### To: Head Teachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies

**March 2020**

Dear Colleague in Catholic Education,

We are living in extraordinary times. We may be facing isolation but we can never feel isolated.  We work with extraordinary Headteachers, staff and governors who are committed to providing the very best outcomes for the pupils we serve. As each day brings with it challenge and anxiety may I take this opportunity to ask you to stop and be still. You are doing a fantastic job and do not let anyone make you feel different. For a while now the question in our country has been should we close schools? The reality is can we keep them open? Over the last 24 hours Headteachers have inundated me with their figures for staff and pupil absence. The capacity to keep our schools open is becoming increasingly difficult. We need to ensure we deal with every child, every staff member, every parent and every partner to our school with dignity and love. We need to be seen to demonstrate and be witness to the grace and peace of Christ in all that we do. This involves difficult and unpopular decisions at times. I have never met anyone in the profession who seeks to close their school, but at this unprecedented time the decision to do so is taken with care and welfare for all and in conjunction with the medical advice from Public Health. We need to work together to manage the next steps.

The Education Service will remain a support to you throughout this time, both practically and spiritually. For most of the team we are now working from home. We seek to help you by sharing advice, guidance, support networks and practical steps to cope with the months ahead. We may make mistakes and communication goes array but never doubt or forget how much we seek to support you at this time of need. We are in this together. As Pope Francis put it so beautifully, “Our God is near and asks us to be near one another. Perhaps right now we cannot draw physically to others for fear of contagion, but we can reawaken in ourselves a habit of drawing near to others through prayer and mutual help.”

Please refer to our website regularly. We seek to share with you platforms for external and remote learning. If your school uses and advocates a particular learning platform let me know about it and we can share it with all schools. Any sharing of learning platforms will of course come with a diocesan disclaimer that we are providing you with gateway for learning and that they do not necessarily come with a diocesan endorsement. It’s a choice for you and your school. Further in this bulletin is advice and guidance on various learning  platforms that are currently available.

**Ofsted  and the Diocese of Westminster suspends inspections**

Ofsted announced yesterday that it is suspending all routine inspections of schools and it has been decided that diocesan inspections will also be suspended until further notice.

The diocesan inspection of maintained schools is a statutory duty and, if a school falls outside the statutory compliance window, the diocese will issue a formal note of deferral that explains why the school has not been inspected within the statutory time frame. Ofsted have made it clear to the CES that they will require schools to explain this non-compliance, but they do recognise the current situation as ‘exceptional circumstance’ that would legitimise deferral. These deferral notices will be issued in September as schools are not considered to be out of the compliance window until the new academic year begins and we are not permitted to issue notices before this.

The Secretary of State has announced that Ofsted is to temporarily suspend routine inspections of schools, colleges, early years settings, children’s social care providers and local authorities.  Urgent inspections where specific concerns have been raised, however, can still go ahead.

Further details can be found via the following links

[https://www.gov.uk/government/news/routine-ofsted-inspections-suspended-in-response-to-coronavirus?utm\_source=06ea718b-2bd8-43ff-8e9f-6e3cc7439a4b&utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\_content=immediate](https://analytics-us.junglemail365.com/link/?c=75e2da98-80f2-487a-a019-d2ac77241bb3&j=ca1a57a7-6374-4562-a83f-1ba49690c392&l=9062a1b4-4109-4d21-bcd3-05de9363a59c&e=65836362-0888-4b88-8e82-971182d2649a&p=0)

[https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-suspends-all-routine-inspections](https://analytics-us.junglemail365.com/link/?c=75e2da98-80f2-487a-a019-d2ac77241bb3&j=ca1a57a7-6374-4562-a83f-1ba49690c392&l=bc27f3c7-32f5-4098-91db-3ff7001ae2bd&e=65836362-0888-4b88-8e82-971182d2649a&p=0)

The Education Service is very conscious that not all students will be able to access learning materials online at home. Many of our pupils come from families that are not so privileged and the weeks and months ahead could prove exceptionally difficult for them. Therefore the following information collated by my colleague Patrick Murphy may be of use to you and your school community.

**Supporting Families in Our School Communities**

Many families within our school communities will experience difficult and uncertain times due to the Covid-19 virus and periods of self-isolation.  In all likelihood this may result in financial implications due to loss of income or increased pressures on low incomes.    Below are a few links to provide information to assist parents and careers on how to access various levels of support.

**Catholic Children’s Society** – Crisis Fund - <https://www.cathchild.org.uk/crisis-fund/>

The Crisis Fund provides immediate financial support for families facing a crisis in their lives.  Parish Priests and Headteachers can apply to this fund on behalf of a family and we will respond within 24 hours.  This support can make a huge difference to families in desperate situations when they have nowhere else to turn.

**Caritas Westminster** – Caritas Food Collective - <https://www.caritaswestminster.org.uk/caritas-food-collective-918.php>

Caritas Westminster has launched a new initiative across the Diocese of Westminster to tackle the problem of food poverty and insecurity. The project, called [Caritas Food Collective](https://www.caritasfoodcollective.org.uk/), has three key aims: to expand direct food relief across the diocese, to support people to become more food secure through signposting and skills training, and to develop education and advocacy across the diocese so together we can tackle the issues underlying the problem of food poverty.

**St Vincent De Paul (SVP)**  - Community Support Projects – <https://www.svp.org.uk/community-support-projects>

This includes our Community Shops, Furniture Stores, Advice and Support Centres, Supported Accommodation and our contract with the Home Office to manage and run two local Approved Premises. SVP members are also involved with holiday camps and the running of local soup runs and food banks

**The Trussel Trust** – Food Banks - <https://www.trusselltrust.org/>

The website provides useful information on locating your local Foodbank and how you can access emergency help.

**Citizens Advice Bureau** – Advice and support for parents on low incomes - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/help-if-on-a-low-income/>

**Early Help Hubs/Social Services** – All local authorities have advice and support for families experiencing difficulties – Direct parents to your local authority website.

**Gingerbread** – Charity supporting single parent families - <https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/coronavirus/>

**The Money Advice Service** – Free impartial advice on money issues by the Government -  <https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you>

**Caritas Social Action Network** – Provides a comprehensive list of agencies who offer a wide range of help, support and advice on social issues <https://www.csan.org.uk/>

Caritas Social Action Network shares in the mission of the Catholic Church in England & Wales. We animate and co-ordinate our network of social action charities and dioceses, working in collaboration with them to help poor, vulnerable and marginalised people find their voice and to enable them to improve their lives.

**National Debt Line** – A national helpline and advisory service giving free, impartial and confidential debt advice - <https://www.nationaldebtline.org/EW/factsheets/Pages/coronavirus-advice-and-support/help-and-advice.aspx>

**Local Authority** – Grants, Benefits and Crisis Funds - <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

Use the web link to find your local authority where you can access services and seek advice on potential grants, benefits and funds

**Family Action** – Charity supporting families – <https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/grants/>

Family Action works to tackle some of the most complex and difficult issues facing families today – including financial hardship, mental health problems, social isolation, learning disabilities, domestic abuse, or substance misuse and alcohol problems.

**Family Fund** – Charity supporting families with disabled or seriously ill children - <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/>

Family Fund is the UK’s largest charity providing grants for families raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people.

**Turn2Us** - Turn2us is a national charity providing practical help to people who are struggling financially.  - <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/>

Turn2us helps people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face through our partner organisations.

**Communication and Video Conferencing**

Over the next few months, video-conferencing will be a central strand of our communication strategy; particularly with schools. We appreciate that some schools have other systems in place but we have been asked to use MS Teams.

The Education Service recommends the use of this facility for forthcoming interviews for positions in schools in the absence of a face to face meeting.

Microsoft have their “Commitment to customers during COVID-19”. This includes the provision of a free “freemium” licence for individuals that do not have access to teams through Office 365.

Colleagues may find that, to maintain and manage recruitment over the next few months, Teams offers a viable alternative to interviews in school.

The link to the Microsoft commitment is: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/blog/2020/03/05/our-commitment-to-customers-during-covid-19/>

The page explains how individuals and companies can access Teams. Nigel Spears is well versed in the use of this facility and he is willing to help any Headteacher with any queries.

**Education Resources accessed through our website:**

Amanda Crowley and the team have set up new channels on each of our SLACK sharing platforms to aid the sharing of resources and links for home learning.  *Please note, as an Education Service, we do not endorse or take responsibility for the quality of resources shared, we merely facilitate the platform.*

We currently have three SLACK platforms:

**Primary RE**

The new channel is called:

- home learning

**Secondary RE**

The new channels are called:

- KS3

- Home Learning A Level AQA

- Home Learning A Level EDEXCEL

- Home Learning A Level EDUQAS

- Home Learning A Level OCR

- Home Learning GCSE AQA

- Home Learning GCSE EDUQAS

- Home Learning GCSE EDEXCEL

- Home Learning

**Chaplains**

The new channel is called:

- Home Reflections

Those primary schools who require a SLACK login should contact Diana Roberts [dianaroberts@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:dianaroberts@rcdow.org.uk)

Those secondary schools who require a SLACK login should contact Claire O'Neill [claireoneill@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:claireoneill@rcdow.org.uk)

Please let Amanda Crowley know if you require any further information.

**Coronavirus Covid-19 Guidance from the Church**

<https://rcdow.org.uk/news/advice-regarding-coronavirus/>

The Bishops' Conference have recorded a podcast with Prof Jim McManus, who has prepared the guidance for the Church, in which he explains the current situation in greater detail and offers some useful, practical advice. Here is the link:

<https://soundcloud.com/catholicchurch/coronavirus-and-catholics>

Here is a list of home learning platforms and resources to refer to.  Please see below those I am aware of (some are subscription based, but many are offering periods of free subscription).  Some they will need to have set up and engaged with such as Google Classroom / Show My HW… but others they can just go to the link and access resources and activities.

·        Show My Homework [www.showmyhomework.com](http://www.showmyhomework.com/)

·        Google Classroom [www.classroom.google.com](http://www.classroom.google.com/)

·        Microsoft Teams

·        Kerboodle [www.kerboodle.com](http://www.kerboodle.com/)

·        BBC Bitesize <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>

·        GCSE Pod [www.gcsepod.com](http://www.gcsepod.com/)

·        Maths Watch [www.vle.mathswatch.co.uk](http://www.vle.mathswatch.co.uk/)

·        Maths Genie [www.mathsgenie.co.uk](http://www.mathsgenie.co.uk/)

·        Khan Academy [https://www.khanacademy.org](https://www.khanacademy.org/)

·        BBC Learning <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/coursesearch/>

·        Futurelearn [https://www.futurelearn.com](https://www.futurelearn.com/)

·        Seneca [https://www.senecalearning.com](https://www.senecalearning.com/)

·        Openlearn <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/>

·        Blockly [https://blockly.games](https://blockly.games/)

·        Scratch <https://scratch.mit.edu/explore/projects/games/>

·        Ted Ed [https://ed.ted.com](https://ed.ted.com/)

·        National Geographic Kids <https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/>

·        Duolingo [https://www.duolingo.com](https://www.duolingo.com/)

·        Mystery Science [https://mysteryscience.com](https://mysteryscience.com/)

·        The Kids Should See This [https://thekidshouldseethis.com](https://thekidshouldseethis.com/)

·        Crash Course [https://thecrashcourse.com](https://thecrashcourse.com/)

·        Crash Course Kids <https://m.youtube.com/user/crashcoursekids>

·        Crest Awards [https://www.crestawards.org](https://www.crestawards.org/)

·        iDEA Awards [https://idea.org.uk](https://idea.org.uk/)

·        Paw Print Badges [https://www.pawprintbadges.co.uk](https://www.pawprintbadges.co.uk/)

·        Tinkercad [https://www.tinkercad.com](https://www.tinkercad.com/)

·        Prodigy Maths [https://www.prodigygame.com](https://www.prodigygame.com/)

·        Cbeebies Radio <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/radio>

·        Nature Detectives <https://naturedetectives.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/>

·        British Council <https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/find>

·        Oxford Owl for Home <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/>

·        Big History Project <https://www.bighistoryproject.com/home>

·        Geography Games <https://world-geography-games.com/world.html>

·        Blue Peter Badges <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/joinin/about-blue-peter-badges>

·        The Artful Parent <https://www.facebook.com/artfulparent/>

·        Red Ted Art [https://www.redtedart.com](https://www.redtedart.com/)

·        The Imagination Tree [https://theimaginationtree.com](https://theimaginationtree.com/)

·        Toy Theater <https://toytheater.com/>

·        DK Find Out <https://www.dkfindout.com/uk/?fbclid=IwAR2wJdpSJSeITf4do6aPhff8A3tAktnmpaxqZbkgudD49l71ep8-sjXmrac>

·        Twinkl [https://www.twinkl.co.uk](https://www.twinkl.co.uk/)

I have also included a list of links sent home by one of our schools relating to advice and support for Anxiety

Please see below some links to advice and support that you can access:

Anxiety UK - advice and helpline

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/blog/health-and-other-forms-of-anxiety-and-coronavirus>

Mind - Coronavirus and your wellbeing

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your->wellbeing/#TakeCareOfYourMentalHealthAndWellbeing

Mental Health Foundation - Looking after your mental health during coronavirus outbreak

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-> coronavirus-outbreak

OCD Action - skype/phone support groups

<https://www.ocdaction.org.uk/support-groups/online2>

Place2Be Talking to children about coronavirus

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-> for-children

With best wishes.



JP Morrison

Director of Education

**CPD**

In the current climate, the Education Service has postponed all CPD opportunities between now and the Easter break. We will communicate new dates for courses as soon as there is more clarity. We will also be closely monitoring the situation in relation to our April events and will update our website and bulletins accordingly.

*Contact: Linette Blackmore* [*eduemc@rcdow.org.uk*](mailto:eduemc@rcdow.org.uk)

**Year 2 and 3 Moderation Tasks**

To provide moderation support the Primary Team have devised tasks for Years 2 and 3. In order to identify what progression in vocabulary could look like the Year 2 focuses on Attainment Target 1: Knowledge and Understanding, specifically Religious and Specialist Vocabulary. The Year 3 focuses on Attainment Target 3 – Analysis and Evaluation.  Both tasks will also demonstrate skills across Attainment Target 1- Knowledge and Understanding. Attainment Target 3 skills are underpinned and supported by many of the skills taught in literacy lessons such as persuasive writing. For diocesan diagnostic purposes the tasks will need to be undertaken and sent in by **Monday the 27th of April** if you would like to provide samples for comparative judgement use.

*Contact: Diana Roberts*[*dianaroberts@rcdow.org.uk*](mailto:dianaroberts@rcdow.org.uk)*.*

**CAPITAL**

**Capital Work Protocol**

Reminder – Schools must employ the services of a Diocesan Approved Buildings Consultant when planning, specifying, procuring and delivering any Capital Works Project. This directive is based on the advice of legal counsel and is intended to protect both the owner and occupier of a Catholic School.

**LCVAP**

We are still waiting for the Government to announce the School Capital Allocations for 2020/2021. The Trustees have ranked the programme in preparation but will not permit the circulation of that list until after the Government have confirmed the allocations.

Known facts:

* The 2020/21 Programme will be based on the Projects promoted by School Governing Bodies in the Autumn Term of 2019.
* The Trustees will endeavour to support as many proposals as possible, even though this will result in most projects not receiving the full amount requested.

Moving forward. The Trustees have selected the software “Statlog” as their preferred Capital and Asset Management System.

Henceforth, all Strategic Level Capital Work will be identified from the data contained in Statlog. This means that governing bodies will not be invited to represent the needs of their school through a “bidding” process. Instead:

* Need will be identified using the Asset management data provided to Statlog by the specialist Building Consultants retained by the Governing Body
* Governing bodies will be advised when their school has been identified as a potential recipient for Strategic Capital Investment and invited to work with their Consultant to develop an appropriate and deliverable solution.

This appears to be a significant change in policy but in reality it is not. For some years, the Trustees have applied a policy that identifies school capital projects based on high priority need. The vast majority of Responsible Bodies in England use data to identify need and target their resources accordingly. The adoption of a similar “best practice” model will help to ensure that the Trustees can account for all of the entrusted public funding.

**Statlog**

From April 2020, Statlog will be rolled out across the Diocese. Schools are encouraged to engage as soon as possible.

Statlog is not free. There is a monthly licence fee to use the software (See PDF Attachment) and there are certain setup fees that will be payable to your own retained Building Consultant.

However, it is not all bad news. Since the introduction of the requirement for all Capital Works to be managed using retained consultants, Governing Bodies (and the building consultants) have made representations to the Trustees seeking an amendment to this policy. The main arguments presented were:

* Governors were frustrated that they have to pay a fee of 12%+ when they employ staff that could effectively manage a Minor Works Programme
* Consultants were reluctant to take on Minor Work when the fee does not cover their time/resource commitment

After exploring the potential of Statlog, the Trustees have concluded that there are sufficient safeguards within Statlog for them to permit Governing Bodies to manage Minor Works Projects themselves.

A full definition of Minor Works will be provided at a later date. However, it is expected to include:

* Work focused on the repair, maintenance and development of assigned spaces and systems. (Work that add or remove floor area is likely to be excluded)
* Work that is directly funded by the Governing Body using any combination of Devolved Formula Capital, Governors Voluntary Fund and School Revenue. (Work paid for, in part or whole, from public or private funding sources that are controlled by a third-party are likely to be excluded)

**Example 1 (1FE Primary School):**

Statlog Licence - £120.00 per month (£1,440.00 per annum)

In year, the Governing Body commissions £25,000.00 of Minor Work

Under the existing terms and conditions of occupation, the Governing Body require the services of their retained buildings consultant to manage this work. The fee is 12% (£3,000.00 + VAT @ 20% (£600.00) = £3,600.00)

**By using Statlog, this school will save £2,160.00! (£3,600.00 - £1,440.00)**

**Example 2 (5FE or 6FE Secondary School):**

Statlog Licence - £155.00 per month (£1,860.00 per annum)

In year, the Governing Body commissions £90,000.00 of Minor Work

Under the existing terms and conditions of occupation, the Governing Body require the services of their retained buildings consultant to manage this work. The fee is 12% (£10,800.00 + VAT @ 20% (£2,160.00) = £12,960.00)

**By using Statlog, this school will save £11,100.00! (£12,960.00 - £1,860.00)**

Statlog is not restricted to a single Building Consultant. Governing Bodies and Academy Trustees will continue to have the options to select any of the Diocesan Trustees recognised/approved Building Consultants. Training will be offered to all Building Consultants.

Contact*: Nigel Spears.* [*nigelspears@rcdow.org.uk*](mailto:nigelspears@rcdow.org.uk)*, 07738183828*

**CCRS News**

Congratulations to the 11 members of staff who have just successfully completed their Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies by attending a course in Islington. There will be a further 10 teachers from Hertfordshire celebrating the same success shortly after Easter.

Recent comments have included, *‘I have a greater understanding of what it means to teach in a Catholic school.’*

*‘Putting Christ at the centre of all I do at school has helped me to become a better person and teacher.’*

*‘I have really enjoyed attending CCRS sessions and taking part in discussions and presentations.’*

CCRS is, undoubtedly, of great benefit to all teachers and particularly for those considering a leadership post. If you are interested in attending a course, please contact*:*

*Liz O’Brien at*[*ccrs@rcdow.org.uk*](mailto:ccrs@rcdow.org.uk)*07738183831*

A course overview can be found at:  <https://education.rcdow.org.uk/professional-development/ccrs>

**Good News Slot**

(Please note: this section of the Communique consists of good news which have been sent in from schools around the diocese. It may well be that others have achieved similar awards or success and, if so, we congratulate them too! Please send your news to [greenyl@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:greenyl@rcdow.org.uk) )

*We are happy to publicise all sorts of achievements, although we do not usually feature OFSTED outcomes.*

**SAD NEWS**

Colleagues will have learnt with great sadness of the death of Ruth Sykes, Headteacher of St Anselm’s in Southall. We remember her with great love, and pray for her family and the St Anselm’s community at this very sad time. May she rest in peace.

*Prayer from the St Anselm’s school community*



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