
SIDEGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

NOTES FROM GOVERNING BODY GOOGLE MEET BRIEFING

Date:	18th May 2020
Attendees:	Wendy James - Headteacher Tim O'Keefe - Chair of Governors Mary Hallett - Trust Governor Karen Wesley - Trust Governor Jack Rich - Trust Governor Matt Moseley - Trust Governor Heather Valentine - Staff Representative Matthew Ferrier - Staff Representative Toni Morris - Clerk to the Governors

WJ welcomed Governors to the 'Google Meet' and explained how she had previously spoken with TOK Chair of Governors, to keep him updated on the progress since the school closed on 20th March.

To bring Governors up to speed, WJ summarised the below.

- It has been a challenging time for WJ/MF with numerous documents received late in the evening (via email/social media etc.) The Government documents are contradictory and WJ/MF have been working long hours to keep up to speed.
- Regular meetings are held with SLT, ALT and wider staff with the Trust (Board and CEO) trusting headteachers to do the right thing.
- Prioritising pupil safety is paramount but to achieve what the Government is asking it seems impossible to manage social distancing of both staff and pupils. Using the Government 'guidance' of all children in together, our YR group would take up nine classrooms, with unfamiliar environments, unfamiliar staff, no access to their usual resources and outside space. We have therefore chosen to disregard this Government 'guidance' and children will come in on a rota basis. To achieve social distancing within our classroom sizes, we are considering splitting every group into 10 (not 15). Full backing on the Trust.
- A joint union document (NEU Unison, GMB and Unite) was sent last night (17th May) which WJ/MF read through this morning, annotated, cross checked against our existing plans and control measures. We feel our plans closely align to those of the unions and we and the staff feel reassured that we are doing the right thing.

Staffing for reopening

- Familiar adults will be with children in YR Y1 and Y6 although this may not be their teacher (maybe an HLTA). 8 teachers are in the clinically vulnerable group (flu jab group) and they cannot be in the classroom with children as they would not be socially distanced. They will support home learning instead.
- Staff in the clinically vulnerable group or extremely clinically vulnerable (shielding) will not be asked to work in school and will continue to work from home.
- Staff with a member of their household who is in the extremely clinically vulnerable category (shielding) will continue to work from home.

- Staff with a member of their household who is in the clinically vulnerable category can be directed to work. Discussion has taken place with those staff members.
- Staff with school aged children should be offered critical worker care at their child's school if they wish or we could offer for them to bring their children here, we are insured for this.
- Staff with preschool aged children will need to arrange childcare. The Trust is suggesting if this is not possible that they should take unpaid leave. We will need to be flexible going forward as some are teachers and could be working from home although we are not exploring unpaid leave at this time.

Reopening Timetable Plans

- The staffing timetable is being finalised, achieving 3 groups of up to 10 children with a teacher and TA. We can achieve this with EYFS, Y1 and Y6 plus critical workers (KS1/KS2), and SSC, our most vulnerable children.
- The Prime Minister announced that they were hopeful that all children would have a month of learning before school holidays. Our plans allow us to expand and bring in other year groups.
- 1st of June at the earliest but the Government said they must meet their own 5 tests and the unions have their own 5 tests too. We are planning for the possibility of reopening on this date.
- Biggest challenge is safely socially distancing adults from children, and adults from adults. We will create bubbles and each class will be a bubble. Bubbles will not mix in school and will have different arrival, departure, play and lunch times. We aim to reduce as much transitional contact, going to assemblies etc. (although it is a low risk passing in the corridor). Staff may struggle to keep apart, face to face talking is a medium risk even at 2m apart, so staff will be instructed not to talk in school and will be encouraged to talk by telephone or email. Different refreshment points will be created for each bubble to reduce mixing. Whilst the R number remains high, we will need to keep social distancing going in school as long as possible to reduce this.
- Classrooms have been measured classrooms and we can achieve 2m apart in Y6 with a teacher, 3m gap between nearest mouth of child. Other classrooms, including Y1 there will be 1.75m between children sitting sideways (less risk than face to face) and they can socially distance the teacher from the children. YR is the same size at Y6, we need to discuss ideas with YR staff and get their views as this may be a challenge. Good ventilation also reduces the transmission risk and we will keep the children apart inside but also have them outside as much as possible.
- Need to ensure there is formal direct teaching for Y1 and Y6, and phonics in YR.
- To reduce contact points (stop surface spread), children will have their own desk and chair. They will sanitise their hands on arrival at school, trays will be outside the classroom, trays on desk, coats on chair, zipped wallet with own stationery. They will not be allowed to bring in any personal belongings into school (toys etc.). At the end of day, items will go back into the tray and into the trolley and the area will be cleaned.
- We need to ensure there is room to move about in the classrooms by removing excess items and resources. We will be asking staff to come in over half term to clear away etc. This day will be compensated by finishing a day early at the end of the summer term.
- Half term school will close, which will only affect 3 critical worker families. All have been very understanding.
- It is parental choice whether they wish to send their children back and there will be no penalty if they chose not to. We have built trust with families around the measures we have put in place. If publicity is good and the R number continues to reduce, parents will feel

safe and confident, so they may decide to send their children in. A joint survey by the Trust will be issued tomorrow. Will be fed into the Trust and reported back to us.

- There will be staggered start times but children will have the same amount of teacher contact time. Parents can arrive and drop children before the next group arrives. Reducing transitional contact through gates..
- Children YR 1 and 6 will be offered 9 contact days if they start back on 1st June. They will be in school for one day and have follow up activities for the next two days, then return back to school for another contact day. Those children not in school will have home learning, similar content to Seesaw as now.

Home Learning

- As at today around 20 children out of 650 have logged into Seesaw (some overseas). Families have done very well to get children logged in. Not all are fully engaging but most families have logged in. Y2/3/4/5 are not being offered the opportunity to come into school so will continue with home learning with those teachers who are not able to come into school and are home working. Teachers in school will not be expected to respond to home learning.
- Workload started low for teachers, not MLT, PLT. Learning platforms are more demanding as more tasks are set and we need to be aware of workload. Teachers need time to plan virtually for both those at school and home therefore every Friday school will be closed to children and most staff to allow for planning time to ensure there is a coherent plan for home learning. This will allow us to manage staffing within their contracts.

Risk Assessment

- Comprehensive risk assessment has been prepared. This a working document and will be shared with Governors. This is based on a risk assessment following a [video by Dr Matt Butler](#). We have learnt lots from it, what the Government is trying to do and also the science behind it. Staff have been directed to watch this video too.
- There will be stringent control measures as more staff return to school and we will need to 'police' the way people behave as this way of working is contrary to normal.
- A training session will take place on 22nd May at 10am on how we would like staff to behave and operate over half term moving classrooms. A longer session will take place on 1st June to prepare for starting back.
- If the Government says we can start back then children will return on 2nd June.

Cleaning

- Unions have said that teachers shouldn't be cleaning. Throughout the day staff have been disinfecting with Milton, wiping down surfaces where children have been and contact points within the classroom. We will ask staff to continue to do disinfect areas within their classroom (contact points). There have been no objections and staff are aware it is for their safety too. Resources will be provided, including gloves and they need to be aware of complacency with PPE.
- Cleaners bubble will be created and they will clean when staff and children have left.
- Teachers will not be asked to clean toilets or corridors but SLT may do this if there are not enough staff.

PPE

- Difficult to obtain at the moment although we have some items in school, a few masks but not many. If we are delivering first aid or intimate care to challenging children then a visor will need to be worn. The virus can live in stools for up to 30 days and when cleaning children it is important staff are protected and do not inhale any fecal particles.
- There will be a risk assessment on all children who may need intimate care but unless we have appropriate PPE, we may not be able to have the children in school. Disposable masks are available at £8 each currently and we have ordered 40. Aprons and gloves have been ordered too. Visors have been made by Chantry high and we have some science safety glasses, which are adjustable to fit over glasses. The video by Dr Matt Butler explains about covering eyes, protecting mucus membranes.
- PPE should only be used for intimate care. Social distancing is key to stopping the virus spreading which we can do in our plan.
- If staff want to wear face coverings in school they can (people do get hayfever, cough, sneeze). Government has advised not. We know face coverings don't protect the wearer but the spread of the virus.
- Face coverings are being made by volunteers, fabric and bias binding has been purchased.
- We have said to staff it is important for them to follow Government guidance and watch the video. They should limit contacts with other people, washing hands, keeping distance to lower R number.

Staff Training/Wellbeing

- We are asking people to attend training on days they don't normally work and we recognise that some people have other jobs too. We are asking for lots of goodwill and it is important that we meet contractual obligations.
- All staff had days off over Easter that they were entitled to, except SLT and we are trying to look after staff as much as we can to build trust amongst staff.

Documents

- WJ shared the document re-opening class groupings to give Governors an overview of the contact days/follow up days for each class group. Left two days to consider transition for EYFS and farewell/end of term events for Y6.
- Parentmail Letter from Trust, letter from WJ with lots of attachments and questionnaire.

Governor Questions

TOK - what documents will parents receive?

A Parentmail letter from WJ which is very detailed (11/12 pages) and explains everything; Aims for reopening, what we are trying to achieve, rationale, plan, information about control measures, link to Dr Matt Butler's video, link to risk assessment, information about PPE, things child should bring to school, FSM, uniform, FAQs from the Government why they have chosen specific year groups, definitions etc.. The letter will be accompanied with a letter from the CEO of ALT, the ALT survey.

Aware some people may choose not to send their children back to school.

JR - does the plan account for parents who may decide at a later date to send their children back?

WJ explained how all children in a class have been split into 3 groups (10 children per group). It may be that early on only 2 children will turn up in one group and 7 in another. Until we know what is happening nationally, parents may change their mind if cases drop. Need to keep our socially distanced bubbles intact without having to rehash the plans. As children are asymptomatic we couldn't then change their groupings without them having to isolate for a period of seven days..

MH - if someone gets the virus, does the whole bubble go or the whole school shut?

If we have gone with the Government plan (take a class of 30 children, split into two groups of 15, one with a teacher, the other a teaching assistant and put them into separate classrooms) we could have had bubbles and kept all of those bubbles separate. If we do this, we would not be able to maintain the level of social distancing, as Dr Matt Butler said in his video. We would have also had a teaching assistant teaching a class. We may have to use a TA if a teacher is unwell to replace them. In that system, if someone became unwell in the half class bubble and tested positive for the virus, the whole bubble would have to go away and isolate for the 2 weeks (only 16/17 people or up to 20).

In our model, because the teacher and teaching assistant are in contact with all the children in their class and some critical workers, then up to 70 people would have to go home and isolate. WJ and MF discussed this at length, looked at our model v Government model. Because the focus of our model is to lower the transmission rate, if the virus came into school it is less likely to spread. Under the Government model the virus is likely to spread further. This would not be a problem for children but would be for the adults. WJ also spoke to other heads for reassurance and they were in agreement with this model..

MH explained she is an NEU rep for Northgate and attended a Zoom call for other reps nationally. She explained it was fascinating to see how many schools will not be following the Government guidance and is impressed with the Sidegate model.

KW - what about lunch arrangement?

WJ believes catering services will resume and they will provide grab and go lunches for FSM, UIFSM and those who pay. Children will stay in their classrooms and have their lunch delivered. They can eat outside in their bubbles, socially distancing using the dining hall tables. MF confirmed that picnic tables can be moved too to accommodate bubbles. There will be a 40 minute lunch break.

KW - what about those who refuse to come into school?

WJ acknowledged that some families who are 'vulnerable' may refuse to send their children to school. MF also highlighted that some staff are being told to stay at home too. It is our duty of care to accommodate this. We are awaiting Union advice and are aware that this could result in industrial action if directed. MCH highlighted section 44 1996 H&S Act which talks about 'employees feel unsafe'.

[NEU/Unison/GMB/Unite Planning Guide for Primary Schools](#)

TOK - is there any financial support available for schools?

WJ explained there is not but that the school has made savings by not opening.

MM - has there been any talk about September and any potential budgetary implications/recession?

Expecting budgets to be cut. HQ has been tweaking the budget in readiness for staffing in place for September. The Trust would like this information by 31/05/2020 and HQ is on it and knows all the costs. We will need to continue to review as necessary. We are still waiting to hear about children who have special school spaces to decide on TA's on F/T contracts for September.

WJ spoke about the comprehensive plans above and that the school is open to any suggestions from Governors. Governors acknowledge that the plans in place are very very comprehensive and thorough and were confident that the school has covered everything. WJ welcomed any further input from Governors on the risk assessment etc.

HV spoke about the letter which is being sent to parents, and as it is a large letter some parents may need support, as they did with Seesaw. WJ explained that Google translate is available which works very well but initially we will need to see who responds to the questionnaire. We may need to get on the phone to contact those who haven't. A help desk was set up to support pupil welfare, thank you to HV for supporting us with this. We may have to do something similar. If children do not arrive at school on the first day we will be phoning parents, the same way we do for first day absence calls.

TOK - will this affect attendance?

We haven't been legally required to complete a register to date but have been sending numbers to the DfE. We have been keeping our own register. Will be sent appropriate codes once we reopen. Attendance data will not be used against us.

TOK - how hard will it be for those year groups to catch up?

WJ explained that everyone will be in the same boat and we will need to think about this in September. We will look at our curriculum for 20/21 after September and look at what is important for children moving forward, reading, maths and writing skills are the priority as well as supporting their mental wellbeing. We need to use the Sidegate approach.

MM - has there been any guidance about SATs estimations?

WJ confirmed that nothing has been received. We haven't had anything from Northgate high school about transition support, some information received from Copleston. MCH stated they were thinking about it although she is not part of this process. A video tour of the school was sent to Y6. Believes Kesgrave have scrapped their transition.

Moving forward we will need to see if we are back on 1st June, we can then see how Northgate can support us with the transition process.

MM spoke about the positive feedback he had been made aware of regarding the home learning resource set for children (Seesaw).

WJ acknowledged that some parents have the capacity to support their children more than others. We have been proactive in lending Chromebooks to families too.

Meeting closed 20:20pm