

East Midlands Academy Trust

Minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on the 23rd April 2020. Meeting conducted virtually.

These minutes reflect the order of the agenda and not necessarily the order in which items were discussed.

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome	<p>Present: Kevin Crompton (EMAT: Trustee) Fiona Wheeler (EMAT: Trustee) Ayo Salam (EMAT: Trustee) Andy Davis (EMAT: Trustee) Jon Harris (EMAT: Trustee) Stephen Morales (EMAT: Trustee) Matt Johanson (EMAT: Trustee) Leigh Jones (EMAT: Trustee)</p> <p>Joshua Coleman (EMAT: CEO) Paul Wheeler (EMAT: Finance & Operations Director) Monica Juan (EMAT: Head of Governance & Safeguarding)</p> <p>Natalie Parker – SEN Forum Chair (joined at 11.30am) Mike Kendall – PP Forum Chair (joined at 11.30am) Lorna Beard – SIP (joined at 11.30am)</p> <p>KC welcomed all and reminded all present that the matters raised within this meeting would remain confidential until the minutes were agreed and signed off.</p>	
2. Apologies	No apologies were received	
3. Quoracy	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.	
4. Declarations of Interest	There were no declarations of interest pertaining to this agenda in addition to those already recorded on the annual Register of Interests.	
5. Coronavirus Update (incl. safeguarding update)	<p><i>JC reported verbally about COVID19. The safeguarding protocols had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>KC informed that he had been having regular conversations with JC from the beginning of the crises and praised the effective response of everybody involved; staff, central team, governors and trustees during these challenging times.</p> <p>JC reported about the current situation across schools. Currently there was no date in place for schools to reopen but there was an expectation that a transitional period would take place to accommodate a phased return of students, particularly those starting secondary education. Communications had</p>	

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	<p>been streamlined and only official information had been distributed. Response from stakeholders had been positive. Schools had utilised their websites to distribute information and students in primary were receiving work for the week on Monday morning. Students (and parents) in secondary were using EduKey platform to set up and complete tasks and exchange communication with teaching staff. There had been a fantastic response from all staff volunteering to come into schools as well as staff working from home to coordinate online learning. All schools had been able to organise rotas to cover all needs.</p> <p>In response to a question about the level of support provide by the Local Authorities JC reported that both NCC and MK had not been very responsive.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether the MAT was confident that all vulnerable children had been identified. JC confirmed that although levels of attendance had been low, schools had identified and were monitoring all vulnerable children. Safeguarding protocols had been distributed across members of staff to minimise risk during any possible home visits.</p> <p>In response to a question concerning level of staff sickness JC explained that the percentage was around 20%. HR was currently seeking legal advice regarding the best way to approach staff currently off sick due to COVID19. LJ agreed to share a Staff Log template to help collate data.</p> <p>In response to a question regarding staff training days JC confirmed that all school staff were actively taking part in CPD online if they were not currently involved in the delivery of curriculum. JC was unsure whether the agreed training days could be modified however he firmly believed that training days would be crucial to bring people and culture together when schools reopen. Staff were working to develop a programme to recognise collective grief and what everybody had gone through during this pandemic.</p>	<p>LJ to send Staff Log template</p>
<p>6. CEO Report</p>	<p><i>The report had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>JC presented the highlights of the report and asked if they were any questions.</p> <p>KC draw attention to the PWS section in schools improvement as it needed to be updated.</p> <p>FW reported that NIA had successfully appointed a very dynamic candidate to fill the HT post. JC explained that HR had managed the virtual recruitment process for this post as well the HoS for Hardingstone and SAA.</p> <p>Trustees were delighted that the HR report presented a picture of a happy workforce and a good and supportive employer. JC confirmed that the COVID19 situation had highlighted the willingness of staff members to work through the crises collaboratively.</p>	<p>JC to update PWS section</p>

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	<p>Regarding IT & Estates. PW explained that IT had been brought in-house from 1st April, a Head of Shared Services had been appointment in March to start in May and a new Finance Business partner had been appointed.</p> <p>SM congratulated PW on completing his accreditation as SRMA (School Resource Management adviser)</p> <p>Trustees received and noted the report and agreed with the proposals regarding payment of current contracts suggested by JC.</p>	
<p>7. Minutes of the meeting held 13/12/2019</p>	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 13th December 2019 were reviewed and agreed to be an accurate representation of the meeting. KC agreed to physically sign the minutes once lockdown restrictions had been lifted.</p>	
<p>8. Actions log from the meeting held 13/12/2019</p>	<p>Actions from the meeting held on the 13th December 2019 were reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>SM & PW to present to FHR & Estates committee on financial planning and ICFP and this to be presented on Skype or otherwise recorded: Done</i> ii. <i>Send details of proposed Independent Chair for S&P committee: JC explained that the original appointment had not been successful. LJ agreed to continue chairing the S&P committee.</i> iii. <i>Work with TB to review Terms of reference for the S&P committee in line with SoD: To be presented at the next S&P meeting.</i> iv. <i>Provide the TB with analysis of successful UTCs: No longer relevant</i> v. <i>Set TB meeting for 90 days into 100-day plan for UTC discussion: No longer relevant</i> vi. <i>Ask SW or GO to present to Trustees on additional spending and potential Ofsted lines of enquiry to assess any knowledge gaps: Superseded by inspection taking place.</i> 	<p>MJ to present ToR to S&P</p>
<p>9. Committee updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Standards and Performance: <i>Minutes of the committee meeting held in January had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting. There were no updates.</i> ii. FHR and Estates: <i>Minutes of the committee meeting held in October had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting. There were no updates.</i> iii. Audit and Risk: <i>Minutes of the committee meeting held in April had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting. PW informed trustees that RB had resigned as A&R Chair. He had agreed to chair the last committee meeting of the current academic year where he would present his annual report.</i> <p>Trustees discussed extensively whether there was a need to appoint another independent chair for the A&R committee and agreed that best</p>	

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	<p>practice would be to recruit a new trustee with transferable audit & risk skills.</p> <p>JC agreed to approach the Trust's internal auditors as well as engaging with the usual organisations that support governance recruitment and would keep trustees informed of any developments.</p>	<p>JC/MJ to start trustee recruitment process</p>
<p>10. Finance update</p> <p>i. DRAFT Report - Budget setting process review</p> <p>ii. EMAT Academy Management Report-March 2020</p>	<p>i. DRAFT Report - Budget setting process review: <i>The report had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>JC gave some background regarding the inception of the report. After objections were raised by a former member of staff, it was agreed that an internal review of the budget setting process would be conducted and that this would take place outside of the normal internal audit regime. JC explained that the report had shown that not malpractice had taken place and that the auditors had not found any evidence to substantiate the initial reservations about the integrity of the process. However, the report had highlighted several areas for improvement which had been or were currently being addressed by the finance team, including more robust involvement with HTs throughout the process and a physical sign off.</p> <p>Trustees were satisfied that a thorough review had taken place and the suggested recommendations were being followed. It was agreed that the report would be distributed to HTs for information only and should be kept confidential to other members of staff.</p> <p>Trustees discussed extensively whether the former member of staff should be informed about the contents of the report. The board agreed for the Chair of the Board to draft a letter informing that the objections raised had been duly considered and due diligence had taken place. Trustees agreed to approve the final version after the draft had been distributed for comments.</p> <p><i>The DRAFT Report - Budget setting process review was formally received and unanimously approved by the Board.</i></p> <p>ii. EMAT Academy Management Report-March 2020: <i>The report had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>PW clarified that although the FHRE committee would look at this report in full at the next committee meeting, due to the COVID19 crises the TB should also see the report to better understand the current financial impact of the COVID19 crises on the Trust.</p> <p>PW proceed to present the highlights of the report. Some of the biggest expenses incurred during this period had been the purchase of IT equipment for disadvantaged students so they were able to access learning online (approx. £30,000) and extra catering costs to provide food hampers for disadvantages families (approx.. £3,000 p/w). These had been identified</p>	<p>MJ to distribute report to HTs</p> <p>KC to draft letter and distribute to trustees</p>

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	<p>as urgent priorities to deal with.</p> <p>PW informed trustees that there was an expectation to recover these costs (approx. £200,000) through the COVID19 'exceptional costs incurred' government recovery scheme and the finance department would be looking into this. Ultimately, if the Trust was not entitled to place a claim with government scheme this would have an impact in the budget and reduce the possibility to produce a financial surplus.</p> <p>KC, on behalf of the trustees thanked PW for the comprehensive report.</p>	<p>PW to present report to FHRE committee.</p>
<p>11. Forum reports:</p> <p>i. SEND</p> <p>ii. PP</p>	<p><i>Reports from both forums had been shared with Trustees with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <p>MK presented the highlights of the PP report to Trustees. KC thanked MK for the excellent PP report and invited questions and comments from Trustees.</p> <p>In response to a question regarding the Trust's current PP position, MK explained that the Trust was oscillating between Basic and Intermediate and the forum was currently looking at what could we done this year to achieve some of the points in the plan. The most important element would be producing a consistent report to help build a common agenda linked to the strategy.</p> <p>Trustees unanimously agreed to publish the PP report on the website.</p> <p><i>MK left the meeting at 11.45am.</i></p> <p>NP introduced herself and alongside LB presented the highlights of the SEN report to Trustees. NP and LB asked trustee to endorse the KPIs presented in the report which all HTs had agreed to be included in the MAT Improvement Plan.</p> <p>KC thanked NP and LB for a very comprehensive and valuable SEND report and invited questions and comments from Trustees.</p> <p>In response to a question about why the number of children with EHCPs in the Trust appeared lower when compared with national data NP explained that although national data included special schools EMAT was still lower than average. NP described that during initial conversations in schools, SENCOs had reported that NCC and MK were particularly challenging local authorities when dealing with EHCP applications. However, the overall number of EHCPs issued in Northamptonshire appeared in line with national average. Consequently, one action moving forward would be to carefully look at the applications that schools and parents were submitting in order to identify whether there was a need for more tailored support when completing the need assessments.</p>	<p>MJ to publish PP report on EMAT websites</p>

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	<p>From a HTs point of view LB added that schools, when applying for an EHCP didn't often have the engagement of the specialist services which would make the applications to be processed quickly and eventually granted. LB suggested as part of the ongoing strategy, to look at using part of the funding to ensure this sort of specialist provision existed in the MAT, as this might in turn release back some funding into the system.</p> <p>A trustee asked whether the MAT had enough resources to deliver this provision. LB explained that as LA services were diminishing, schools had to do more to identify children with potential needs. Therefore, as funds were being used more to identify than to provide provision, there was a piece of work to be developed as a MAT to identify how resources could be used in a more purposeful way and to help understand whether there was a need for extra funding to be allocated.</p> <p>In answer to a question about TAs CPD, NP explained that an integral part of the project would look at how effectively TAs were being deployed across the MAT to support SEND provision and what was the current and future CPD offer for this particular group. NP welcomed the suggestion from one of the trustees to work in a common TA development programme with Birmingham University. LB informed that the MAT had developed internal training packages for TAs and was looking to put forward a UON cohort.</p> <p>NP outlined the strategic priorities to Trustees and presented the agreed KPIs to be achieve by next year.</p> <p>Trustees unanimously agreed to endorse the KPIs suggested in the report and for the report to be published on the website.</p> <p>KC asked for the TB to be regularly updated on any progress and obstacles.</p> <p>On behalf of the other HTs LB praised the backing of the CEO and support from NP helping to deliver the SEND project.</p> <p><i>NP and LB left the meeting at 12.19pm</i></p>	<p>MJ to publish SEND report on EMAT websites</p>
<p>12. Policies ratification</p>	<p><i>All policies had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. COVID19 EMAT Safeguarding Policy Addendum ii. Employee Absence Policy iii. Pay Policy <p>All policies were formally received and ratified by the Board.</p> <p><i>Ayo Salam left the meeting at 12.26pm</i></p>	<p>MJ to upload policies to all EMAT websites.</p>

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13. Policy approval	<p>i. Relationships and Sex Education Policy 2020</p> <p>Trustees approved the RSE draft policy and agreed for consultation to start immediately. Trustees agreed to ratify the policy during the July meeting.</p>	JC/MJ to start RSE policy consultation
14. AOB	<p>ii. EMAT Admissions Policy September 2021-22</p> <p>EMAT Admissions Policy September 2021-22 had been updated with some statutory requirements stated by the NCC Admissions officer.</p> <p><i>The updated policy was formally received and ratified by the Board.</i></p> <p>iii. Staff COVID19 bonus</p> <p>JC proposed to look into the possibility to offer some remuneration to staff to cover the costs incurred while working at home. Trustees agreed for a proposal to be presented the FHRE committee for approval.</p>	<p>MJ to upload new version to all EMAT websites.</p> <p>JC to present Staff COVID19 bonus proposal to FHRE</p>
15. Dates of next meetings	<p>Dates of meetings to July 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 06/05/2020 at 14:00pm Standards & Performance 12/05/2020 at 9.30am FHR & Estates 07/07/2020 at 9.30am Audit & Risk 10/07/2020 at 9.30am FHR & Estates 13/07/2020 at 14:00pm Standards & Performance 17/07/2020 at 10.15am Trust Board 	Calendar appointments have been sent

Meeting closed at 12:41pm

Signed by Kevin Crompton, Chair of Trustees

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Date.....

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Action Log of the Trust Board meeting held on the 23rd April 2020. Meeting conducted virtually.

Item	Action	Owner
5.	Send COVID19 Staff Log template to MJ and JC	LJ
6.	Update PWS section in CEO report	JC
8.	Present new ToR to S&P, FHRE and AR committee	MJ
9.	Recruit new trustee with transferable audit and risk skills	JC/MJ/PW
10.	a) DRAFT Report - Budget setting process review to be distributed to HTs. b) Draft response and distribute to trustees for further comments c) Present EMAT Academy Management Report-March 2020 to FHRE committee	MJ KC PW
11.	a) Publish PP report on website b) Publish SEND report on website	MJ
12.	Upload policies on website: i. COVID19 EMAT Safeguarding Policy Addendum ii. Employee Absence Policy iii. Pay Policy	MJ
13.	Start consultation process for Relationship and Sex Education Policy 2020	JC/MJ/JA
14.	a) Upload new version of EMAT Admissions Policy 2021-22 to all websites b) Present Staff COVID19 bonus proposal to FHRE committee for approval	MJ JC
15	Prepare meeting dates for 2020/21	MJ