

**THE GOVERNING BODY OF ALMA PRIMARY**  
**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING HELD BY ZOOM**  
**-PART 1**

**WEDNESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2021 AT 7:00 PM**

**Present:**

Ilan Jacobs (Chair and chairing this meeting)

Deborah Brooks (Vice Chair)

Katie Abrahams

James Burns

Emma Davies

Natalie Grazin

David Grunwald

Jonathan Levy

Ed Lewin

Jean Linsky

Marc Shoffren (Headteacher)

David Steadman

Andrew Sutcliffe

Adam Zellick

In attendance:

John Twomey – Sessional Clerk

**1. WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed all attendees.

**2. ACCEPTANCE/NON-ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF ANY DIRECT OR INDIRECT PERSONAL INTEREST (INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ANY PERSONAL FINANCIAL INTEREST); CONFIRMATION OF ANY CHANGES TO REGISTER OF BUSINESS INTERESTS AND RELATED PARTIES**

ED declared that she provided occasional tutoring to one child at Alma. No other changes were declared by any Governor.

JL and AZ will need to complete register of interests forms.

#### **4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE GB MEETING OF 24 FEBRUARY 2021**

The minutes of 24 February 2021 were approved.

#### **5. REPORTS – HEADS, CHAIRS, COMMITTEES AND QUESTIONS**

A comprehensive set of reports had been sent to Governors prior to the meeting. The reports dealt with all leadership and management issues at the school and were authored by the HT, Chair/Vice Chair, Committee Chairs, Leads Governors and Subject Leads respectively.

The reports were taken as read. It was agreed that it would not be necessary for their content to be revisited in detail at the meeting. The HT highlighted a number of issues and responded to questions as follows:

- **Staff workload and wellbeing**

This was a critical priority for the school. The annual staff survey enables the GB to monitor it but appointing a Staff Wellbeing Governor was also an option.

- **Finance and Operations Committee**

The school had done as well as could be expected in the exceptional circumstances of the year. Gift Aid had been a little better than anticipated and there had been a small amount of additional income from school activities as well.

Regarding security, the security Governor (JB) had done a second visit at the end of May and had been impressed with the arrangements for the dropping off and collecting of the children. He remains in contact with CST (Community Security Trust) about a number of issues and will report back to FOP/GB in due course.

- **Learning & Children**

Each subject leader has reported in the report. The school has been focusing on supporting the children to reintegrate into school life and into a pattern of regular learning. This is expected to be a complex process that will take time. The term “catch-up” may suggest that this can be done rapidly but that is not the case.

- **Catch up funding**

Most of this has been used on tutoring. The hoped-for funding commitment from central government for next year for schools has not materialised. The school is likely to receive about £10k. It has saved a small amount from this year for use in the autumn term. The challenge next year will be how to make up the funding gap.

- **Staff training**

Teaching staff have done lots of virtual courses during the lockdown. The local authority (Barnet) are now keen to resume in-person training. This may present challenges to staff who are worried about attending events in person.

A Governor asked if all staff had been vaccinated. The HT responded that all bar perhaps 10% had. The Governor suggested that work might be done with individual staff on vaccination hesitancy and appropriate risk assessments undertaken. The HT responded that even teachers who may have been vaccinated may still be reluctant to attend courses in-person.

A Governor commented that it was likely to gradually improve over time. If staff proved reluctant to attend courses in the long term, it may give rise to hard questions.

- **Inclusivity/Jewish Learning**

The Ivrit teacher had been ill for the first part of the summer term and temporary cover had to be arranged. The school has now appointed another. The teaching of Jewish Life is progressing well. The Pikuach inspection is anticipated in the autumn term. It is known that the school is high on the inspections list.

- **RHSE**

The school's PSHE & Wellbeing Policy has been updated to reflect the 2020 statutory guidance. Staff are now teaching Relationships & Sex Education following the Christopher Winter Project scheme of work. Samantha Rosehill, as Lead, is continuing to support staff with ideas and activities to support the wellbeing of children in and outside of school.

A Governor asked about the school's response to the recent Ofsted investigation into sexual exploitation and abuse in schools. The HT responded that Ofsted recommended an embedded approach to RHSE and the school was committed to this. He added that it was desirable that the school would have an RHSE Governor though it was not mandatory.

- **Safeguarding**

Under the auspices of the Learning and Children Committee, a safeguarding sub-committee had been set up. Its detailed report is set out in pages 18 and 19 of the Reports document. The school endeavours to be especially vigilant in this area.

In April, it had conducted a thorough audit of its safeguarding provision with Safeguarding Governor, AS. The full audit report was a 29-page survey of all aspects of safeguarding. The main findings were reported to the safeguarding sub-committee at their inaugural meeting in May. Overall it had been a very positive process. A summary of the audit was included in the GB pack for this meeting.

A Governor asked if safeguarding was discussed with children. The HT responded that this was done where appropriate.

- **Changes to GB membership (per the Chair)**

Governor KA had been reappointed by the members.

Five governors (DB, NG, AS, DS and JL) are due to step down shortly. The process to recruit replacements is well underway. Three potential candidates had already made themselves known to the school. It is hoped to offer them the opportunity to visit the school and to attend committee meetings as a means of giving them a sense of their potential task. The governor vacancies have been advertised on the Jewish Volunteers Network and this was drawing a good response. The appointment of a staff governor is also awaited. The GB will temporarily reduce to 9 but is anticipated to come back up to 14.

A Governor suggested that in recruiting new governors, gender balance would be an important factor.

A Governor asked if the individual roles of the retiring governors would be handed over as well and the Chair responded that they would.

A farewell dinner for departing governors will be held on the 19th of July. It is hoped that the lockdown will have fully eased by then.

## **6. POLICIES**

### **Redundancy**

**DECISION:** Governors approved the updated Redundancy policy. It was last reviewed in 2018, so an update was timely.

### **Admissions**

The admissions policy had been amended in two respects:

- Section 4: Covid restrictions had affected faith practices such as synagogue attendance. It was necessary to introduce a temporary policy variation for one year to reflect this.
- Section 1.9: This year the 30th place went to one of two twins and it was decided to offer a place to the second twin. The amendment allows the school to increase its Published Admissions Number on a temporary basis to accommodate twins or children of multiple births. The higher PAN however would only remain in place until the child leaves the class.

**DECISION:** Governors approved the amended admissions policy.

Additionally, the HT advised Governors that it was anticipated that new legislation would amend the definition of looked after children and previously looked after children to include children who had been looked after in other countries. The local

authority were keen for schools to adopt the new definition. Governors agreed that it would be appropriate to await the legislation before amending the policy.

### **Policies For Noting**

The following policies were noted by Governors:

- Exceptional Able and Talented
- Preventing Bullying
- PSHE & Wellbeing
- Behaviour for Learning
- Alma Grievance Resolution

They have been published on the school's website. The Chair thanked the Governors who had worked on them.

### **7. COVID ROADMAP UPDATE**

Governors had been sent an update report in advance of the meeting which set out the school's plan for a gradual return to normal provision. The HT advised that the plan was proceeding and they were following government guidelines carefully. Things were moving slower than anticipated and the Delta Variant was a factor. One staff meeting had been held outdoors. Park & Pick Up had not resumed yet.

### **8. SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – REVIEW STRATEGIC AIMS**

Governors had been sent the school's strategic aims in advance of the meeting. The Chair reminded Governors that the aims informed the School Development Plan and it was appropriate for a Governing Body to ask itself from time to time if they were still fit for purpose. Governors offered a number of comments:

- Should the aims address how children relate to one another?
- Does inclusivity need to be included?
- How might the achievement of strategic aims be measured?

The Chair responded that the aims would be examined further at the strategy meeting this term.

### **9. RISK REGISTER UPDATE**

Due to time constraints, it was agreed that this item would be carried over to a future meeting.

### **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- The Chair advised that the post-Covid lessons learned/ look-back exercise that had been promised would be undertaken by Bronwyn Tamini. It had been hoped to complete it earlier in the year but it had not proved possible. The work will begin with a questionnaire which will be sent to all Governors. Facilitated sessions will follow thereafter. It is hoped to progress this substantially during this term.
- It was noted that Landau Baker had recently been appointed as the school's auditors by the Members after a full appointments process. Governors had recommended this by email resolution.
- The Chair expressed his thanks to the retiring Governors for their extremely valuable service to the school and he hoped that all Governors could attend the farewell dinner on the 19<sup>th</sup> July.

#### **ACTIONS LIST**

<b>ITEM NO.</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>ASSIGNED TO</b>
<b>3</b>	Complete register of interests forms.	<b>JL and AZ</b>
<b>8</b>	Review Strategic aims at strategy meeting	<b>Chair and Committee Chairs</b>
<b>9</b>	Review Risk Register	<b>Chair, HT and Committee Chairs</b>
<b>10</b>	Complete post-Covid lessons learned/ look-back exercise with Bronwyn Tamini	<b>Chair and HT</b>