



# ST JAMES' R.C. ACADEMY TRUST

Maybury Close, Petts Wood, Kent BR5 1BL

*Faith in Action, Working Together, Walking in the Footsteps of Christ*

## **Minutes of the 130<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Governing Body which took place on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 starting at 1800 on Zoom.**

Present:

Mary Hutchinson (Chair of Governors)  
Lisa Weeks (Head Teacher)  
Michelle Wilson (Deputy Head Teacher)  
Kenneth Chan  
Amanda Garlick

Margaret Connell  
Carlette Victoire-Nijjar  
Mark Hutchins  
Mark Edwards  
Catriona Hardiman

In Attendance: Dominique Wells (Clerk)

Papers relating to the meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read.

### **1. Opening Prayers**

The meeting was opened with a prayer led by the Chair.

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Fr David Camilleri  
Paul Gribben  
Martin D'Souza

It was noted that Fr David is near completion of the Spiritual Directors course and would be attending meetings in full from September.

It had been hoped that Martin D'Souza could be formally welcomed as Governor at this meeting, but the Education Commission are not furthering new Governor applications while their staff are on furlough. Reappointments have been extended automatically to 31/01/2021.

Carlette Victoire-Nijjar's term of office has ended but she has kindly agreed to stay on until September, and was thanked for her pragmatic and sensitive approach.

### **3. Declarations of Interest** in items in this Agenda.

None.

### **4. Deferral of usual Summer Term Agenda, Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising**

It was agreed to defer this item, which would have been scheduled for this meeting, until the next meeting in September.

## **5. Head Teacher and Staff Wellbeing**

The School's approach has been to make sure staff look after themselves so that they are able to look after others. At the beginning of lockdown, the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher told staff that they were available to talk to, and have since been in contact with staff every day to ask how they are. Telephone calls are made to staff who are stressed or need support. Two WhatsApp groups have been formed for staff – one business group and one social group. The social element has been maintained through online quizzes and birthday celebrations.

The Head Teacher acknowledged that the current situation (particularly the flood) has been one of the most stressful that she has had to deal with, but the mutual support and team effort has been great and morale seems good. With regard to the phased return to school for R, Y1 and Y6, although there has been some prior anxiety about this, the reality is now much calmer and less stressful.

The Deputy Head Teacher noted that the Head Teacher has done an amazing job. She also mentioned that the union has a counselling service which has been offered free to all staff until the end of September.

## **6. Pupils and Safeguarding (approval of Safeguarding addendum)**

All schools have been asked to add the Coronavirus addenda to policy – this has also been added to the Behaviour Policy.

The Head Teacher reported that there were no issues, and staff would bring up any concerns they may have. Social care has been inundated with issues and she would follow up the child who is under the Child Protection Plan.

Governors approved the addendum – to be signed electronically by the Chair.

## **7. Continuing Education**

### **a. Key worker children and vulnerable children**

There would be a detailed report for the FGB meeting in September.

Before lockdown, parents were asked to state whether they were on the list for the 'priority group'. Some replied but didn't send their children as they were able to work from home or were cautious. Out of an initial group of 40, 10 were expected. There are 10 children overall on a part-time basis and a daily average of 3 children in this group which is now a bubble. They do work set on Seesaw supervised by an adult. The picture is different throughout other schools in the Umbrella Trust.

### **b. Remote learning**

Some parents would like more work, but some are unable to do anything as they have to work or are single parents. Overall the response is positive and it was noted that some schools did not have anything in place.

Setting and issuing the work is time-consuming for teachers - it can take a whole day to respond to messages on Seesaw and therefore impossible when a teacher is in front of a class. All classes are having a weekly Zoom meeting and a phone call every fortnight.

Some families have chosen not to send their children back to school – these are continuing work on Seesaw.

**c. Phased Return – YR, Y1, Y6**

The DfE have prioritised year groups in this order, but because of the toilets only YR and Y6 returned initially in bubbles of 15. Y1 will return on Monday in 2 bubbles of 10. There was anxiety about the return, but it has gone well and is fine now the children have started.

There have been no issues. There is a one-way system along the pathway. Parents are sometimes lax with social distancing but encouraged to drop their children off and leave straight away. Children seem ok with this and are confident.

**d. Transition arrangements for Y6**

It was noted that Y6 are subdued and 4 children did not return. The normal paperwork including SEN and safeguarding information is being completed by Mrs Connolly regarding their transition to secondary school. Currently secondary schools are unsure about how the transition and return to school will work – some may not resume until January. Mrs Connolly has planned PSHE work about 'moving on' for the children and there will be an SEN transition meeting tomorrow.

**e. Entry arrangements for YR**

The school cannot hold the usual parents meeting for YR entry so there will be Zoom meetings instead, led by Mrs Richards and Mrs Weeks. There would be a one meeting for current families and another for new families. Many pictures have been taken of the Reception classroom so that children and parents can see what it looks like.

Governors agreed that the School has been exemplary in its contact with pupils and parents and that huge credit was due to the School.

**8. Staffing Matters**

There have been no resignations nor appointments.

The Finance Officer was given credit for managing furlough arrangements.

The After-School and Breakfast Club staff had been furloughed. The School relies on these clubs financially, and has taken a big hit here. Some staff had been furloughed until the end of August (although this could be until the end of October) on HR advice and the Finance Office followed the correct procedures. Staff were contacted to ensure they understood what it meant and all consented. The furlough allowance is 80% and the school tops up the 20%. Only one other school in the Umbrella Trust did the same.

## 9. Flood Damage Repairs Update

The School has secured a project manager to manage this. All the floors are now down and the furniture that was in hall is now in the classrooms. The cooking room, staff toilet, reception and SEN room is nearly done. The hall flooring has now come in – fitting started today and should be finished tomorrow. Plaster has been obtained and the kitchen area will be done tomorrow. The work is a week behind schedule but doesn't impact the running of the school.

The only issue is with the roofing which had been finished but was affected by flood damage underneath it. Two firms looked at the roof and one had to cut the roof to let the water out. As a result, the insurance company won't pay – the loss adjuster is arguing it at the moment. At this point, the project manager had not been appointed. A Governor advised that the School could threaten to go to the ombudsman if this isn't resolved, and would help to write a suitable letter.

## 10. Financial Matters

The Finance Officer highlighted the points below:

Regarding additional expenses relating to Covid-19, the School has to be careful as to what it can apply for.

Payments from the insurance company do not pass through the School – they go through the loss assessors to the contractors, so only contents claims will go through the School. The contents claim (£3k + additional figures to be agreed) is separate from the works

Currently, no costs have been provided for until there is more certainty.

The large item of £531k in the balance sheet is due to the year-end accounts not yet having been done and will be moved.

The furlough grant is paid straight away by HMRC as a lump sum of 3 months.

£1,500 of Covid claims can be made. Regarding loss of income from clubs, the School can claim for items, but is looking into whether it can claim for loss of income.

## 11. Policies

All policies were circulated prior to the meeting. The following points noted:

### **Rarely Cover Policy**

This relates to teaching assistants covering classes. It is noted that these are exceptional times and they would be delivering but not setting lessons. Their role is supervising rather than teaching a bubble – the teacher plans the lessons and saves it onto a memory stick for the teaching assistant. Each bubble has two adults which works for the School, although each school is different.

It was acknowledged that this is not in line with policy but with current guidance in these exceptional times.

## **RSE Policy**

This policy could be transferred to the Summer Term to start in September. There is one more year before it becomes a statutory requirement and schools are urged to start in September. The Ten Ten resources will be used as nothing else is provided.

**All policies were accepted.**

## **12. Any other business**

The Head Teacher noted that the parent body have come together in support of the School both on a financial level and in morale. They have asked how they can support and many ideas for fundraising have been generated.

The Governors extended their thanks to the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Finance Officer for their dedication during this time.

## **13. Date of Business Meeting to approve Minutes etc.**

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 at 4.30pm

## **14. The Closing Prayer** was led by the Chair

**The meeting closed at 19:00**