

## **Important Diocesan Education Team Update #13, Wed 13 May 2020**

Dear colleagues,

Well this week is proving to be quite a week with the recent announcements from Downing Street and the suggestion that schools will start to expand the scope of provision on site from 1 June. I am sure that you will already be inundated with guidance etc. and so I will not be including any as part of this email. But do let me know if you would like us to send you anything. It is possible that you may have reservations based on what has been released to date and we will need to keep a close eye on issues related to safety and workload. Tim Reid and I are in regular contact with LA colleagues on this issue and we will represent your best interests at all opportunities. Please do keep in touch with us and feel free to share your concerns, questions, thoughts, and suggestions. If there is anything that you would like us to feed into these discussions, please email [Tim](#).

- **Looking to the Rainbow**

- We have heard from several schools who are busy learning, singing and recording the beautiful Looking to the Rainbow song. I would love to encourage as many of you as possible to join in with this national initiative and be part of (hopefully) 1,000 schools across England bringing harmony, joy and hope in time for Thank a Teacher Day on 20 May. Helpful links to record your own version include: [Worship for Everyone: Looking to the Rainbow](#); [video](#).
- Apparently, I have been 'persuaded' to join a group of DDEs who are going to record a version – if I can do it, you certainly can! If our effort ever sees the light of day, I will (reluctantly) share.

- **Diocesan Training events and support – Autumn Term**

- As previously shared, we have moved the period of the 2020-2021 Training and Support SLA so that it runs from September to July. There will be no centralised training in Summer term 2020 (apart from Cluster Meetings) and in the Autumn term all training will be held via Zoom.
- We will share details and logistics for this nearer the time but I wanted to reassure you that training and support from the Diocesan Education Team will be ongoing and suitable for the times in which we find ourselves. Staff meetings, inset training, advice, audits and all bespoke input will be reimagined and reconfigured to enable everything to continue to be offered. Our Advisers are currently in the process of shaping a programme that will enable us to continue to support you, but safely and in as time efficient a way as possible.
- We expect that most of the next academic year, and certainly the Autumn term, will be a time of settling and re-establishing for school communities and we want to offer you means of accessing our training and support whilst minimising the amount of time that you and members of your team need to spend out of school. We are planning ways in which to operate in a 'wiser living phase' once Covid-19 is less of a threat to us all and we will be implementing some of the positive lessons that we will have learnt as a result of the pandemic. More details soon.
- In the same way, we believe that it will be unhelpful, at least in the Autumn term, for you to receive visits from people outside of your immediate school community. We are also aware that members of our team could end up potentially acting as 'super spreaders' of any infection as, in 'the good old days', it was not unusual for some of our Advisers to visit upwards of ten schools a week. Until we are sure that we are able to visit you safely, we will be planning to 'meet' with you using Zoom or other similar platforms. We look forward to the time that we are able to meet with you again in person but until then we are pleased to still be able to support you, albeit remotely.

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• **Cluster/Briefing Meetings**

- Tim and I will be leading three sessions of diocesan updates and discussion for headteachers and three for Chairs of governors. The agendas will be confirmed nearer the time but will include issues such as Ofsted and SIAMS updates; the next phase for schools; diocesan support, including for bereavement; and other matters related to Covid-19. Dates and times of the meetings are as follows:

Headteacher Clusters / Briefings		Chair of Governors Briefings	
Monday 15 June	1.30pm - 2.30pm	Monday 22 June	1.30pm - 2.30pm
Tuesday 16 June	10am - 11am	Tuesday 23 June	10am - 11am
Wednesday 17 June	4pm - 5pm	Wednesday 24 June	5pm - 6pm

- All sessions will be held via Zoom and numbers will be limited to 25 per session. Laura Farmer will be in contact separately asking you to book your place on one of the dates and we will send you the link to join the meeting once your attendance has been confirmed. Chairs of governors will be contacted separately but it would be helpful if you could email [Laura](#) with the name and email address of your Chair in the meantime as some of our records are incomplete.

• **Governance**

- Although the Worcester Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) discourages schools from including faith and church attendance as part of admissions over-subscription criteria, we recognise that for some VA schools this remains either necessary or desirable. We are currently awaiting national guidance on church attendance as part of these criteria during this time of church closure and will share it with you when we have it.
- The DBE continues to meet during this time of social distancing and to re/appoint foundation governors. The date of the next meeting is 7 July and all applications will need to have been received before this date. Application forms and skills audit forms are available on our [website](#), or, alternatively, from Laura Farmer. This also applies to MAT Trustees who are appointed by the Worcester Diocese Academies Trust (WDAT). Exceptionally, the DBE and WDAT can make appointments outside of meetings but I would ask that you do all you can to work within the dates.

• **Leadership Support**

- Tim has been working closely with a number of schools that have leadership needs for the coming academic year. We would like to remind all schools - headteachers and governing bodies – that we are keen to hear from you if you think we can help you in any way. We are aware that some heads have barely had a day off since February and, as we now enter a new phase of planning and uncertainty for everyone, you may be feeling close to breaking point. If you are – or better still, if you are not but know that some additional help would be welcome - please let us know. We have some capacity on the team to offer your school some additional leadership support and we would be delighted to discuss this with you further if you think it may be of help to you. Unfortunately, there will be a charge, but, as with all of our services, fees are set to cover our costs rather than to make a profit.

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- **And finally...**

- I don't know about you but, at times recently, my emotions have been all over the place. Friends, family, and colleagues are very much appreciated and the right word from some at the right time has helped. Today, I have been soothed by the Psalms and I wanted to share with you probably the most well-known of them all – words that are as familiar as an old item of clothing and which bring comfort and peace.

**Psalm 23**

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters, he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff – they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
my whole life long.*

As always, thank you for all that you and your teams are doing. We see you; we appreciate you; we value you.

With best wishes,



**Margaret James**  
**Diocesan Director of Education (DDE)**