



Swift Academies

Success will inspire future triumphs

Extraordinary
Board of Directors' Meeting
5:30pm, Thursday 4 March 2021

a virtual meeting, held via Microsoft Teams

Present

- **Directors**

Derek Bell (Chair), Keith Bernstone, Stuart Hargrove, Julie Cornelius, Sam Hirst, Michael Garmston, Geoff Liddle, Dean Judson (Chief Executive Officer)

- **also**

John Armitage (Head Teacher, The Rydal Academy),
Nichola Peaker (Head of School, Hurworth School),
Nick Lindsay (Head of School, Longfield Academy),
Glen Hart (Chief Finance Officer, Swift Academies)
Sarah Jones (Trust Business Manager, Swift Academies)
Stuart Rawle (Assistant Head Teacher, Longfield Academy)
Beth Wright (Swift Academies)
Tracey Curtis (Governance Partner, Avec Partnership)

Item:

Description of discussion:

action by:

1

Welcome, introductions and confirmation quorum present

A quorum was confirmed to be present. Three Directors were required in order that decisions could be taken during this meeting of the Board of Directors of Swift Academies. Eight (8) Directors were present.

The Chief Executive Officer highlighted housekeeping arrangements to ensure the smooth flow of the meeting, including ensuring microphones remained on mute when not speaking, the use of the chat facility to ask questions and the raising of a hand to gain attention.

Swift Academies

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Company Registration Number 07533271

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- 2 Apologies for absence and their acceptance**
Apologies for absence had been received from Tim Fisher.
- Directors RESOLVED that the apologies for absence received from Tim Fisher were accepted.
- 3 Notification of items of urgent other business**
- items that the Board of Directors of Swift Academies regard are of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the end of the agenda
- No items of urgent other business were notified for consideration at the end of the agenda.
- 4 Declaration of personal and pecuniary interests**
- a) complete the Register of Interest
Directors and those present were reminded that they should complete the register of interest to declare any relevant business or pecuniary interest and close family relationship between Members, Directors or Governors and/or Members, Directors or Governors and employees. A register should be completed annually and updated during each academic year where circumstances change.
- It was confirmed that all Members, Directors and Governors had completed the Register of Interest for the current academic year.
- b) to declare any personal or pecuniary interests in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting
Directors and those present were reminded that they should declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting. No declarations of interest were made.
- c) Code of Conduct
Directors were reminded that the Board of Directors of Swift Academies had approved a Code of Conduct for Directors. The Code of Conduct had been signed by all Directors.
- 5 Arrangements and approval of Risk Assessments and associated documentation for the 'wider opening' of schools on Monday 8 March 2021**
The Chief Executive Officer thanked Directors for attending this additional meeting of the Board of Directors of Swift Academies.
- Directors were advised that the meeting had been called to approve the respective school's Risk Assessments in preparation for the wider opening of Trust schools on Monday 8 March 2021.
- It was reported that during the current period of national lockdown that had commenced on the 4th January 2021, the Trust Logistics Group had been reconvened with representation being provided by each school of staff with specific responsibility in the relevant areas. The group had

communicated with each other throughout the week and then feedback on shared documents, respective issues, communication to stakeholders etc. at weekly meetings. The Logistics Group had worked collaboratively to produce Risk Assessments for each school.

The Chief Executive Officer hoped that this was the last re-opening of schools following the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Directors were informed that the approach for The Rydal Academy to reopen, was slightly different to what was required in the secondary schools within the Trust; the main difference being the introduction of lateral flow testing of pupils being introduced in the secondary sector.

The Trust Business Manager had worked with schools across the Trust to develop Risk Assessments for each school with support from Trust staff and the schools External Health & Safety Representative.

Nick Lindsay reported that he had participated earlier in the day in a Department for Education webinar and had been able to confirm that all issues identified during the webinar had been raised and addressed by the Trust.

- **Rydal Academy**

The Head Teacher (The Rydal Academy) discussed with Directors the content of the circulated Risk Assessment for the school in preparation for the wider reopening of The Rydal Academy on Monday 8 March 2021. The Risk Assessment had been shared with Directors via e-mail on Friday 26 February 2021 and again on Wednesday 3 March 2021.

Directors were reminded that The Rydal Academy would work in a bubble format, which meant for pupils at the school, that they would remain in their normal classes. The only exception to this was in respect of pupils in Reception and Year 1 who would mix on a daily basis in phonics groups. Children accessing Breakfast Club and Youth Club would mix with other pupils in their respective cohort, but not beyond this. Two cohorts would access the dining hall at any one time but would be socially distanced.

Directors were advised that home testing had been offered to all staff and would become available to staff families and families of the pupils at The Rydal Academy. Information had been shared with parents and staff. It was understood that the national vaccination programme was also affording families some reassurance as well as the measures in place at The Rydal Academy.

The Head Teacher reported that the extra-curricular programme would not be operational for the foreseeable future. The two school buses used to transport to school each day would not be operational. This approach to the extra-curricular programme and use of the school of buses reduced the contact between pupils.

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The Head Teacher confirmed that the full curriculum would be operated from Monday 8 March 2021, other than music which could not permit singing and playing of instruments and in PE around contact sports.

The Chief Executive Officer thanked the Head Teacher and staff at The Rydal Academy for their hard work to identify the arrangements in respect of the re-opening of the school.

- **Longfield Academy**

Stuart Rawle (Assistant Head Teacher, Longfield Academy) provided context in respect of the secondary setting and how the secondary schools in the Trust had been working during the national lockdown introduced in January 2021. When the announcement was made that schools would re-open fully on Monday 8 March 2021, it was also announced that lateral flow testing was part of that plan, with three tests required.

Lateral flow testing plans had been put in place to allow pupils to be tested twice before being permitted to join their respective bubbles and key worker bubble. In total, 60-70 key worker pupils were being tested at Longfield Academy, each week. Staff testing took place twice weekly (Monday and Thursday morning) with approximately 25-35 staff being tested. This arrangement provided staff with insight into lateral flow testing with smaller groups, prior to extending the testing to all pupils and to increase the capacity and train individuals to support the lateral flow testing arrangements.

It was reported that there were a number of NHS track and trace units that staff and volunteers had to complete to allow them to administer lateral flow tests.

It was reported that all key worker pupils (67) at Longfield Academy would be tested on Friday 5 March 2021 through two testing bays and would be completed by lunchtime. The integrity of their bubble would therefore be retained. From Monday 8 March 2021 all key worker pupils would be in live lessons with their respective teachers and therefore able to follow their timetable.

For the pupils returning to Longfield Academy on Monday 8 March 2021, a system of appointments had been put in place, with Year 11 students arriving at five minute intervals on the first day. Testing capacity at this time would be increased to four testing bays and see 48 tests completed each hour. Students would be retained until test results had been received, following which they would be released into their normal timetabled lessons with respective teachers. It was anticipated that by close of play on Monday 8 March 2021, all Year 11 pupils would be in lessons and have taken a lateral flow test. A similar pattern would be operated over the course of the week, with year groups being admitted back into Longfield Academy on a day by day basis.

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It was reported that 74% of the school roll had given their consent to the lateral flow testing: this translated to approximately 115-130 students per year group. All students who had consented would have received three lateral flow test by Monday 22 March 2021. Pupils would then be expected to naturally transition to home testing kits.

During this week staff had transitioned to home testing kits, with 86 kits circulated to staff. This arrangement has also increased the capacity in school to focus on pupil testing.

A number of letters had been shared with parents and carers in respect of the lateral flow testing and arrangements identified in school to facilitate testing. Volunteers have been arranged to assist with the testing from DBC as well as Central staff and supply staff.

Directors were informed that the Risk Assessment contained a further requirement to the lateral flow testing for the re-opening of Longfield Academy: face masks were recommended to be worn by pupils in all classrooms and communal areas.

The Assistant Head Teacher reported that bubbles would be operated at both Longfield Academy and Hurworth School: this was a measure that would identify any close contacts should a positive case be reported and mitigating where possible any cross year group bubbles.

- **Hurworth School**

The Head of School provided Directors with information in respect of Hurworth School. It was reported that mass testing had commenced at the school with key worker pupils being tested for the second time on Friday 5 March 2021. Year groups had returned to school to commence lateral flow testing as soon as possible.

All students at Hurworth School will have received three lateral flow tests by Wednesday 17 March 2021.

The Head of School extended her thanks to the catering staff at Hurworth School who had been operating the testing centre and reported to be doing an amazing job. Volunteers had also been arranged to assist with the testing from DBC as well as Central Team staff.

67 members of staff had been tested regularly during the partial closure of the school: staff had now transitioned to home testing.

It was reported that the Risk Assessment for Hurworth School mirrored that of Longfield Academy, and included the recommendation that pupils wear a face mask in all classrooms and communal areas.

70% consent had been received for pupils of Hurworth School. It was reported that nationally consent was currently 50%. Longfield Academy

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and Hurworth School were commended for their efforts and the number of consents received to date.

Directors congratulated staff on the phenomenal amount of work, effort and preparations involved in preparing the Risk Assessments for re-opening. Directors sought clarification whether any staff or pupils would not be returning to school because they had been identified as clinically vulnerable. Responses were provided as follows:

The Rydal Academy: no pupils, one member of staff and one pregnant member of staff

Longfield Academy: no pupils, one member of staff

Hurworth School: three pupils, no staff

Directors queried across the Trust communication with Trade Union Representatives, the Chief Executive Officer commented that feedback had been received, however this challenge had been supportive and helpful. The general consensus was that staff were supportive of the schools re-opening and looking forward to pupils fully returning.

The Head Teacher (The Rydal Academy) confirmed that all staff had been in school since the start of the national lockdown in January 2021. Staff were reported to be re-assured by arrangements in place.

The Head Teacher (The Rydal Academy) commented that the Gypsy and Traveller communities' pupil's attendance in September was mixed, however the feeling amongst the community is that they are looking forward to schools reopening again

The Head of School (Longfield Academy) reported that there had been a mutual understanding of staff in what was trying to be achieved at Longfield Academy to support the return of pupils to school. Trade Union representatives had been helpful and had been fully engaged in dialogue with the Senior Leadership Team.

The Head of School (Hurworth School) echoed the comments made already that staff were looking forward to pupils' return to school.

The Chief Executive Officer complimented staff on the phenomenal amount of time and effort they have spent in producing the comprehensive Risk Assessments.

Directors RESOLVED that the content of Risk Assessments in respect of the re-opening of schools across Swift Academies were noted and approved and adopted with immediate effect.

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Any urgent other business raised under item 3

No items of urgent other business had been notified.

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Approval of documents for inspection

Directors RESOLVED that the agenda, approved minutes and supporting documents be made available for public inspection with the exception of information concerning identifiable pupils and/or teachers.

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Time and date of future meetings (all from 2pm)

- Friday 26 March 2021
- Friday 9 July 2021

These minutes were approved by the Board of Directors of Swift Academies as follows:

May 6, 2021 (date)

signature (chair): *Derek Bell*
Derek Bell (May 6, 2021 12:45 GMT+1)

approved

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Swift Academies Board of Directors' Minutes 4 March 2021

Final Audit Report

2021-05-06

Created:	2021-05-05
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