

CORE GROUP REVIEW AND PLANNING MEETING (remote)
Monday 29th June 2020 at 12 noon
Draft Minutes

Present:

Simon Ball	Head of School - DCE
Paul Blackburn	Chair - WDCE Governors
Andrew Bradley	Chair of Governors – St. Wilfrids
Bev Burrows	Headteacher– St. Elisabeths
Paul Good	Chair – Trust & DCE (MDBE)
Lee Jamieson	Chair - St. Elisabeth's Governors
Hannah Large	Head of School - WDCE
Helena Miller	Head of School – St. Wilfrids
Matt Whitehead	Executive Headteacher

In attendance

Kathy Crotty	Clerk
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1. Update on each school – *Re-admission progress and plans up to summer.*

SECE – Bev Burrows

There are six KW bubbles and up to 52 children, Friday is the busiest day. There is a teacher and TA in each bubble. There are two Yr6 bubbles and two Yr1 bubbles of three days with part time staff. There is a spare teacher and TA in case needed

SWCE – Helena Miller

There are four KW bubbles with over 50 children. There are three bubbles for Yr6, and two bubbles for Yr1. Reception has three bubbles; nursery has reopened and Yr5 are coming into school next Monday. The disadvantaged pupils tend to be the children not in school, BAME children are back in school.

DCE – Simon Ball

All eligible groups are in school and DCE has a high take up. Yr2 to Yr5 are in school by rotation as Yr6 children are using Parrs Wood school. There are 13 teaching bases, 11 on site and two off-site. KW groups are expanding, some parents were working from

home and now being called in. The school has Yr4 children this week, and only two children have not taken a place. There were 28 out of 30 Yr5 children in school last week. Children who have not returned are all BAME (8 children) and the staff are sensitive to this.

WDCE – Hannah Large

There are 13 bubbles open, and all have nearly 15 children. There are new bubbles open today for Yr3 & Yr4 so the school is full. The last week of school will open for Yr2. There are 161 children in school today.

HL is currently analysing who has not returned, there has been a 75% return for each year group. There are BAME families who have not returned. Disadvantaged families are more likely to not return.

MW was asked to contact the DfE to state they have to be more active about the groups not returning and MW agreed to contact the DfE relationship advisor. MW noted the Trust is close to capacity with all groups. The chair reported LAs are also not informed of details from the government announcements.

Reduction in social distancing to one-meter

The question was asked about the expected announcement about reducing to one-meter, is the Trust changing plans? This announcement is expected from July 4th 2020. DfE guidance to primary school is the two-meter rule is not applicable to the bubbles. The bubbles will be 30 or smaller in September 2020. St. Elisabeths have remained with a two-meter gap and the demand from parents from places has allowed for this.

SECE – Bev - Burrows

A reduction in distancing has been explored in SECE and a one-meter distance can fit 13 children in the school. There are five new children in school this week and more children might return. It was clarified the distancing rule relates to staff, the children do not socially distance, it is the adult who keeps the two-meter distance (or one-meter) and they can move into a different bubble if needed.

DCE – Simon Ball

The DCE newsletter has informed parents firmer details will be shared this week. The fact the school has been at capacity has not stopped parents asking for places. More parents are now being re-deployed and moving into KW positions. It is likely there is no provision for the summer holidays. The chair confirmed there is no guidance from the DfE so this might have to be the position. The government focus is on the September return.

The School of Sports club is unlikely to be operating. This will be confirmed to MW after the meeting.

WDCE – Hannah Large

The South Manchester Heads meeting reported schools only have to be open from 8.45 am to 3.15pm, the wrap around care is not a priority although this is important for parents. Choice Home Tutoring has contacted the Trust and they were informed the preferred option is to pay staff for additional catch-up sessions. This company has offered to provide tutoring over the summer holidays and this will be considered. The guidance currently precludes third party providers on the premises.

2. Premises and risk assessment issues

The government have announced £6 billion for school buildings. Essential works need to continue but any longer-term building improvements might be covered by this announcement.

SECE – Bev Burrows

The school needs repairs, Cowan and Co., building consultancy, has visited the school to assess internal work to remove a wall; the school has had some collapsed drains and has received a bill for £900. The school is investigating updating the emergency lighting. The school is waiting for a quote, it expects the costs to be between £8,000 to £10,000. There is a room that had damp patches that needs painting.

WDCE – Hannah Large

Air conditioning is being checked in relation to the Corona virus. There is a leaky roof even though this is a new building.

3. Current Staffing issues relating to school and staff welfare and staffing plans for September - Confidential

This is reported in the Part 2 Confidential minutes

4. Vulnerable children and safeguarding - updates

Hannah Large reported from the South Manchester Heads meeting which reported on online safety. There needs to be a reminder to children and parents about talking to strangers via the internet as this has been relaxed during lockdown.

Action: MW to add digital safety to the Trust newsletter

5. Initial Proposals for September 2020 - *including discussion of the extension of Friday pm closure for PPA and cleaning*

Gavin Williamson announced today there will be 'class bubbles' (of 30?) from September 2020 details will be forthcoming. SWCE Governors at the LGB last week raised the issue of moving staff between bubbles. The Friday afternoon closure for PPA and deep cleaning is being continued at SWCE. MW reported class bubbles of 30 present some challenges; staggered times, zoning of the playground and the Friday afternoon PPA would continue to be required. PPA is often covered by the same people across classes and would increase to potential of cross contamination. The systems and procedures currently in place would need to continue as these are effective.

EYFS needs phasing for new children, stay and play with parents will not be possible in the bubbles. The "new normal" for new starters need to be introduced. Children will have to be supported in different ways.

Three schools in the Trust employ their own Kids Club staff, it might be feasible to zone the Kids Club to facilitate distancing and offer a service from September, but further consideration of this is required.

There are still staff who are clinically vulnerable and a group of 30 is a risk. It was noted many of these issues are a national problem.

SWCE – Helena Miller

Managing lunchtimes when it is wet is an issue at SWCE as there is not enough LOs to cover with the new arrangements. Lunchtimes could be reduced and learning time increased. The LSAs are also an issue for some bubbles. Shorter lunchtimes do not help when there is staggering and the school may need extended hours for lunchtime staff.

DCE – Simon Ball

DCE can accommodate the after school offering but not on a Friday afternoon when cleaning is needed. Classes which have over 30 children are a problem when bubbles are restricted at 30.

Latest discussions from national government suggested schools could arrange two children to a desk facing the front as this reduces transmission so there may be guidance about the arrangements of desks.

There are 11 bases at DCE and each bubble has its own LO, everyone has the same lunchtime, half the school play then eat and the other half eat then play. From September, the 11 bases become eight bases. Wet play is working well at DCE. The lunchtime has not been staggered. The children eat quicker with the current arrangements. If the school day is lengthened the PPA needs to be 10% of time and this will actually reduce. The bubble has to be a stepping stone as this cannot continue indefinitely.

WDCE – Hannah Large

HL shared a concern about lunches in the bubbles. There might not be capacity to make 420 packed lunches at WDCE and the hall can be used for dining as long as they are cleaned between each setting. Children might be asked to bring their own packed lunch. The preference is for a hot lunch as for some children this is essential. The expectation is the current hygiene regime continues for a long time. There needs to be consultation with the outside providers.

Proposal to close the schools on Friday afternoon

This is on the Trustees agenda at the 30th June 2020 meeting.

This group agreed to maintain a Friday afternoon closure for the first half term of the new academic year.

There are expectations of a spikes later in the year. This decision will be reviewed and adapted in the light of further guidance. The question was asked if there a directive from the Government about hours of learning, and it was felt the concerns at the moment are about safety rather than hours of learning. There are specified hours of learning but this might not be mandatory as school is currently not mandatory.

If parents ask about the teaching time on Fridays it was suggested Heads explain this is a safety risk reduction issue following government guidance. The length of the school day is less of an issue. Parents expectations need to be managed. Reducing lunchtimes might raise issues about the children's mental health. Losing hours on a Friday afternoon is preferable to having to close down bubbles if staff are shared across the bubbles.

Issues to be resolved include PPA time being only on a Friday, part-time members of staff do not work Fridays.

Swimming afternoons are not expecting to recommence.

INSET Days

WDCE requested to change the INSET dates, and to move the planned November date to Wednesday 2nd September. There is a planned INSET on the first day back, Tuesdays 1st September and this means the children will return on Thursday 3rd September 2020. The first days INSET training cannot be changed as there is an outsider provider delivering this. This will be raised with Trustees for a decision.

The **SWCE** LGB have discussed INSET days and took account that attendance will be affected by such a short week. St. Wilfrids are using Tuesday 1st September for risk assessment training. The Trust view is “there will be a period of time for training” before the start of term.

Staff Questionnaire

The staff questionnaire about staff welfare was issued to Heads today. It was agreed to change Q2 & Q4 to just refer to the school as Q5 is focused on the Trust. Most questions are similar to previous years to enable trend data and this is now over four years. Where possible room for comments to explain answers will be included. It was agreed to administer electronic questionnaire. The system to be used enables an email so you can see who has responded. (Microsoft outlook is the platform used).

Draft letter to parents

A letter has been drafted for each school to personalise which informs parents the school is now at capacity and to inform about the school holidays where there is no provision for KW/V children. The letter also includes the proposals for September 2020.

It was agreed to defer the letter to parents for one week given the expectation of new government guidance and to see if there is greater clarity about summer provision. The letter to parents will explain schooling is compulsory from September 2020.

6. Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was led by Andrew Bradley. He noted there were so many decisions to be made with so little information and wanted the Heads to have some quality rest over the summer period. The meeting was informed today is the feast day of St. Peter & St. Paul.

Formal thanks were given to all school leaders for the outstanding job they are doing and the Trust is very grateful.

Meeting ended 13:40