

Romans 15 v13

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the holy spirit'

Dear Colleagues

I hope that the beginning of February proves to be a little calmer than the start to the year was. I have no doubt that there are still many stresses and challenges to be faced – not least the growing numbers of children seeking to be in school. However, I do hope that you have established routines and systems with which you are comfortable and which allow you to run your school communities safely. You remain very much in our prayers.

As you know we are fully aware of the challenges that our headteachers have had to face over the past twelve months and the impact of these has become evident in the conversations our team have been having with you. Last year we ran our Peer-to-Peer Support Programme. This was an innovative programme which established relationships between fellow headteachers, enabling them to support one another socially, emotionally and professionally. The feedback we had from this programme was very strong. We ran it in partnership with Brighton University and they have used their findings to develop a range of new practice.

We are presently looking at running this programme again. This time it will not include the research elements that dictated some of the activities that needed to happen and will be purely based on supporting the welfare of our Headteachers. Places are limited but if you are interested please contact Jon Gilbert or Lesley Hurst who are leading the programme. Jon will be taking the lead in this project and we will benefit from his experience as one of the Heads who took part last year.

In short the peer to peer programme will:

- Have twenty places available
- Establish a paired relationship between experienced heads
- This relationship will be non-hierarchical and will offer heads the opportunity to coach and mentor each other as equal peers
- There will be some element of supervision from the Diocese and from Brighton University
- There will be no charge for this programme
- We expect this programme to start in May and run for 12 to 15 months.

If this is of interest to you, please do contact [Jon](#) or [Lesley](#).

The restrictions imposed by Covid has led us to making some difficult decisions. We have decided to cancel the locality versions of our Year Six Leavers' Celebrations. Whilst June and July are still sometime off, we realise that schools need to carry out their planning now and we cannot see a strong likelihood of large gatherings like these being encouraged. It is possible,

come June and July that restrictions will be eased but having to make decisions now to have effective planning in place leads us to the conclusion that cancellation is the wisest option.

However, making a decision this early is enabling us to make some exciting, alternative plans. We will be producing an online service similar to the one we shared with you last year. However, we are looking to include a number of additions and options for you to engage in. This will become clear in the months ahead but we are very excited to have Bishop Will of Lewes onboard and he is supported by a wide-ranging team of clergy and our own officers. We will keep you updated on plans for our Leavers' Celebrations over the next few months and we hope that it will enable us to celebrate our year six children, as part of a wider church family, in a new and innovative way in these different times.

We have also needed to reconsider the situation with our Headteachers' Conference. Clearly 26th March does not look like a feasible option now. We are therefore looking to postpone the conference to a point in July if we can negotiate this with the conference centre. We will be informing you very soon about the new date. However, if this is not possible, we are making plans to move this onto an online platform in the summer. We do very much want to share with you the ideas linked to growing the Partnership Agreement documentation and we are determined to make sure that we come together as a community in some shape or form in the near future.

In the meantime, may I once again reiterate my gratitude and my thanks for all you are doing for your local communities, for your commitment, your energy, your selflessness and your love. We continue to pray for you.

Trevor Cristin
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Learning with meaning and purpose: to know God and shape the world