

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 would like to wish you all a happy New Year.

Once again I am fully aware that school life will present a series of challenges but I also hope that this new year will also bring a lot of joy and new opportunity. As we start this year, I think it is important to re-emphasise the verse that we place at the head of all our communications. It is taken from Romans chapter 15 verse 13:

‘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.’

Talking about hope can be very challenging for some of us in our current circumstances. We are surrounded by the difficulties of ensuring our schools are fully staffed, by the worries of the health and welfare of our children and by our own concerns for the health and welfare of our loved ones. Hope doesn't always seem to be that near. However, this verse reminds us of where we as Christians find hope. God is the origin and the object of our hope and if we are able to put our trust in Him we will be filled with the joy and peace that cannot be found elsewhere. Our God of hope will enable that sense of joy and peace to fill our lives through the Holy Spirit. I know how challenging placing that trust in God can be but we at the Diocese will be praying for you all and that you will be able to do this and know the sense of joy and peace that only God can bring.

Moving on to matters of everyday business please be aware that SIAMS Inspections are being suspended until January 31st when a further review will take place. Please read the statement below from Dr Margaret James, the National Director of SIAMS:

In view of the additional pressures with which school leaders and staff are currently dealing as a result of the rapid spread of the Omicron variant of Covid, no SIAMS inspections will take place until Monday 31 January at the earliest. The National Director of SIAMS will review the situation over the coming weeks and will update diocesan education teams, as well as the SIAMS website, with the date of the resumption of normal inspection activity. Once inspections resume, schools will receive one week's notice of the date of their inspection as per the notification policy.

I hope you see this decision as supportive within the challenging circumstances you have having to manage.

I would like to ask you to remember several leaders who are taking on temporary or new roles. Please remember:

Mark Pollard at High Hurstwood, John Cumming at St John the Baptist, Findon and Laura Collins at Netherfield. Please remember them as they adjust to their new roles in your prayers and similarly if you are working close to any of these schools do give them a call of encouragement.

DCAT were pleased to welcome Northiam CE Primary School and Hurst Green CE Primary School as new academies into their trust on 1 January 2022. We look forward to working alongside them in this new way and I am sure they are excited about the prospect of working in a close partnership with DCAT.

I would like to inform you of a date for clergy on 3 March 2022 (14:00-15:30). We will be running a webinar for members of the clergy on Growing Partnerships. I would ask you to encourage your linked parish priests and partners to attend this. The focus of this will be strongly on how the clergy can support schools and I will be supported by colleagues from the Apostolic Life team. We believe it will be a genuinely valuable time.

I am delighted to inform you that the take up for our Diocesan Leavers' Celebrations at the end of the academic year has been extremely strong. It is lovely to have us all coming back together as a family of schools. If you have not booked places do contact Vanessa leavers@chichester.anglican.org. Although I am aware that a number of venues are now full, I am sure that we will be able to find a way to support you.

We understand the challenges you continue to face as you enter 2022. We are so grateful for everything you give to your communities and once again I would like to emphasise that we are here to help you. Please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything you need or if you just need to unburden, we are good listeners.

With best wishes

Trevor Cristin
January 2022