



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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19/05/2020

Minutes

Full Board of Directors Extra-Ordinary Meeting Tuesday 19th May 2020 at 9.30am Remotely via Zoom

1. Join Meeting

TM ensured all present had audio and video.

2. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Graeme Barriball (Chair), Peter Hague (Vice Chair), Will Hermon (CEO), Claire Paul, Tim Woodward, Carol Green, Steve Tavener, Jon Sharpe, Trudy Rudge

In attendance: Toni Martin (Governance Officer), Jo Callow

3. Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda

None declared.

4. Confirm Minutes of previous full Board ExO meeting (4th May 2020) and matters arising

- Confirm all schools have submitted annual safeguarding return (CP). *Every Cornwall school has submitted but in Devon, LT and PT are on a different time scale.*
- Hold workshop to go through management accounts (EG). *Completed 10am 18th May. TR, JS, ST and PH all in attendance. Questions recorded on governance log and will be included in the FSD minutes.*

The Board agreed the minutes as an accurate record and the Chair will sign a copy at a later date.

5. Re-Open Schools on 1 June 2020

WH noted that in his view the general principle of opening schools for certain year groups should go ahead but the safety of staff and children should always be a priority. He noted that it is not an easy decision given that we are being asked to set up a provision that keeps staff and children safe and we do not have access to the scientific information from the government that helps do that; we have to trust what the government are telling us. There is also influence from the Unions on whether staff should return to work. There is also safeguarding of vulnerable children to consider as some children are not having the same opportunities as others at home.

Planning for this has been underway for the last week and WH referred to the Key Principles document version 2 provided to the Directors. It has required constant updating and WH noted the 250 pages of guidance received in the last 4-5 days from various stakeholders, some of which is contradictory. WH noted the key principles and noted that a decision is required based on these principles whether to open the schools for further provision on 1 June 2020.

Keeping staff and children safe is our highest priority. We also have to ensure reception, Yr 1 and Y6 children get some kind of education from 1 June if it can be done safely as the government have

asked us to do this and we are obligated to try as we are in receipt of government funding. Risk assessments have been completed and we are confident that we can open but only with reduced opening. We cannot staff 5 days a week for the priority groups. Each school's provision also depends on their staffing, location, space in the school; for example PT may only open in the mornings, town schools may only open 2 days a week and so on. There will also need to be staggered start and finishing times for the pupils attending school. The priority is to stay safe and we cannot do full time opening for all the priority groups and stay safe. We also need to retain remote learning for other year groups so we need staff for that too. We also have some staff that are unable to return for good reason such as being in the vulnerable or shielded category. The information changes daily and risk assessments are constantly being updated.

WH noted that it is the Trust Board decision as the employers in the Trust and then LGBs can look at the specifics in their own schools and discuss this with their Heads. The LGB Chairs and Heads have been in regular communication during this period.

Challenges and Questions:

The following challenges and questions were asked by the Board:

Do we know how many children will return to school? WH confirmed it is mixed across the Trust but on average about 40% of parents have indicated that they will send their children to school.

What about staffing for the vulnerable children? CP confirmed that there hasn't been one on one provision as that wasn't the model required and children have had a range of staff looking after them for the past few weeks.

Of 40% intending to return, can the parents get their children to school under own steam or do they need transport? It was confirmed that majority can get to school, with exception of one or two. CP noted that 4 children in ARB will require transport and this has to be provided by County but it is not known how this will be done yet.

Noting that it is not completely safe until there is a vaccine, what is actually best for the children at this time? If they are going to do remote learning and then be in school for just 2 days a week, in small groups with lots of rules and disruption – is this better for the children or are they better to continue with remote learning? Remote learning going well for most children and year groups, but being in school for 2 days will achieve face to face education provision and they will have peer support. It is believed that most children are keen to be back in school. They will still do 3 days remote learning but 2 days will be face to face. It's a transition period to getting children back into school in the long run. Whatever the time line, it is a transition period and we will have to face the reality of schools opening at some point. If we leave the transition too long, it will be harder in the long run.

Do we know how staff feel about the prospect of schools opening for more children? Heads have been in contact with staff so we do know how they feel; there are mixed feelings across schools. Some are in the vulnerable category and concerned about returning to work but they can have a role providing remote learning from home. The NEU and Unison have issued a checklist for returning to work but have told their staff not to engage with school leaders about a return to work so it is difficult to fully understand their intentions and to plan sessions.

It will be a challenge to plan and a management challenge if not all staff return to work in some way, whether that be remote learning or in school? The provision will need to be flexible depending on the staff levels each week. Staffing planned to cover all children in priority group but it would need to have to be assessed week by week in order to accommodate staff needs or try to

make it better for children. Parents would need to notify schools that they are planning to send their children into school and not just turn up at the door because it needs to be planned for.

There are vulnerable children that may not have fully engaged with on-line learning, and it may be the case that they do not return to school either? The government's concern regarding vulnerable children may not be addressed unless we encourage them back into school but is this the right thing to do? It is difficult to encourage parents to send their children in case anything goes wrong, it must be a parental decision without pressure.

Do the risk assessments include the use of PPE? Risk assessments need to be tied together in order to re-assure staff that risks have been addressed and some staff will be working during half term to tie this together. Guidance from the government has been received regarding use of PPE and generally it is not required less a few specific circumstances. However, PPE has been ordered and will be in stock should it be required. The Unions are also supposed to be involved in this process.

What happens if a teacher or child tests positive for Covid 19 during this time? The children and staff will be working in a 'bubble' and if someone tests positive in that bubble, they will all have to self isolate. This will disrupt the provision but there is no way around this. It was noted that Unions are keen on testing of staff and children. Testing is apparently available but there is a need to travel to get tested so it is not an easy process.

What is procedure for returning on 1 June 20; do we have to formally inform anyone as Government has made it's expectations known for opening full time for the priority groups? As employer, the Trust can make decision and we will need to document our reasoning behind our decisions.

What provision is there for cleaning? Teachers will spray down, frequent hand washing and cleaners could be utilised at lunch times depending on availability of cleaners. **Will government cover costs of extra cleaning?** WH keeping log of additional costs in the hope that we can claim some back but don't know what we can claim back and when.

Have we had contact from any of the colleges re Yr 6 student transition? It was confirmed that letters have been sent out and some virtual activities have been provided. However, nothing has been done in the colleges but this does not impact the decision to be made today.

Have we been able to order signs such as stay 2m apart? No signage has been purchased. Some posters have been provided but not intending to spend money on signage and will make own signs.

It was discussed that a decision needs to be made and we need be mindful that children cannot stay at home indefinitely. Other countries have tried this and there are lessons to be learned. The government will be making a statement on 28 May have reviewed all the requirements and provide final authorisation for schools to open, or not. So plans maybe in place to open but it may not actually happen. However, it was agreed that opening schools will happen at some point in future so the planning will not be entirely wasted.

A vote was taken by the Trust Board and it was unanimously agreed that:

It is planned to re-open the An Daras Trust schools on 1 June 2020 but only for limited provision and reduced opening for the priority groups Reception, Yr 1, Yr 6, key worker children, vulnerable children and pre-school if possible. It is noted that this only partially meets the government's requirements but takes into account risk assessments and the safety of the staff and children which is always a priority. Schools will continue providing remote learning for the remaining children

throughout. LGBs can discuss the specifics on their school with the Heads and if they have an serious concerns, they should raise them to the Trust Board for consideration.

The Board is mindful of the huge amount of work and preparation that has been done by leaders and staff, and is conscious of the pressures they are facing. They wish to note their grateful appreciation for the hard work, flexibility and courage shown by the leaders and staff at this time.

It was noted that following the government announcement on 28 May or any further announcement regarding more children in school before the end of term, the Trust Board will need to meet to discuss this at a remote meeting.

6. AOB

None.

The meeting closed at 10.35am

TJH Martin
Governance Officer

Distribution List:

W. Hermon – CEO Director G. Barriball – Director (Chair) P. Hague – Director (Vice) T. Rudge - Director C. Green – Director T. Woodward – Director	C. Paul – Director J. Sharpe – Director S. Tavener - Director E. Gilbert – CFO J. Callow – Ex Officio Observer
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