

## **Important Diocesan Education Team Update #24, Fri 3 July 2020**

Dear colleagues,

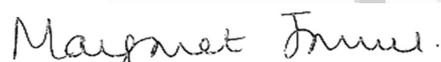
I couldn't quite believe it when my phone told me on Wednesday that it is now July. I was caught between feeling a) that it had to be earlier in the year than that because nothing feels normal for what I would expect in July, and b) that it must be later in the year than only July because I have surely lived more than 6 months of 2020 already! It has certainly been a few months of chaos, confusion, uncertainty, worry, being stretched to new limits, and discovering new levels of resilience. When I think of the work that you are doing I am humbled and realise that the role of supporting, advising and helping is in no way as demanding as that of actually doing the doing. All of us in the Diocesan Education Team are grateful to you for your work and you remain in our prayers every day.

- **The latest Government Guidance on school opening** was leaked and significantly trailed before its actual release on Thursday. If you have not yet seen it, it can be found [here](#).
  - In discussion with Tim on the details of the guidance, he succinctly summarised it as being an instruction to “open schools and teach children”. It does indeed read as a comprehensive intent to resume business as usual in as many aspects of school life as possible. Our prayer is that you and your school communities remain safe. Risk assessments are required for all new arrangements and I would encourage headteachers and governors to take some time to reflect before completing these in order to be prepared for September. Action plans in case of an outbreak of Covid-19 are also required.
- **The government has also published guidance on the use of community-facing buildings, such as places of worship.** The guidance can be found [here](#).
  - Please note that it does not apply to schools making use of those buildings for the routine purposes of education, although this may be possible in *certain carefully considered circumstances*. Please contact me if you think that you would benefit from being able to use your church buildings before the end of this term, and if you already have the support of the clergy, and I will discuss it with the Archdeacons. The guidance itself comes into force from the end of the Summer term and is relevant for activities such as holiday clubs, after and out of school clubs, uniformed organisations, tuition and the like. Government guidance to the Church of England would apply in respect of the opening, cleaning and general use of the building itself, and DfE guidance would apply for all aspects of the management of the children. Risk assessment is crucial and, if a particular community or church activity is carried out in conjunction with a school, then this should be done by the school and church / activity leaders together.
- **Ofsted inspections** appear to be set to resume in January 2021, with a small number of recovery -support type ‘visits’ taking place in the Autumn term. We will support in any way that we can should you be one of the chosen few next term.
- **SIAMS inspections** were suspended by the DfE at the same time as Ofsted and we expect that legal suspension to be lifted again at the same time. As soon as we have further details of what to expect in relation to SIAMS and the scheduling of inspections, we will share them with you. I would emphasise that this will not be a diocesan decision but one that is made by the DfE and the Church of England Education Office.

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- **Never the Same** online conference will be held on the morning of Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020 and will focus on issues of loss, bereavement, recovery and resilience. Please save the date now – it looks like it will be an excellent morning.
- **Wellbeing** is an issue which is taking on more importance than ever before and is one that none of us can afford to ignore.
  - The HR Team at the Old Palace have put together a few resources in Appendix I and I thought you might find some of them useful. Recognising that we all respond in different ways to different formats, the resources include TED Talks, a quiz, websites, and even spoken word poetry. Have a look and see what might suit you from the list.
- **And finally...**
  - We are only a couple of weeks away from what would normally be the most likely time of year in which you would have a proper break. Formerly known as ‘the summer holiday’, I imagine that many of you will lose days and weeks of it this year to planning and preparation for September. But *you really must have a break* and take time to completely switch off from the demands that have been on you relentlessly since February.
  - At a time when Jesus’ ministry was hectic and invasively demanding of his and the disciples’ time, to the extent that they didn’t even have time to eat properly (sound familiar?), he said to them, *“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest”* (Mark 6). In Matthew 8 we read some more of Jesus’ words in which he encouraged; *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light..”*
  - I regularly advocate that your work in church school leadership is a vocation. I believe that you are called to this role - to carrying this particular yoke - and I know that you are committed to enabling the flourishing and well-being of all those in your school community. Sometimes though, your own wellbeing becomes no more than an afterthought and I am sure that it can feel as if nobody is looking out for you.  
**We are.**  
Remember that and remember that you need to take time to rest and to restore your soul. Please take note of Jesus’ words in the weeks ahead and allow yourself some time in a quiet place.

With best wishes,



**Margaret James, DDE**

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## Appendix I

### Wellbeing resources compiled by the Old Palace's HR Team

#### Thinking about our wellbeing

*Here are a range of resources that people have found helpful over recent days. If you've found something helpful that you think others would benefit from please let the Old Palace's HR Team know. We'll plan to rotate them around a bit, so it provides freshness:*

1. A resilience quiz you could try (takes no more than a couple of minutes)  
<https://resiliencyquiz.com/>
2. Some really useful resources from Help for Heroes:  
[https://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support/stronger-together/?gclid=EAlalQobChMIgKrLkpiL6glViKztChI5ewtGEAAYASAAEgKxP\\_D\\_BwE](https://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support/stronger-together/?gclid=EAlalQobChMIgKrLkpiL6glViKztChI5ewtGEAAYASAAEgKxP_D_BwE)
3. 2 minute spoken word art on the power of collaboration: response to coronavirus from George the Poet: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aR\\_CMTneqtA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aR_CMTneqtA)
4. A TED Talk; Dr Lucy Hone is a resilience expert who thought she found her calling supporting people to recover following the Christchurch earthquake. She had no idea that her personal journey was about to take her to a far darker place. In this powerful and courageous talk, she shares the three strategies that got her through an unimaginable tragedy—and offers a profound insight on human suffering: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWH8N-BvhAw>
5. Another TED that might be helpful when thinking about work and living through change; We believe we should work hard in order to be happy, but could we be thinking about things backwards? This is a fast-moving and very funny talk from psychologist Shawn Achor:  
<https://www.ted.com/search?q=the+happy+secret+to+better+work>
6. MIND have some good ideas and resources:  
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
7. Some great NHS tips here:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>