

**The Heath Family (NW) Multi Academy Trust**  
**PART I - Minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on**  
**Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 8.00 am**

**\*\*\* This meeting was held remotely using Microsoft Teams \*\*\***

<u>Present:</u> Helen Stevenson (Chair), Karl Smith, Christopher Davis, Tony Gundersen, Janine Inglis, Mark Stanton, Annette Williams, David Donnelly, Sharon Black, Craig Parkinson, Judith McConville		<u>Apologies:</u> Edward Vitalis, Morag Davies, Alison Duckworth, Kate Whittlesey Non attenders: None			
		Clerk: Trish Roberts			
Items	Discussion	Action	Who	When	Notes
<b>1. Welcome, introductions &amp; apologies</b>	Ms Stevenson welcomed everyone to the meeting.  Apologies were accepted from Ms K Whittlesey, Mr E Vitalis, Ms M Davies and Ms A Duckworth.				
<b>2. Declaration of Business and Pecuniary Interests</b>	Two Trustees advised changes in relation to their declared interests (see Ms Stevenson's and Mr Stanton's records listed below);  Helen Stevenson – Partner/Sole Proprietor of Satis Education, Director of Optimum Education Resourcing Ltd, Contract with another Trust in the area (Frank Field Education Trust), Related to a Local Governor at one of THF schools (Sister), Chair of Governors at Carmel College.  Karl Smith – Vice Principal at Carmel College  Christopher Davis – Headteacher at Moorside High School (part of Consilium Academies MAT).  Tony Gundersen – Director of TG Business Services Ltd, Governor at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School  Mark Stanton – Trustee at Pestalozzi International Foundation, Sole Trader of SSE Potential, Associate Coach at New Level Results, Delivery Partner for Rising Vibe Ltd, Delivery Partner for Mightify  Annette Williams – CEO at Weaver Trust, Governor at Pattishall CoFE Primary School	Register of Business Interests to be updated, and published on Trust website	TGM/COO	ASAP	

<p><b>3. To receive/ ratify PART I and PART II Minutes from THF Board meeting held on 27.05.21</b></p>	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of PART I and PART II minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on 27.05.21. There were no amendments to be made and therefore the minutes were accepted as a true record and ratified.</p> <p><b>RESOLVE: That PART I and PART II minutes of the MAT Board meeting held on 27.05.21 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</b></p>	<p>Chair of the Board to sign agreed MAT Board Minutes from 27.05.21</p>	<p>HS</p>	<p>ASAP</p>	
<p><b>4. To review Matters Arising not included on the Agenda (to include Action Tracker)</b></p>	<p><b>Matters Arising from Minutes of 27.05.21</b></p> <p>Ms Stevenson noted that she had found the SEND presentation received at E&amp;S on 06.07.21 very helpful.</p> <p><b>Trustees also received an electronic copy of THF Action Log dated 08.07.21 prior to the meeting.</b></p> <p>Mr Donnelly assured Trustees that all outstanding actions are on track.</p>				
<p><b>5. Chair's Action Report (to receive)</b></p>	<p>Trustees received an electronic copy of the Chair's Action &amp; Governor Membership Update 08.07.21 report prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly advised that since the report was produced, a further resignation had been received from a Trust Appointed governor; this now brought LGB membership at that HPS down to 4 governors. Mr Donnelly also spoke about his observations in relation to the HPS LGB meeting (06.07.21) he had attended; noting that there was a real need to look at strengthening the committee.</p> <p>Discussion followed with regards nomination/elections processes currently taking place. It was noted that a staff election is currently in process, and that the parent governor election would take place early in September; the reason for this delay was so that new intake parents have an opportunity to participate.</p> <p>Discussion followed regarding how the Board could provide support, and it was agreed that it would be beneficial if a Trustee could join the LGB albeit as an interim measure, ie until such time the vacancies are filled and governance at the school strengthened. Volunteers were requested and Ms Williams kindly agreed to take on the role.</p>				

	<p>Mr Smith also agreed to advertise the Trust Appointed Governor vacancies through his links with Carmel College.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly thanked Trustees for their support.</p>				
<p><b>6. Coronavirus Update</b></p>	<p>Mr Donnelly provided an update to Trustees.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly explained that a lot of pupils are currently out of school, due to bubbles isolating due to one of their number testing positive; case numbers are reported via the weekly updates that are circulated to Trustees. Mr Donnelly then went on to provide details re current data; there are 15-16 cases across all schools, with DPS having their first ever case. Contact tracing continues to work and contacts are particularly high this week at THS/TPS. Mr Donnelly also provided information in relation to the level of cases that trigger a bubble closure (5+ cases in a year group in a rolling 14-day period), how this had led to the closure of Years 7 and 8 bubbles at TPS and the number of cases in Year 10 at THS was being closely monitored. Mr Donnelly went on to advise that there are significant numbers within our secondary schools (around about 600 children) isolating across the 3 schools. Mr Donnelly spoke about his concerns regarding how effective self-isolation is; noting that letters to parents are worded strongly; but still children are being allowed to go out and meet friends, and as such there is a knock-on effect, as those children are then having to isolate. Mr Donnelly noted that the Trust/schools cannot ensure isolation is taking place outside of the school environment.</p> <p>Trustees agreed that the Trust/schools cannot be held responsible for the non-compliance of Covid-isolation once children are sent home; and that the responsibility that rests with the Trust/schools is in relation to what we are doing to stop the spread of Covid within the school sites, noting that the only thing Exec Leaders/Staff can do is to implement Covid restrictions as much as possible. Mr Donnelly also advised that a recent review carried out by the LA provided evidence that there had been no major spread within the school environments, in fact the review showed that in the main cases were clearly linked to community spread.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly explained that should restrictions be relaxed by the Government on 19<sup>th</sup> July; there is no intention to change provisions within Trust schools before we break up for summer.</p>				

Discussion followed regarding return to school in September; and Mr Donnelly provided assurance that all schools are aware of requirements for September, risk assessments will be updated according, and policies and procedures will be in place in readiness for September reopening. Mr Donnelly advised that the Trust has always followed guidance to the letter, but as restrictions are lifted, there is concern regarding how Test & Trace will work, ie although schools are best placed to know who their children have been in contact with/close to, they are not going to be asked for this information; once restrictions are lifted Test & Trace will revert back to contacting the person testing positive to find out who they have been in contact with.

**Q: In relation to the children who have tested positive, how are they?**

**A: There have been no hospitalisations; although it has been noticed that over the past half term, symptoms are strengthening. In Jan-Mar 21 on the whole children were asymptomatic, however over recent months, the level of illness children are experiencing has upgraded from feeling 'a bit under the weather' to feeling 'grotty' for 2-3 days. It has also been noted, that Staff are experiencing strong hayfever-like symptoms in some positive Covid cases. Mr Donnelly noted that we are fortunate in that vaccinations are having an impact; and that this will be the next stage in terms of analysis.**

Mr Donnelly then spoke about Long-Covid and explained that he needed to ask Trustees for guidance in relation to how to deal with the absence linked to it. Mr Donnelly provided figures on how many staff across the Trust have been diagnosed with Long-Covid, and their return to work. It was noted that some individuals had been absent for a significant period of time; and also at this stage, we have staff who are testing positive, ie have begun a 10-day period of isolation but are yet to come back.

Mr Gundersen suggested that Covid-related absence should be treated like any illness-related absence, ie commission services of Occupational Health as and when appropriate. Mr Gundersen also suggested that Covid-related absence should not require a separate policy/procedure.

Mr Donnelly advised that Professional Associations and the media are stating that Covid-related absence should not be treated under the same policy/procedure as other absences; and have suggested that it should not apply for anyone suffering from Long-

	<p>Covid – and therefore this was the reason why he was seeking direction/view of the Trust Board.</p> <p>Mr Davis confirmed his school had continued with school policy/procedures that are in place in such circumstances. Following further discussion, Trustees agreed that policy/procedure should be applied as per the Trust’s policies; but that legal advice should be sought to ensure the Trust remains compliant/ in line with requirements.</p> <p>Mr Smith also gave thanks to Mr Parkinson for the report/due diligence updates that Trustees have been receiving throughout the pandemic, noting that they have provided a good temperature check for Trustees.</p> <p>There being no further questions/debate, Trustees thanked Mr Donnelly for the update.</p>				
<p><b>7. CEO Report</b></p>	<p>Trustees received electronic copies of the CEO report (dated July 2021) prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly reported:</p> <p><b>Ofsted</b> – Mr Donnelly spoke about TPS’ inspection that was deferred this term due to high levels of staff/student absence. Mr Donnelly advised that that this was not an isolated issue, noting that during the Summer term Ofsted have been arranging inspections at schools that are in category, but due to similar issues that have been experienced at TPS, a lot of schools have had to make representations, and in the main Ofsted have been largely accepting of these requests. Mr Donnelly also noted that if Ofsted had significant concerns about a school they would not agree to defer an inspection. Mr Donnelly also advised that as of September, inspections will return to normal.</p> <p><b>Q: In relation to Ofsted activity, which of our schools are likely to inspected first?</b>  <b>A: Secondary – it is certain that TPS and LHS will be inspected. Primary – BWP are overdue, HPS are back within the inspection window, DPS have not been inspected for a long time and therefore inspection could be imminent. Mr Donnelly noted that it is possible that all of our schools could be inspected within the next 12 months.</b></p> <p>Mrs Roberts also drew Trustees attention to an Ofsted Inspection Update event facilitated by Eileen Mulgrew, Senior HMI, that Edsential are advertising; following discussion it was agreed that in order to widen the opportunity for all Trustees/</p>	<p>Contact to be made with Eileen Mulgrew (Ofsted Senior HMI) to ascertain whether an Ofsted Update session can be arranged in Autumn Term 2021 for Trustees/Governors/ Exec Leaders</p>	<p>TGM</p>	<p>ASAP</p>	

	<p>Governors/Senior Leaders to attend, contact should be made with Ms Mulgrew to ascertain whether a similar event could be facilitated for The Heath Family. Mrs Roberts will take this forwards.</p> <p>General discussion also followed regarding training opportunities for Trustees; Ms Stevenson confirmed that Trustees are welcome to access training as and when opportunities arise, and Mr Donnelly confirmed that costs/expenses linked to training will be met by the Trust. With this in mind, Trustees were also advised that bookings/admin linked to Trustee training would be carried out centrally, and as such details should be sent to/contact should be made with Mrs Roberts (TGM) as soon as the Trustee has identified training they would like to undertake/be considered for.</p> <p><b>HR</b> – Mr Donnelly explained that the live HR processes have been resolved through Trust procedures, and as such the RAG-rating has been moved back to Green.</p> <p><b>Exclusions</b> – Mr Donnelly advised that behaviour levels have been and continue to be of concern; this is common across all schools, as children continue to struggle with returning to school routines.</p> <p><b>Q: What are Principals planning to do with regards behaviour issues when schools reopen in September?</b>  <b>A: The key issues re behaviour are around getting children back into school routines; even schools who do not normally experience behaviour issues are now reporting issues at their schools, ie DPS have had their first fixed-term exclusion for years. It also needs to be noted that poor behaviour is not a consistent problem at our schools; the occurrences are low-level which lead on to exclusion. Some of our children are really struggling with the return to normal school routines. Mr Donnelly also advised that he will be looking to put a Trust application together for the DfE’s Behaviour Programme.</b></p>				
<p><b>8. Trust Strategy</b></p>	<p>Mr Donnelly spoke about the current Trust Strategy document and its review processes, noting that the Trust is coming to the end of its 3-year strategy and as such the purpose of this item was to explore how Trustees want to be involved in the review process.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed that Mr Donnelly will work on the document over the Summer in order to update the operational plan so that it can be rolled out to schools for September; the document will also be circulated to Trustees, and the strategic plan will be presented to MAT Board at their September meeting. Decisions re</p>	<p>Updated Trust Strategy document to be circulated Trustees</p> <p>Strategic Plan to be presented to Trust Board</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>CEO</p>	<p>By Sep 2021</p> <p>06.09.21</p>	

	ongoing review process will be made at the September MAT Board meeting. Mr Stanton also advised that he would be happy to support Exec Officers in this process.				
<b>9. Trust Committee Updates</b>	<p><b>Education &amp; Standards Committee Update</b></p> <p>Mr Smith provided a verbal update in relation to the E&amp;S committee meeting that had taken place on 06.07.21; noting that updates had been received in relation to SEND (ind update on Nurture Group), Early Careers Framework, progress on Trust Strategy, Teacher Assessed Grades &amp; Appeals and the Professional Development Programme for Secondary Science. Mr Smith reported that it had been a good meeting where good, healthy conversation and challenge had taken place. Mr Smith asked if any of the other Trustees who were in attendance at the meeting would like to add anything/confirm his observations; Mr Stanton confirmed that this was a good summary of the meeting.</p> <p>There being no questions, Trustees thanked Mr Smith for his summary.</p>				
	<p><b>Business, Finance &amp; Audit Committee Update</b></p> <p>In the absence of Mr Vitalis (Chair of BF&amp;A Committee), Mr Parkinson provided a verbal summary of the BF&amp;A meetings that had taken place on 01.07.21; noting that it had been a good procedural meeting where a positive forecast position had been reported; Internal Audit were in attendance and presented their Visit 2 Covid-Response report; a new operations update report had been produced and received; the SRMA Action Plan was well received; a number of finance-related policies had been approved and will be circulated to schools; the Governors Allowances/ Expenses Policy had been agreed to take forward to MAT Board for formal approval (see agenda item 14); and in terms of the Litherland Project, the first phase of works were approved to take place during the Summer holidays. Mr Parkinson advised that ultimately everyone in attendance was happy with the meeting.</p> <p>There being no questions, Trustees thanked Mr Parkinson for his summary.</p>				
<b>10. Link Trustee Update</b>	Due to Covid restrictions, Link Trustee visits are currently suspended; therefore, there were no Link Trustees updates to be noted.				
<b>11. Governance Update (incl</b>	Trustees received an electronic copy of the Governance Update Report July 2021 prior to the meeting.				

<p><b>Trustee Recruitment)</b></p>	<p>Mrs Roberts provided a brief summary in relation to the items listed within the report.</p> <p><b>Governor Skills Audit</b>  <b>Q: How aligned is it in relation to the Terms of Reference document?</b>  <b>A: Yes, you are quite right in that this needs to be taken into account. The document is from NGA and is therefore applicable for use with mainstream Governors who have different responsibilities to those of an academy Governor, ie responsibility in relation to Finance. Taking this into account we have tailored our proforma so that it meets the financial responsibilities outlined within our LGB Terms of Reference document, however there may be areas in need of further refinement. Mr Parkinson noted that the skills audit document needs to be relevant, and as such he had found discussions with and feedback gathered by Mrs Roberts to be really helpful; and thanked her on behalf of the Exec Officers.</b></p> <p><b>Trust Board Self-Evaluation</b>  Trustees received an electronic copy of a document entitled Trustee Development Plan prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Donnelly explained that the Trust Board Self-Evaluation Working Party had met on 25.06.21; and the development of this document had been an action that had come from it. The next step was therefore for Trustees to agree a way forwards in terms of reviewing the document, providing comments and agreeing whether it meets the needs of the Trust Board.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed that the document will be circulated to those Trustees who are members of the working party so that they can review, comment and make refinements if required. A final draft will then be brought to Trust Board for formal approval.</p>	<p>LGB Skills Audit Proforma to be reviewed so that it is in line with the Trust LGB ToR document</p> <p>Initial Draft Trustee Development Plan to be reviewed</p> <p>Final Draft Trustee Development Plan to be brought to Trust Board for formal approval</p>	<p>COO/TGM</p> <p>Trust Board Self-Evaluation Working Party</p> <p>M Stanton (Trust Board Self-Eval Working Party Lead)</p>	<p>ASAP</p> <p>ASAP</p> <p>06.09.21</p>	
<p><b>12. Litherland Project Update</b></p>	<p>Mr Parkinson provided an update with regards the Litherland Project, noting that a Board paper had been taken to BF&amp;A on 01.07.21 for decision on how the Trust proposed to move forward with the project. Mr Parkinson explained that the first phase of the project would be in relation to the secondary school moving to the area of the school designated for their students; resulting in the area of the school being vacated in readiness for when the primary school move across.</p>				



	<p>Mr Parkinson noted that at BF&amp;A it had been reported that issues had been experienced when trying to contact the LA; but since the meeting the ESFA/DfE have been supporting in this, and meetings have now been arranged.</p> <p>Mr Parkinson also reported that school leaders/Exec Officers are currently working on logistical plans so that works can commence once the school closes for Summer.</p> <p>Mr Parkinson then went on to speak about the Project Board.</p>				
<b>13. Risk Update</b>	<p>Trustees received electronic copies of the Trust’s Risk Register prior to the meeting; and reviewed those items allocated to full MAT Board.</p> <p><b>Risk &amp; Reporting Workshop</b> Mr Donnelly explained that following the Risk &amp; Reporting Workshop, Exec Officers had met and a draft risk document had been produced (encompassing directorate and enterprise risk concepts). As such the next step of the process was to ascertain Trustees risk appetite/trigger points etc.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed that if those Trustees who had attended the Risk Reporting Workshop had time/resources available during the summer break a further meeting would be arranged so that the document could be discussed/refined. Ms Inglis also confirmed that she still had some capacity available to work with Exec Officers prior to the document being circulated to the working party.</p> <p>Mr Davis also spoke about Ofsted Reports and the need to capture any risks within the Trust Development Plan, noting that this will be a huge area of focus next year. Mr Donnelly agreed.</p> <p>There being no further questions, Mr Donnelly agreed to take this items forwards, by circulating the draft to working group members for further comment and next steps.</p>	Circulate draft Risk register concept document to working party members	CEO	ASAP	
<b>14. Policies for Approval</b>	<p><b>Governors Allowances &amp; Expenses Policy</b> Trustees were updated in relation to this policy; in that it was initially tabled at BF&amp;A on 01.07.21; the document had been checked by Hill Dickinson (Trust Legal Advisors) and minor tweaks had been made in relation to various legislation/regulations. Following discussion, BF&amp;A committee had agreed to take forwards to MAT Board for formal approval. Mr Gundersen also confirmed the accuracy of the summary provided.</p>	Governors Allowances & Expenses Policy to be circulated to schools and	TGM/COO	ASAP	

	<p>Following discussion, Trustees</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: to approve THFNW Governors Allowances &amp; Expenses Policy</b></p> <p><i>Q: With regards Trustee’s claiming, the policy only mentions travel and expenses; would the policy cover costs of the training course itself?</i></p> <p><i>A: No, we would not expect Trustees to fund their own courses and then claim costs back. The course itself would be booked, and paid for centrally, and therefore there should be no need to claim these costs back.</i></p>	published on the Trust’s website			
<b>15. AoB</b>	<p><b>Pension Access Request:</b> Mr Parkinson advised that a further Pension Access Request similar to that received in Dec 2020 had been received; and as such needed to gain Trustees perspective as to whether all Pension Access requests needed to come to Trust Board for approval or whether Trustees were happy to delegate approval to the CEO.</p> <p>Following discussion Trustees agreed that these requests are operational, and as such decisions rest with the CEO, and not the Trust Board.</p> <p>Mr Parkinson thanked Trustees confirming that approval is delegated to the CEO; and also noted that future HR Updates will just report on such matters.</p>				
<b>16. Date of Next Meeting</b>	<p>The date of the <b>next MAT Board meeting is Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021</b></p> <p>Ms Stevenson closed the meeting by giving formal thanks to the Exec Officers and their teams for their continued efforts over the past 12 months, especially considering the challenges that have been overcome; adding that staff need to ensure they get a good break so that they can recuperate ready for the year ahead. Ms Stevenson also thanked Trustees for everything they have done over the year; noting the efforts of those Trustees who have joined the Board mid-year and during such challenging times.</p>				

Meeting closed at 9.05 am

These minutes are approved as a true record of the meeting

Signed: .....

**[H Stevenson – Chair]**

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Chair’s initials to record approval of minutes: .....

Date: 06.09.21