

Newtown School Board of Trustees

Meeting minutes

Wednesday 27 September 2017, 7.30 pm, school staffroom

Present: Mark Brown, Annette Gittos, Julie Bennett, Kelvin Harper, Victoria Esson (items 1 - 5), Lucy Kebbell, Karen O'Leary, Alan de Lima and Jo Gould (minutes).

Apologies: Daniel Petersen

1. Karakia

2. Previous Minutes and Actions

Minutes of the 9 August 2017 Board meeting were approved and the action items were discussed and updated.

For the school pool item, Mark reported that he and Julie had met to look into alternative options for strengthening the structure - they had talked to a project manager, who indicated that while the design that was approved was the best option, there were other options. Any alternative option would have to be approved by the Wellington City Council. A more light-weight option, similar to Berhampore School (but improved), could be explored. The [South Pacific Pool Enclosures website](#) has some examples of these options.

Internet policies - the Board discussed the security of passwords to access chromebooks and children's google accounts. The school was guided by the expert opinion of the provider that set up the chromebooks and google accounts. The Board noted that the school's IT and security policies will be reviewed as part of its policy review work.

ACTION: Security settings on school chromebooks and google accounts to be reviewed when the school changes providers for the devices.

3. Conflicts of interest

None declared.

4. Principal's report

ERO visit

Mark acknowledged the Board members and Leadership Team involved in the ERO visit. ERO went into classrooms, talked to a range of teachers and students, and undertook "triangulation" - where they looked for the evidence to support what the teachers were saying. Mark commented that valuable feedback was given by ERO during the review process. Overall the review was a positive experience, putting the school on a firm foundation going forward.

ERO recommended that the Board look at the school's complaints policy (particularly making the processes clearer and more transparent). This arose because ERO observed that the Board had received some written complaints from parents, when these should have been raised with school management. The Board noted that there is a complaints policy, but better communication with the school community about the policy is needed. Various ideas were discussed - for example, including the policy in enrolment packs, on the website, in the foyer, discussing the policy at introductory meetings with whanau at the beginning of the year etc. Annette had circulated to the Board a more simplified flow chart of the complaints process, and invited comments. Lucy indicated that she had previously done some work on the policy and would circulate these to the Board.

ACTION: Lucy to circulate her suggestions about the complaints policy to Board members for consideration.

Julie mentioned that she had heard ERO raise the policy of vetting of staff, but this might require further clarification as ERO had confirmed in their draft report that all policies, procedures and relevant documents (including those required under the Vulnerable Children Act) are in place.

The Board discussed the draft ERO report, which the school has been invited to provide comments on. Mark noted that there were no major surprises or issues in the report.

ACTION: Mark and Annette to finalise comments on the draft report and provide these to ERO.

School charter

The school charter needs to be updated (the new charter must be submitted to the Ministry of Education by 1 March 2018) - it needs to reflect the school's vision, core values, style of teaching, and what we do for learners. The Board agreed to go through the current charter at the October Board

meeting to identify areas that need to be updated, removed or amended. The leadership team will also be involved, and teaching staff will also have the opportunity to contribute.

Capital Community of Learners

A planning workshop was recently held to establish underlying principles of working together and learn more about the context of the different schools involved. This follows the Board signing an expression of interest in the COL earlier this year. Next step is the establishing of a steering group - Board of Trustee representatives and school leaders will come together on 2 November 2017 (at SWIS, from 6.00 - 7.30 pm) as part of this process. Two Board members and two school members will be invited. Annette and Karen indicated that they are happy to attend.

New school build

The date of completion of the school build has been confirmed - 11 May 2018. The Pohutukawa prefabs will stay, but other prefabs that are not wanted will be removed after this date.

Term dates for 2018

The Board approved the start date for term 1 2018 - 7 February 2017 (moved by Mark, seconded by Julie).

ACTION: Kelvin to update the website with the school terms dates for 2018.

Student attendance data

The Board discussed data on student attendance at school. For some groups of children, this is an issue. Parents have been contacted, and told about the data relating to their child(ren). In some cases, this hasn't improved attendance rates, so the school is actively engaging the attendance service. Lateness is also an issue that the school will continue to address.

5. Policy

Healthy food and nutrition policy

Staff and the school community were invited to provide feedback on the draft healthy food and nutrition policy. A small amount of feedback from parents/caregivers was received (3): submitters liked - no lollies as treats, water and milk only, the children encouraged to sit down for 10 minutes to eat lunch, fundraising not involving chocolate. Some submitters didn't like - school programmes (e.g. road safety)

being sponsored by fast food companies (not seen by the Board as a food policy - the guidelines on corporate sponsorship/involvement in the school covers this).

The Board discussed Tui and Pohutukawa whanau having a fruit/vegetable break in the morning - some staff don't like this as it interrupts learning. FANS interested in contacting the market to see if they could donate some fruit and vegetables. The Board agreed that this was not a policy issue - it's more operational in nature.

Balance between parents having a choice about what their kids eat, and teaching children about good food choices. The Board agreed that it's about encouraging, promoting, and educating with positive messages and role modeling, rather than the school policing what's in lunchboxes.

Board approved the policy statement, aim and objectives, and invited the staff to work through the guidelines for implementation (and inform the Board of any changes) and to present back to the board at the next meeting.

ACTION: Mark to put the healthy food and nutrition policy on the agenda for the next staff meeting (in particular, the "Newtown will ..." implementation section) and report back.

Parental leave

Lucy had circulated to the Board the following draft policy for consideration:

Newtown School, as a good employer, acknowledges the importance of families spending time together following the birth of a child (or, in the case of adoption, a new child arriving to live with the family). Accordingly, in addition to the entitlements under law and the collective employment contract, any staff taking Partner's Leave under Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 (the Act) may be entitled to a discretionary payment from Newtown School, while on Partner's Leave, of an amount equal to up to one week (5 working days) of their normal rate of pay. This payment is intended to support the staff member to spend time with their family where they are the parent but not the primary carer of a child and where they will not be receiving other forms of paid parental leave under the Act or collective or individual contract. Any application for payment in accordance with this clause should be made to the Principal and should detail the circumstances in which the leave is applied for. Each application will be considered on a case by case basis.

Victoria confirmed that any discretionary payments made under this policy would be within budget allocations.

The Board approved the policy (moved by Lucy, seconded by Victoria).

Funding from Lotteries and community trusts that operate gaming machines

Karen gave a presentation to the Board, discussing the pros and cons of applying to lotteries and other gambling operators for funds. Karen indicated that a key question is whether applying for these grants contributes to problem gambling (and other ethical considerations associated with gambling). The Board discussed the issues and options, and agreed that the school is able to apply for grants from any funder (moved Karen, seconded Lucy, approved unanimously).

6. Finance

Mark commented that the school's financial position remains healthy and on-track.

7. Any other business (including correspondence)

Karen indicated that she isn't available for remaining Board meetings for this year, due to filming commitments.


Mark provided a quick update on the enrolment scheme. Mt Cook School Board of Trustees has agreed to an amended zone (the area west of Wallace Street will not be included in the Newtown School enrolment zone). This will be reviewed after a year.

10. In-Committee

Alan left the meeting.

The Board moved into committee at 9:41 pm to discuss personnel and other matters. The Board and moved out of committee at 10:00 pm.

Next meeting: 25 October 2017

 25/10/17

