



**COMMUNITY INCLUSIVE TRUST BOARD MEETING**  
**Minutes of the virtual extraordinary meeting 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 5:00pm – via TEAMS**

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Attendees	Stephen Hopkins – Chairman Lucy McClements – Trustee (Chair of FA &E Committee) Kate Goodman – Trustee Kim Adele-Platts – Trustee Kathleen Weekes - Trustee Rachael Sharpe – Trustee (Chair E.S Committee) Jayne Storey – Trustee Helen Drew-Bradley – Trustee Bryan Steele - Trustee Peter Bell – CEO Daran Bland- Director of Governance and Operations (Observer) Claire Buffham – Director of Education SEND (Guest) Paul Hill – Director of Education Primary (Guest) Ana Hendrickson – Clerk to the Trust Board
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**1. WELCOME AND CHECK IN**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially at such short notice and explained that this meeting developed as a result of the latest Covid-19 related matters. The Prime Minister will be addressing the nation at 8:00pm tonight, significant changes are expected.

This meeting covers item 12 of the January 12<sup>th</sup> 2021 meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Sue Maycock- Trustee – Work commitments

Kate Rouse – Trustee – Work commitments

Apologies accepted.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The CEO declared being a member of NAHT. Union’s involvement - encouraging their members to declare that it is unsafe for schools to remain open.

**4. ASSURANCE REPORTS LINKED TO SCHOOL REMAINING OPEN**

01 Report to the TB 04.01.21 and Appendix to the Behaviour and Intimate Care Policies of all schools v3 available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

The Chair stated that the purpose of this agenda item is Governance risk assurance. The Directors of Education will assure the Board (via relevant supporting documents) that all Health & Safety arrangements in schools are such that they can continue to be open irrespective of the Prime Minister’s announcement later tonight. A national lockdown is suspected; however, in previous lockdown schools remained open to vulnerable pupils and key worker children. All plans for schools to continue to open will remain as they are, unless a complete lockdown is announced tonight at 8:00pm.

As Trustees, the Board represents two critical stakeholder groups, pupils/parents and staff. From the Health & Safety point of view the Trust Board is an accountable body.

The Director of Education Primary briefed Trustees regarding numbers of staff within the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable category / staffing levels (absences due to staff self-isolating, illness or following union advice), level of rate of infection per area, pupils requiring additional support (handling), delivery of lessons (face to face in schools and via Teams), cancellation of swimming lessons, cancellation of trips, protocols for visitors / contractors in schools, and monitoring and reviewing of risk assessments in all Mainstream Primary schools.

The Board was assured that rigorous processes are in place, the Trust is doing everything possible to secure schools remain open. Mainstream Primary schools are fully compliant and extra mitigations have been put in place. Headteachers are kept informed at all times (via text and e-mail). All details are up to date and available on Datadashboard. The Director of Education Primary has no concerns.

The Chair welcomed comments.

Questions were asked around possible staffing difficulties/class implications should union advice be followed by more members of staff, parental communications and feedback regarding pupils' returning to school.

The CEO explained the current dispute between the Government and employee Unions (re: schools re-opening) and confirmed that staffing levels are being monitored, processes are in place however this situation could change very quickly. Letters from parents have been received in some Mainstream schools. A cautious approach is being taken.

The Chair clarified that discussions and decisions will be made by the CEO and ELT re: closure of classes/bubbles. The Board's involvement is only for full schools closure.

The Director of Education Special stated that the report which was uploaded onto the portal is no longer up to date, changes took place this morning with some staff having taken their Union's advice. Unlike Mainstream Secondary schools, SEND schools have not been allowed to remain closed (until 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021) in order to carry out pupil testing. A further Inset day has been given by the DfE (on top the statutory five days per year) for this purpose. Most schools, apart from Sandon, Ambergate and JFS, converted today to an unscheduled Inset day in order to train staff re: Covid-19 testing. Headteachers have worked tirelessly to achieve this. Generic Risk Assessments have been written for all testing in schools. Test kits have arrived today with only a couple of schools experiencing missing items. Staff have taken the Rapid Lateral Flow test today. This test is a *self-test* system which some SEND pupils may not be able to carry out by themselves. DfE guidance for SEND schools is yet to be received. Trustees were assured that SEND schools are well prepared, parents have been contacted and kept informed.

The Director of Education Special briefed Trustees regarding numbers of staff and pupils within the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and Clinically Vulnerable categories / staffing levels (absences due to positive Covid-19 tests, staff self-isolating, as requested by Track & Trace or following union advice), pupil levels / plans for a phased pupil return (only Key Worker children and vulnerable pupils attending school), delivery of lessons online, class closures, reviewed *end of school* timings (this applies to two schools and for three days only to allow staff training), cancellation of trips (inclusive of DofE award), protocols for visitors / contractors in schools. Risk Assessments are dynamic documents which are continuously under review. The Director of Education SEND has no concerns.

The CEO provided context around Section 44 of the Health and Safety act, staff anxieties and the pressure Headteachers and staff are currently under.

The Chair welcomed comments.

Trustees thanked the Directors of Education for their comprehensive reporting and the assurances given during tonight's meeting.

Queries were raised regarding contingency plans for a worst case scenario where a majority of school staff at a particular SEND school test positive for Covid-19 and criteria used when prioritising vulnerable pupils.

The Director of Education SEND confirmed that, in such scenario, CIT would consult with the DfE as that particular school would not be able to remain open to all pupils. Prioritisation of pupils would take place. Attendance of Key Worker children and vulnerable pupils would not be compromised. Each pupil is currently risk assessed on an individual basis, priority is given to those pupils who are at greater risk when at home.

The Chair thanked the Directors of Education, all CIT Headteachers and staff on the frontline on behalf of Trustees.

**ASSURANCE: Trustees were assured by the CEO and the Directors of Education (Primary and SEND) that rigorous and robust processes are in place; the Trust is doing everything possible to secure schools remain open. There are no concerns as CIT schools are fully compliant.**

#### 5. DECISION TAKING RE: ANY SCHOOL FOR WHICH IMMEDIATE CLOSURE

Agenda item dependant on school cases brought to Trustees attention. None to be discussed at this point in time.

The Director of Education SEND mentioned that the Priory School is at risk of closure due to major issues with their heating system. However; as this is an operational matter any decisions regarding closure would be made by the either the Headteacher on H&S grounds or the CEO.

#### 6. RESOLUTION RE: SCHOOL CLOSURE DECISION MAKING

The Chair explained that a process is to be put in place should the Directors of Education, through the CEO, recommend a full school closure.

Decision making in respect of the full closure of a CIT school is delegated by the Trust Board to The CEO (through consultation with the ELT). The decision to close a CIT school will be reported to, and scrutinised by, the Trust Chair as Chair's Action (as permitted within the current Scheme of Delegation). The Chair will report the decision to Trustees within 24 hours and the Chair's Action will be recorded in the Board's Resolutions Register.

The Director of Education SEND requested clarification regarding TB involvement when school closure decisions are made in conjunction with Public Health England. The Chair stated that the CST advised for such decision to be put forward to the Chair of the Trust Board for ratification and recording.

Trustees indicated their agreement with the decision making protocol as stated above.

**RESOLUTION: For decision making in respect of the full closure of a CIT school to be delegated by the Trust Board to The CEO (through consultation with the ELT). The decision to close a CIT school will be reported to, and scrutinised by, the Trust Chair as Chair's Action (as permitted within the current Scheme of Delegation) or, in the Chair's absence, by the Vice Chair. The Chair will report the decision to trustees within 24 hours and the Chairs Action will be recorded in the Board's resolutions register.**

## 7. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair drew Trustees' attention to the Appendix to Behaviour and Intimate Care Policy which has been amended and strengthened in light of Covid-19 safety.

The Director of Education SEND re-iterated that this document needs to be adhered to as it has been written (and all amendments made) to ensure staff safety. After discussions with Headteachers earlier today further amendments will be necessary specifically to points 1 and 6 - should a pupil be physically restrained, through a risk assessment, a five day 'home learning' period will take place to provide 'thinking space' for the pupil and respite for staff. Pupil's return to school will be reviewed after those five school days to ascertain whether it is safe for the pupil (and staff) to return to school. Risk assessments will include scratching, biting, spitting, bodily fluids; the latest strain of the virus is very contagious therefore staff must be protected.

Trustees indicated their agreement and resolved to adopt the revised Behaviour Policy. As this is a dynamic document, future revisions are to be approved via the OnBoard portal.

**RESOLUTION: To adopt the revised Behaviour Policy. As this is a dynamic document future revisions/amendments to be approved via the OnBoard portal.**

The Chair welcomed input from the Director of Governance and Operations regarding the reimbursement of the £30,000 Bowman Academy Grant. It was explained that a grant for £30,000 had been received for the opening of Bowman Academy in September 2023; however the DfE paid this grant twice in error therefore a reimbursement has been requested. An official Purchase Order for his amount is to be raised and requires TB approval. Trustees resolved to approve a Purchase Order with the value of £30,000 for the reimbursement of the DfE grant.

**Resolution: To approve a Purchase Order with the value of £30,000 for the reimbursement of the DfE grant received twice in error.**

The Chair thanked all present for their time and contributions to this meeting. Covid update will be an agenda item for next Trust Board meeting on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2021.

The CEO thanked Trustees for their time and invaluable support.

Trustees thanked both Directors of Education for their leadership and assurances.

Meeting closed at 6:08pm.