

Email message to School Leaders Friday 3rd April 2020 from Joy Tubbs – Diocesan Director of Education

Dear Colleague

I can only begin to imagine the complexity of your week, and thank you so very much for all that you are doing, every day in leading your school. We have become very aware of the scope and scale of your work at this time – far beyond your classroom provision for children that are vulnerable and the children of key workers. We can see the depth of compassion that is being shown by you for the communities you serve.

We are pleased to be in close contact with LAs, through daily on-line conferencing and written briefings (Mandy Christopher and Linda Rowley are fulfilling that role). I have regular contact with the Regional Schools Commissioner and wider RSC/DfE team. We continue to thank MAT CEOs and teaching school leads who are playing a vital leadership role in this time. Through these meetings/relationships, should you consider there is anything we should be aware of or act on which would support you please do let us know. I hope you find the worship resources, shared with you this week helpful, and as you would expect we are working to support you with material and pastoral support as you support your communities with bereavement. We hope these small steps support you; do not hesitate to flag to us needs which you believe we can help with.

We know that for the majority of you, this Easter will bring little respite as so many schools remain open. We do not underestimate the demands being made on you and how hard this must be alongside the vital importance of your own family life.

DBE change

I thought it important to update you on change at the DBE in light of the national crisis. We are only a tiny part of your support system but we believe one that you value; we do not want to add to your burden at this time and assure you that despite the following changes, we remain here for you.

As a charity our Trust Board is deeply aware of the potential impact of the virus on DBE income streams; our future staffing is at significant risk because of the loss of a range of such streams including investment returns, Trust Grants to our charity, the hire of our building for external courses for local firms and of course the courses which we lead for schools and parishes.

We have thus moved to mitigate the risk, enabling us to preserve staffing and the organisation for the long term; this has led to the furlough, with their consent, of just over a third of our staff (6 staff out of entire staff of 17) from either the 1st or 4th April for a period to the 31st May 2020. This includes staff from Senior Leadership, Advisory, and administration teams. We have let our staff know this may be extended but this would again be with their consent. We are expecting to furlough further staff in the coming weeks, potentially leaving a core team of staff.

There are important work streams which need to continue, including support for Church schools which have such a vital role in this crisis; we are working hard to ensure we can meet your needs at this time, whilst also ensuring we are there for you for the long term future. Our website makes clear the contact numbers of all staff who continue to work and we will be in touch with you again once we have fully re-distributed roles across the team over this next week or so.

Nicola Coupe and Mandy Christopher will continue in their role as your school improvement advisers and thus your immediate link to the DBE; Neil Revell will move into furlough. Neil will be writing to you if you are supported by him, and we will ensure you have a new contact number for the duration of the time that he is not with us. I can imagine many of you supported by Neil would want to wish him well for his return to headship in the autumn; I promise I will enable that to happen nearer the time.

One of our Trustees, mindful of the hard moments being faced shared the following with me, and I share this with you in the hope that it will comfort you in the complexity of all of the decisions you are making, large and small, personal and professional:

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. (Deuteronomy 33:27)

Here is a beautiful Celtic encircling prayer from Iona. It reminds me of the prayer for protection and safety in Ephesians 6 - The Armour of God. It's a really moving one to pray during these uncertain times.

My Christ,
My shield,
My encircler,
each day,
each night,
each light,
each dark,
be near me,
uphold me,
my treasure,
my triumph

Every blessing

We are praying for you and your leadership at this complex time. Remember we are here for you, and will continue to be so.

Kind regards,

Joy

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LIVING OUT GOD'S TRANSFORMING PRESENCE

If you have received this email outside of your normal working/office hours, there is no expectation that you will respond before you are next at work. It has been sent because it fits with my working pattern. We all need to maintain a healthy balance – take care.

Covid-19 Update

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, like many others we at the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education have transitioned to remote working.

As such, we ask that you please note the following:

- Please send all correspondence electronically rather than via postal services to DBE, at the Diocesan Education Centre, as we will not be there to receive post
- Our office land lines are not being answered – please use our mobile numbers listed on the website or email and we will telephone you [DBE contact details](#)
- We are also using Microsoft Teams to meet with our internal and external colleagues
- We appreciate your patience as we put all of our remote working systems and processes in place

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