

**GOVERNING BODY FOR ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING**  
**HELD ON THURSDAY 4 JUNE 2020**

**GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Governor Type</b>	<b>Term End</b>	<b>Present/Apologies/Absent</b>
Alessia Errico (Chair)	Foundation	31/8/20	Present
Sylvia Lehrian (Vice Chair)	Foundation	31/8/20	Present
Fr John McKenna	Foundation	31/8/21	Present
Fr James Fasakin	Foundation	31/8/20	Apologies
Francesca Giacon	Foundation	31/8/20	Present
Peter Moger	Foundation	31/8/21	Present
Peter Collins	Prospective Foundation		Present
Vacancy	Foundation		n/a
Gordon Fisher	Local Authority (LA)	13/1/21	Present
Julie Burke	Parent	6/3/23	Present
Liz Reeve	Parent	16/5/22	Present
Liam Fitzpatrick	Parent	17/12/23	Present
Maureen Kelly	Staff (Headteacher)	n/a	Present
Úna McAuley	Staff	7/6/22	Present
<b>Non-Voting Attendees</b>			
Marc Boucherat	Associate Member (Committees)	24/11/23	n/a
Mary Ainger	(Deputy Headteacher)	31/8/20	Present
Sheila Bennett	Clerk	n/a	Present

**PART I**

The meeting opened in prayer.

**20/52 WELCOME**

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance at this second summer term meeting of the Governing Body via Zoom. Úna McAuley was especially thanked for attending on her birthday.

**20/53 ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been submitted and were accepted from Fr James.

Liam Fitzpatrick apologised for his late arrival.

Fr John and Sylvia Lehrian both apologised as they would have to leave early.

**20/54 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN THE CURRENT AGENDA**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interests in the business to be discussed.

20/55 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 11 MAY 2020**

The minutes of the Governing Body meeting held on 11 May 2020 were **CONFIRMED** as being a fair reflection of it.

20/56 **MATTERS ARISING**

The Chair confirmed that all actions had either been completed or would be addressed at this meeting.

*20/49 Any Other Business* The Chair was very pleased to report that Liam Fitzpatrick had joined the Resources Committee.

20/57 **VERBAL REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

The Chair explained that the purpose of this meeting was two-fold. Firstly, the Headteacher would be informing Governors of changes to the Risk Assessment (RA) associated with the re-opening of the School. This was being put in place following the relaxation of the lockdown that had been introduced by the government to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

Secondly, the Resources Committee had recently met to discuss the Local Authority Coordinated Voluntary Aided Programme (LCVAP) funding that had been received for the building of the Performing Arts Hub. Governors would be given an update on the progress of this project.

20/58 **VERBAL REPORT OF THE HEADTEACHER**

**Consultation**

The Headteacher said a consultation on the School's re-opening had been sent out to staff and parents on the Friday before half term. There had been no response from staff.

Two replies from parents had been received. The first had asked that shoeless learning be reconsidered for September 2020. Governors were aware that although this was not a response to the consultation, it would be a valid point to consider at a later date.

*Action/Chair/Headteacher*

The second parent had expressed disappointment that Yr 6 had not been able to return to school on 1 June 2020. They had wanted a half term of learning to be completed before the summer break.

The Headteacher reported on a survey for the child care for key workers, Nursery and Reception classes, that had been sent out to parents.

The Headteacher said that 47 children had originally been signed up to attend child care. This number had diminished to 45 and then 40 children. The parents

who had changed their minds had been contacted to make sure that they did not require child care for their children.

*Fr James joined the meeting.*

Out of 47 children, 14 had been signed up for the morning session and five for the afternoon in the Nursery.

In Reception, out of 60 children, 16 had been signed up to have a morning session and 18 in the afternoon.

The Headteacher felt that this showed there was not a huge demand from parents to open up child care and year groups at the present time.

*Mary Ainger joined the meeting.*

### **Risk Assessment (RA)**

The Chair said that a special meeting of the Resources Committee had been convened following the publication of the RA, to discuss the plan for the re-opening of the School.

The original plan had been to re-open the School on 8 June 2020. The Chair regretted to report that some personal protective equipment (PPE) that had been ordered did not arrive on time. This equipment had been identified in the RA as crucial for the staff in the Nursery.

The Chair explained that the children were in a protective 'bubble' system while in school. Staff had to become familiarised with the one-way system and the regulations in place to ensure that these bubbles did not cross. The Resources Committee had made a decision to recommend to the Governing Body that, due to the need for this training and the lack of PPE, the School should not re-open until 15 June 2020.

### **Staff Training & New Safeguarding Procedures**

The Headteacher explained further. She had put together a lengthy RA prior to the re-opening of the School. This document was changed daily as its practice was put into place and potential risks were discovered. Addendums had also been made to the Staff Handbook and the Behaviour Policy.

The Headteacher reported her surprise that staff were entering and leaving the School via the wrong entrances. She gave examples of how staff had not followed the guidelines in the RA and had not respected the one-way system.

The Headteacher realised it would be necessary to train staff to take the RA guidance seriously to ensure the safety of all staff and the children. She regretted to say that staff were now becoming anxious about getting the guidance wrong. She had reassured them that they were not being told off but she had stressed the importance of implementing the RA correctly. Governors

also noted that not all staff had been in school this week; another group of staff would be coming in the following week.

The Headteacher emphasised that the School's systems needed to be robust to ensure the safety of the staff and children. Unfortunately the School was not yet at that stage. It was taking time for staff to understand the procedures in reality. The Headteacher gave examples of this and how the environment had changed for staff and children. The dining hall and Yr 2 classrooms looked completely different as they were now stark, with furniture and equipment pared back.

In Childcare this week one day there were two children in one bubble and seven in another. Staff had to be reminded to maintain the integrity of the bubbles. The Headteacher realised that this way of teaching went completely against the staff's instinctive way of working with the children.

The training of staff had begun this week. The Headteacher had not expected this and it was not in the RA. She said that something new everyday had to be added to the RA and this then had to be redistributed to staff. Staff were also given updates on the changes each morning.

The Headteacher reported that, apart from the late arrival of PPE, the safeguarding signs and banners for parents that had been ordered had also not come. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had printed out some from the internet as best they could. The order for cleaning supplies had not arrived either. All this information had been shared with the Resources Committee. Members of that committee had stated they were not confident that all necessary child care procedures were in place ready for the re-opening of the School.

The Chair said she understood that it was not easy for teachers and teaching assistants to cope with these changes. Teaching in bubbles and moving through the School in completely different ways was complicated. Naturally staff were eager to get back to normality. Staff had said that it had felt to them as though they were beginning a new job in a new school.

The Vice Chair said it would take time for everyone to get used to the new procedures and to be comfortable with them. The Deputy Headteacher commented that there was a difference between reading the RA in the abstract and actually putting it into practice.

The Staff Governor reported on a very useful staff meeting held that week on 2 June 2020. Staff had the opportunity to ask questions about the guidance as there was a lot for them to absorb and be clear about. The school environment had completely changed. Governors were pleased to hear from the Staff Governor that this meeting had been really positive for staff. They had felt supported and cared for. The meeting had been attended by 21 teachers and 17 teaching assistants.

**QUESTIONED** on whether the Headteacher was concerned about space as the School filled up with more bubbles of children, the Headteacher replied that she knew the limits of the School. If over 50 children attended in Childcare, then Yr 6

could not be accommodated because there were too few toilets. She reminded Governors of the priorities: child care for key workers, and then the Early Years children.

**QUESTIONED** on advice from the local authority (LA) on this matter, the Headteacher replied that the LA had said that arrangements for the borough's schools should be decided on an individual basis to suit each school and its community.

**QUESTIONED** on advice from the Diocese of Westminster (the Diocese), the Headteacher replied that schools had been informed that they should make their own decisions through their headteachers and governing bodies. Fr John confirmed that this advice was the same for churches. He said that each church and every school had a distinct layout and therefore different risk assessments needed to be applied.

*Liam Fitzpatrick joined the meeting.*

**QUESTIONED** as to whether all children would be back at school full time by 8 July 2020, the Headteacher regretted to say that this was not realistic. With bubbles of 15 children, there were not enough classrooms to cater for the return of all the children, as the school would need double the space.

**QUESTIONED** about the guidance on securing the number of placements and to allow for parents to change their minds, the Headteacher replied this was in place and she was trying to accommodate parents as much as possible.

There was clear guidance for the start of each year group, with added guidelines specifically for each year group. She gave examples of how parents had been assisted after changing their minds. Governors noted that although the Headteacher was trying to help all parents as much as possible, the children of key workers and those from vulnerable families was the priority. She thanked those parents who had kindly altered their arrangements to help other families out.

The Headteacher emphasised that a parent would not be allowed to change the bubble that their child had been allocated to for safeguarding reasons.

### **Vote on Date of School Re-Opening**

Following this discussion and the questioning of the Headteacher, the Chair called for a formal vote on when the School should be re-opened.

It was **RESOLVED** unanimously that the re-opening of the School should be postponed until 15 June 2020.

*Fr John & Sylvia Lehrian left the meeting at this point due to other commitments.*

20/59 **PERFORMING ARTS HUB UPDATE**

Peter Moger was delighted to report that the LCVAP funding of £201,000 had been received. This was added to the funding awarded the previous year of £190,000 together with £90,000 from the PTA, to total £481,000.

Governors heard that this sum would be sufficient to enable the School to purchase an excellent new building and appropriate furniture for the new venture.

The Governing Body wished to place on record its grateful thanks to the Diocese, the PTA and parents for their financial help to make this project possible. The Governors said that the Performing Arts Hub would be a superb asset to the School and it would be enjoyed by the children for many years to come.

Gordon Fisher shared his screen showing the different building options available. Governors noted the changes to the porch area that would be made. The building decided upon would cost approximately £397,000. Governors were aware that the furniture and audio/visual system would be an additional cost.

Peter Moger reported that planning permission had been verbally agreed and confirmed in writing by email. Formal planning permission was still awaited.

The next step would be to knock down the caretaker's house and start the building works, which were expected to be completed just before Christmas 2020. Peter Moger expressed a concern that this demolition would happen as the children would be returning to school. The Staff Governor reassured him that this would not be a problem as, with full safeguarding measures in place, this would be a very exciting event for the children to witness.

Peter Moger highlighted the strange financial situation of the School at present. He reminded Governors that the budget for 2020/21 was extremely tight. At the same time, the School would be going ahead with erecting a very smart building to accommodate the new Performing Arts Hub. He stressed that it would be necessary to communicate very carefully to staff and parents that these works came from completely different funding streams and that no overlap was possible.

*Action: Chair/Headteacher*

20/60 **SAFEGUARDING, ON-LINE SAFETY & GENERAL PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)**

There was nothing further to report.

20/61 **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**Resources**

The deliberations of this committee, on 1 June 2020, had been fully discussed earlier in the meeting.

20/62 **RATIFICATION OF POLICIES**

There were no policies to ratify.

20/63 **GOVERNING BODY MEMBERSHIP**

**Forthcoming Ends of Terms of Foundation Governors**

The terms of office of four Foundation Governors would end on 31 August 2020. Reappointment application forms had been sent to them by the Clerk.

Sylvia Lehrian was thanked for already completing and sending in her form to the Diocese, as their processes could take some time. The other Foundation Governors concerned were reminded to do so as soon as possible, if they wished to continue in the post.

Following a query, these Governors were asked to contact Kim McKenzie, Business Manager, regarding providing evidence of their Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check to the Diocese.

*Action: Chair/Fr James & Francesca Giacon*

20/64 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Thank You from Staff**

The Staff Governor wished to record thanks, on behalf of all members of staff, to the Headteacher and Governing Body for their support and care of the staff and the children over this unprecedented time.

**Website Updates**

The Chair reminded everyone to check the website regularly for the latest updates.

20/65 **WHAT WAS THE IMPACT ON THE CHILDREN?**

Governors noted how this meeting had been focused on the children:

- The plans to re-open the School more fully following the relaxation of the government lockdown in response to Covid-19 had been considered.
- A Risk Assessment was in place that was being continually monitored, to ensure the safeguarding of the children, staff and parents coming into the School.
- The very exciting news had been shared that full funding had now been received to allow the new Performing Arts Hub to be built for the benefit of the children and the future success of the School.

- Foundation Governors whose terms of office would end on 31 August 2020 had expressed their willingness to be reappointed and to continue to serve the School.

20/66 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the Autumn Term meeting would be decided in due course.

*Action: Chair/Headteacher*

**There being no further business, the meeting ended.**

Vice Chair's Signature  
(Standing in for Chair)

*Sylvia Lebrian*

Date: 30 September 2020