

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 the beginning of December finds you well. I want to reassure you all that we are fully aware of the challenges you are facing posed by the uncertainty relating to the continued rise of Covid cases. You are having to juggle the worries of some parents and the wishes of others. You are balancing the anxiety of your staff and your own health concerns but above all, you hold the welfare of the children as top priority. Some of the decisions you are facing make it very difficult to choose which path to take. We know many of you are tired and this has been a very long term for you. We are praying that you are being sustained until the end of the term and whatever events you are running as a school will be rewarding and honouring of the spirit and community you continue to seek to build. I can only express on behalf of our team and the wider diocese, our gratitude for everything you are doing amidst such challenge.

Mike Simmonds, our new Governance Officer is now fully operational. Over the next few days, we will be publishing our new training schedule for the Spring Term. Much of what we offer will be online but we will continue to seek the right and most appropriate opportunities to hold gatherings in person in due course. He is continuing to offer his virtual handshakes and as you can see from the information below, he is ready and willing to meet anybody who would like to introduce themselves. Please do feel free to take this opportunity. Mike has a wealth of experience and I’m sure the support he is going to offer will make the lives of our governors a lot easier. I would also urge any heads who have concerns regarding governance issues to contact Mike as he has broad experience and understanding.

Our Growing Partnerships initiative was presented to Synod this week and we have had a very positive response from both schools and clergy. I hope amidst the challenges you have faced this term your relationship with your church has continued to grow. As leaders in the community, you and your clergy have much in common. Please continue to inform us of all you are doing and if you require any support or help, do not hesitate to contact us.

We have been delighted with the response to the Leavers’ Celebrations bookings. Many of our venues are now full and for those schools wanting to join us, you will need to respond quickly as options are narrowing. Therefore, I do urge you to contact [Vanessa Vollebregt](#) as soon as possible so that you get a service that suits you.

Some of you may be aware that Cathy Slow was intending to retire at the end of this term. We are delighted to tell you that we have persuaded her to stay on until at least Easter. I know from the schools I have spoken to regarding her support that this will be particularly encouraging to them and we greatly value all that Cathy brings to our team.

We will soon be planning our next round of our Headteachers’ Peer to Peer Support Programme. We have run this initiative for two years now. Headteachers from the diocese support each other in a structured, non-hierarchical mentoring relationship. It has been well received in both cohorts and as we plan, it would be really useful to get a sense of who might be interested to join the next cohort. If you would like to know more, please contact [Jon Gilbert](#) as soon as possible. We are very keen to offer this again but we need to decide if the demand is still there or if it might be worth opening to other school leaders. We are very confident this is a valuable provision.

I hope to write to you all before Christmas but in the meantime, I would like to re-emphasise my gratitude and admiration for all you continue to do. I hope that Christmas time is a happy time in your school.

With best wishes

Trevor Cristin
December 2021