the purpose of this extraordinary meeting is solely to discuss the school reopening from lockdown. 	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors gave various declarations in respect of their children who attend the school. 	
3.	<p>School Reopening from Lockdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair advised that 6 Governors came into the school to meet with SRv, DFA and DLS to discuss PPE, hygiene and the school's risk assessment, which has been circulated to Governors. Chair advised that the Government has requested all Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 students should return from 1 June. There is also a request for some face to face support for Year 10. The Government will update their advice about this on 28 May. Chair advised the NGA state this reopening is an operational decision and so the Headteacher is responsible for the final decision, although, as employers, Governors have responsibilities towards the staff and a collective responsibility for H&S; but it would be very rare for Governors to be held personally liable. During the Governors' visit half the group visited Primary and were given an insight of a mixed class operating for the children of key workers. The younger students were not observing social distancing, as is to be expected. Governors looked at classrooms that have been made ready for Year 6 and advised that these look good, albeit necessarily sparse, and they are confident with what they saw. There was a lack of posters about social distancing, but they are assured these are en-route. Governors commended the hard work that has taken place. Governors commented that students will struggle with social distancing and although desks have been separated, they will still have to walk close together through central access points, so it seems futile to even try and get them to stay apart. Chair asked if the school is following Government guidance on this. DLS said the Government recognise that young children will not socially distance so they will be kept in bubbles. Governors noted that being present in the same place together for a short period of time is ok; the risk comes when people spend over 15 minutes together in close proximity, so passing each other in pinch points such as corridors and doorways is not a real-world problem. Governors said staff are being offered a bag of hand sanitiser and wipes, but confirmed they are not being expected to act as cleaners. Another group of Governors spent time with DFA looking at cleaning supplies, PPE and manpower. DFA explained the precautions being brought in and Governors commended the tremendous amount of work that has been done. SRv then took all visiting Governors through preparations and they had no concerns; they considered the risk assessment to be thorough and the school to be as ready as it could be in the circumstances. Governors asked about the self-isolation policy in the risk assessment and queried students returning to school if they have had a negative test result. Other Governors commented about the reported high false-negative rate, but it was agreed that one would expect someone demonstrating symptoms to be unlikely to get a false-negative. Governors added that the tests undertaken by experts are a lot more reliable than the home testing kits. Governors queried whether the self-isolation should be for 7 or 14 days and SRv said the school will be led by the Government advice at the time. He advised that a student went home with 	

<p>fever recently and took a test which came back negative, but nonetheless the school insisted they could not return for 7 days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRv advised that, according to the survey, 45% of parents are planning to send their children back to school while some are adamant they will not return until September, and the remainder are undecided. SRv will produce a risk assessment summary for parents next week. • Two-thirds of the staff are available, although cleaning staff are somewhat sparse. The remainder have underlying health concerns or are 'shielding'. • SRv advised Governors of his proposals, all of which are subject to the risk assessment and the Government announcement on 28 May: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ From 8 June - Year 6 only will return into 4 classes of 15 students, being overseen by a mixture of Primary and Secondary staff. ○ From 15 June - Years 10 and 12 will be split into 4 groups each and each group will attend one day a week. • This will take the school to the limit of the cleaning regime limitations. There is no proposal, as yet, to bring back Reception and Year 1 apart from the children of key workers and vulnerable students who will continue as before. • SRv explained the demand for key worker children's places is growing every week and he receives daily requests from parents to be added to the list. Most days around 40 Primary students attend and around 22 Secondary students. • Governors agreed that the limiting factor is the cleaning regime. DFA advised she has been trying to source external cleaners, but they are very much in demand currently. Governors asked the school to investigate this in more detail. DFA explained that external cleaners will need various checks and DBS before they can work at the school. • Governors asked SRv to clarify the advice on using rotas for students. SRv said the response from Government is that schools are not to use a rota system, and this meant the school had had to redesign their original plans. • Governors asked if Years 10 and 12 are going to be 'taught' or if their attendance is more pastoral. SRv said initially it will be pastoral to establish issues, but it will then quickly become academic. • Governors asked if Year 6 attending all week long poses a problem with deep cleaning. SRv confirmed it does but he is satisfied this can be overcome with the plans he has made for the cleaning regime. • DLS said students will not be mixing bases. Governors asked if the teachers will stay the same all week, but DLS said teachers will need to alternate. AHT-A&C added that 3 teachers will work on a rotation basis. • Chair asked if it is within Government guidance for adults to be mixing with different groups of students and SRv said it is. The SLT will make sure toilet breaks and break times are staggered, and there is also signage being erected outside toilets by Friday advising students to wait before entering. • Chair asked if there are any plans for returning Reception and Year 1 and SRv confirmed there are none currently. He needs to monitor how it works with Year 6 and then look at the staffing figures again. DLS said she has devised several scenarios where it may be possible to offer a rota system, but they will certainly not be able to cover the whole week. • Governors asked if the school will still have a problem with staffing come September, SRv advised he cannot answer that at this stage, clearly the 12-week shielding periods will expire soon, but if they are renewed this will undoubtedly cause problems in September. He is determined not to go down the route of engaging lots of supply teachers. • Governors commented that the shielding staff and those with Type 1 Diabetes are the most affected, and Governors also commented that BAME staff are believed to be higher risk too. 	<p>DFA</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair asked if the school will still be able to support those students not attending school. SRv hopes so but as the numbers attending increases this will become more difficult and he wonders how best to manage this situation. DLS said she can see this becoming an issue. • Chair said Year 6 could be asked to complete some Secondary work to help their transition. SRv explained that Year 6 need to gain closure, and say goodbye to Primary first and then some transitional work could start within a few weeks, as well as virtually meeting their new teachers, etc. • Chair asked about external Year 6s and if there is provision to reach them. DSF said a lot of resources have been put together which are going out to all Year 6 – this will be project based work and the school are looking at wider pastoral issues. • Chair asked if the school’s plan has been run past ESCC. SRv advised it has and they have been very supportive. Also, he has been working with a consultant Headteacher and other Heads across Eastbourne. ESCC thought the school’s original plan was slightly ambitious and so they have rowed back on the extent of them. • Chair asked if those students already attending would be kept away from those newly coming in. DLS said yes apart from the Year 6s who will be merged together with the new ones. Governors said there are no right or wrong answers here it’s about trying to keep the interactions away from other people as much as possible. • Chair asked about the basis of the risk assessment and if it was provided by Government. SRv said it had come from Essex County Council who were quicker at producing this than ESCC. • Chair asked SRv which parts of risk assessment he is concerned about. SRv said there has been one small legionella spike in one area but the risk assessor has advised the risk is very low. This area is in an unused part of the school and the area is now shut off while the situation is dealt with. • SRv advised Governors that two outside sinks are being fitted and classroom signage will be ready by next week. He will share the risk assessment with staff a week in advance. • SRv explained that the risk assessment now includes much more detail about start times, break times, etc. For catering the school are proposing packed lunches only. PPE will be provided in key positions and in some situations they will be insistent on staff wearing it, for example dealing with a student displaying Covid symptoms. • SRv explained that Year 12 are under a lot of pressure because the UCAS process has started and the school may need to hold some exams in July which may come as a shock to the students. • Years 6’s and 10’s curriculums will be dictated by the staff that are available. • Chair said we need to think about parents too and SRv said the SLT will be located on the driveway reminding people to socially distance. Governors asked about emergency lockdown procedures and SRv said no changes are required. • Governors said it is clear a lot of work has gone into the planning and queried if the school is asking children from a household with someone who is shielding to return. SRv said the school are not pushing parents to send students back if they do not want to and he will make sure everyone knows attendance is optional until the end of summer term. • Governors asked if the school has supplies and access to PPE. DFA said they could not get it at first, but there is now a good supply. • Governors commented that Eastbourne appears to be in the lowest 10% of affected areas in the country for Covid and asked if the school needs to inform parents of this to those who are not returning their children. SRv said he had assumed everyone would know, but he is happy to clarify this. • Governors said with retail premises opening up soon and people needing to go back to work the school needs to give a clear message if parents are going to have to home-school their children for the next 6 weeks. SRv said it is highly unlikely that Years 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 will be 	<p style="text-align: right;">SRv</p>
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	<p>back in school before September. Governors said parents will want certainty and there is a complexity where some siblings can go back while others cannot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors said in the parent survey some people stated return dates that might not now be possible and asked if this may change the numbers who are expected to turn up. SRv said he has planned for a scenario involving the return of all Y6. • Chair asked if SRv has surveyed staff. SRv said 95% of staff have responded and there were some real heartfelt concerns, but he has had a clear steer that two-thirds of staff are willing to return. He will start off with those who volunteer to return first. He is currently encouraging staff to come in to see how the school is preparing over half term. This will help to support those with reservations and concerns. • Governors said we need to ensure we are working in concert with other Eastbourne schools and SRv said there is a lot of agreement between the Eastbourne Heads. • Governors asked when other year groups should come back. SRv said he does not think the school should say other year groups will definitely not come back before September as there are lots of options on the table and things could change. • Governors said there have been a lot of experts proposing that during the summer holidays schools should be used as empty buildings to provide entertainment and learning throughout the summer and asked if the SLT are thinking about doing anything like this. SRv said he has not had a discussion amongst SLT about this. • Chair asked about the meeting SRv held with unions. SRv said they were very impressed with progress made on the risk assessment which they cross-checked against their own guidelines and own risk assessment. They were delighted to have been involved and the meeting had a positive feeling as they could see the school was taking their members' safety seriously. • Chair commented that iSage advised the school to include stakeholders in decision making, and the school is clearly doing just that. • Chair said not accepting Reception and Year 1 will cause some angst and he would suggest we tell parents the reasons and that this communication should be jointly signed by Chair and Headteacher. • Governors said the risk assessment needs to be maintained as a live document and SRv advised it will be reviewed weekly. Governors discussed whether there is expected to be a rise in cases once students return to school. Governors concluded there could be an increase in cases although it has been established that children are less likely to spread it in the home. • Chair said most European countries seem to be ahead of us in relaxing their lockdowns. Governors discussed the potential for a second peak in July but how it could be spread over a much longer period than the first peak was and that it seems we are going to have to learn to live with Coronavirus for many months to come. • Governors said the problem is that because schools and workplaces and shops are all reopening around the same time it will difficult to pinpoint where a spike originates from. • Governors asked how the school is supporting teachers with their PPA and the welfare calls they need to make for those students staying at home. SRv said this is a concern for lots of staff and clearly it becomes harder the more students attend; DLS added this will be difficult. • AHT-A&C said that certain year groups are coming to a conclusion – Year 11 and 13 – although the school will still monitor the vulnerable students amongst them. But this releases 5 tutors in Year 11 and some capacity from Year 13. On the other hand, there will be some Secondary staff deployed to cover Year 6. Overall, there will be more non-contact time than normal which can be used to support those students who are still home working, although the school recognises it will need to be careful what it promises in this regard. • DLS and AHT-A&C are going to meet this week to devise a more structured plan for Year 6. • SRv said the school has factored in issues such as childcare and he is making allowances for lots of staff on a case by case basis due to personal situations, ensuring a compassionate approach. He added that all staff are aware the SLT are listening to their views. 	<p style="text-align: center;">SLT</p> <p style="text-align: right;">SRv</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair reminded Governors we are meeting again next Thursday for the FGB and asked Governors to vote in support of the school's plans and then potentially reviewing the situation again next Thursday in case anything has changed – Governors approved unanimously. • Chair asked SRv to begin the communications of the above plans with the school community. 	
5.	Confirmation of future FGB meeting dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGB 4 June 2020 – <i>Via Zoom</i> 	
6.	Meeting Close <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair closed meeting at 6.37pm 	