

**St James and Emmanuel MAT  
Core Group Remote meeting  
Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 2pm  
Minutes**

**Present**

Simon Ball  
Paul Blackburn  
Andrew Bradley  
Bev Burrows  
Paul Good  
Lee Jamieson  
Hannah Large  
Helena Miller  
Matt Whitehead

Head of School – DCE  
Chair - WDCE Governors  
Chair of Governors – St. Wilfrids  
Headteacher– St. Elisabeths  
Chair – Trust & DCE (MDBE)  
Chair - St. Elisabeth's Governors  
Head of School - WDCE  
Head of School – St. Wilfrids  
Executive Headteacher

**In attendance**

Kathy Crotty Clerk

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Paul Good explained the purpose of the reconvening of the core group, to offer advice and support to school leaders and enable them to make decisions with the confidence there is support from the Trust. Formal thanks were given to all in attendance for agreeing to meet at short notice.

**2. Executive Headteacher Update**

- The schools have previously contacted parents identifying key workers and vulnerable children. DfE information arrived at 11pm last night changing the guidance, stating that now a place may be offered if one of the parents is key worker (previously it had to be both) and this may increase the numbers of children wanting a place in school. Teachers are now being asked to undertake two roles: remote learning and classroom learning. The view of the Trust is there needs to be low numbers of children in the school buildings due to safety concerns. Heads were asked to identify a safe number of children for their space and the new data on key workers now needs to be identified. Remote learning planning has occurred and schools are ready for this. This week numbers of children in school are low but if places are offered where there is only one key worker parent this will increase.
- Three schools are open today for key workers. SECE are still on holiday and BB noted there were about 50 children of key workers and vulnerable children which would be about 4/5 a class if all classes are open.

### WDCE

- HL reported WDCE is capping at 15 children per year group and is implementing a different system to that in the last lockdown. The emphasis now is on home learning and this will be mirrored by the TA in the classroom with vulnerable children and key worker children. (KW/V) The TA will facilitate the learning and teacher provides the remote learning. The other teacher in the year group will deliver remote learning from home that week. The staff will then be reversed from being at home to in school. This method means every week staff are teaching their own class. Live lessons will be provided by the teacher for their own class. Alternate weeks the teacher will provide remote learning and children in school. This school has identified vulnerable children (families are identified) and this includes more children than the government definition.
- 50% of cleaning staff are currently not in school and this is affecting children being able to be in school as the required cleaning regime cannot be undertaken until supply staff have been secured.

### **Q: What is the is a maximum allowed in a class?**

SECE could only have eight children in safely in the school due to the size of the classrooms. The last guidance was issued on the 30<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and this has now been removed. WDCE intends to have no more than 15 in a room but has the space.

- Staggered starts will not be needed, school is from 8:15 am to 3:10pm. The lunchtime can now be shortened and there are hot lunches.

### DCE

DCE is a one form entry so will be emphasising online learning which will be available from tomorrow. Google Meet and face to face teaching will be used at the start of the day to engage children. The intention is to move to one live lesson each day. Feedback from the children, who were working from home for the whole period, during the last lockdown was a sense of being forgotten so this will be addressed by this approach. The online learning will be the priority and the TAs will provide the in-school learning. The expectation is for 50 children and the school is only admitting double key workers. Individual cases are being considered as the school has many parents who are NHS staff. Previous online learning started at 8.30am and this worked well. There is instant feedback from the teacher with online learning.

### SWCE

- Some children have been dropped off at school today. SWCE is a 1.5 entry, there will be a teacher and one TA in the class providing online learning using Goggle Classroom for Yrs1 – Yrs6. There are 84 children in the school, no class will be more than 15. The highest number so far is nine children. All classes are open.
- There will be a staff briefing at 4pm today and a live registration will occur mornings and afternoons. The staggered starts will remain as parents are familiar with this. All key workers are being asked for evidence of their role.

### SECE

- There are six TAs who do not want to come into school and this time there will be no rota and TAs will be expected to be in school all week. Tables will be separated so each room will hold eight children.

### 3. Key workers – Matt Whitehead

- The issue is how to define and determine key workers and a protocol was shared before the meeting to help heads identify eligibility. Ranking might be needed as places may be limited. The formal curriculum is not abandoned as it was in March 2019 and staff are expected to follow the national curriculum. There is currently no guidance on the safe numbers of children in the school building, this will need to be identified on a school by school individual basis, based on class sizes, ventilation and staffing.

**Heads confirmed they were satisfied with the overall strategy of prioritising home learning.**

- Andrew Bradley felt the school needs to be cautious about who to admit and to ensure the lowest number of children in school given the new strain of the virus is more contagious. BB confirmed TAs will be offered visors but there will be some resistance to working in the school building. There is a pregnant teacher and this is a consideration even though the guidance does suggest this is not an issue. HM informed the meeting the definition of critical workers has changed and some parents have changed jobs so the schools may have to update their records since the last lockdown.
- LJ raised the issue of communication to parents and noted this is key and parents need to know remote learning is the priority. SECE has work to do as not all families have devices. BB was concerned as there are too many children not doing the work set to be completed at home, and Seesaw is not able to be accessed by all families.
- It was discussed that parents need to understand the limit on the numbers in school is for health and safety reasons. The remote provision is good quality and this should allay parental concerns. There was agreement the message needs to be clear with parents.
- DCE is only offering places where there are two key workers (or single parent key worker) this week and this capacity will be reviewed. There will be a tiering system to allocate places. This will be different in the different schools as there is different capacity and different spaces in each building. At SWCE parents have been informed eligibility for a place is not the same as being granted a place.

### 4. Questions and Answers from Heads

**Q: Are nurseries expected to be open to all children?**

EYFS is expected to be open but this depends on safety concerns in schools. EYFS providers are allowed to be opened and this is assumed to be the private, voluntary and independent sector (PVI). EYFS in school sits within the school strategy which will mean places are allocated to key worker's children or vulnerable children.

**Q: Are key worker children being given full time places in the nursery?**

It was confirmed the key worker children at DCE; SECE; and SWCE are given a full-time place at no cost.

**Q: Are all staff coming into school even if they are vulnerable staff?**

In WDCE the cleaning staff are not in school and supply staff are needed. Pregnant staff will be advised to work from home as the effect of the virus is unknown. Heads were cautious about bringing vulnerable staff into school even though the guidance implies they should be.

**Q: How is PPA (planning, preparation and assessment) being covered? In bubbles this could be managed.**

In DCE there is no PPA time currently due to staff not working on site. There is no capacity to provide this. Previously the school closed Friday afternoons. MW reported the Government guidelines are for schools to provide a minimum of three hours of lessons online. This gives staff PPA time to be taken at a time that suits them.

**Q: Can TAs argue PPA cover is not in their contract?**

The TAs are not covering full classes, they are delivering teacher directed learning to those children in the school building. The remote learning is not a full day giving time for PPA. In SECE the SENDCO can cover PPA. Trade Union advice is TAs can cover as long as they are not planning and preparing, and the teacher is doing this.

- SB reported teachers are available (on duty) from 8:30 to 3:30 and are expected to be assessing when not delivering. They may also be interacting with children. They still need to plan for the next day so this is a long day for staff teaching from home.
- School leaders were asked to monitor staff closely regarding workloads and health issues arising from online learning. In SWCE staff are choosing to work in the school rather than at home to give some clear division between home and work and the school can accommodate this. DCE does not have the space to do this. It was agreed staff need a cut off point for emails and MW suggested it would be sensible for teachers to have a defined structure of their day including break times. Staff need to be encouraged to move away from the screen when possible.
- MW has seen evidence of excellent communication with parents and suggested heads copy each other into their communication to share information.
- Heads were informed Joe Wickes is resuming PE this Monday.

**Q: BB asked if the first day back this Thursday could be a day to prepare the staff?**

MW suggested switching an INSET day as preparation and planning for the new system is crucial. This might affect attendance on Friday. BB will inform parents asap that remote learning starts next Monday. The planned SECE LGB will be deferred until the new risk assessments are completed.

**Q: HL asked if there a problem with the order for the school laptops?**

Primary schools are unlikely to receive their allocation as secondary schools will be the priority. There is an issue of supply and demand of electronic devices.

**Q: Heads asked about FSM (free school meals) vouchers?**

There has been no information on the government plans, this is expected by the end of this week. WDCE offered the families packed lunches which would have to be collected from school as Manchester Fayre are still working. Totally Locally will provide a packed lunch.

**5. Date of next meeting**

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 9.30am.

*The meeting ended at 15:10*