

Witness to the Word – 10th June 2020



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1. Diocesan Updates

Churches Re-opening

Cardinal Vincent has welcomed the decision that Catholic churches, that can safely do so, will re-open for individual prayer on 15th June. In his statement, he said:

'This is a first, measured step in restoring the more normal practice of our faith and will be welcomed by so many, who have waited with great patience since 23rd March when our churches were closed, by government decision, as part of the fight against this pandemic. I thank everyone for that patience. It is important that every care is taken to ensure that the guidance given for this limited opening is fully observed, not least by those entering our churches. Our preparation is taking place with thoroughness. Visiting a church for individual prayer, benefiting from the sacredness of that space, can be done safely and confidently.'

'Not every Catholic church will be open on 15th June. Local decisions and provision have to lead this process. But it is a great blessing, for individuals and for the benefit of all in society, that church doors will again be open to all who long to pray there for the peace and grace we need today.'

'This first step enables us to learn and prepare for those that will take us to a fuller use of our churches, for the celebration of Mass and other sacraments. We await that time with deep longing but patient understanding that the protection of the health of our society, especially of the most vulnerable, is a proper cause for caution and care.'

Diocese of Westminster – Going Green for Energy

Please find attached a summary of the work on green energy of the Diocese, in conjunction with Church Marketplace and its partners.

Diocese of Westminster Education Service - Online Training and CPD

Please find all upcoming online training opportunities for the Summer Term [here](#). Please do speak to your adviser if you would like to arrange school or deanery wide training at a particular time.

Casting the Net Out - Andrew O'Neill

Please enjoy reading an article in the Tablet this week by the Headteacher of All Saints Catholic College, Andrew O'Neill. Andrew has written a reflective piece placing welcoming of more children back into schools, within a scriptural context.

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/blogs/1/1482/casting-the-net-out-as-schools-reopen>

Caritas Westminster during COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Caritas Westminster has been supporting parishes and schools to start new projects or adapt existing ones to meet the increased demand for social outreach in the community. New projects have included pop up food banks, delivering food to those stuck at home and making phone calls and visits to those who may be suffering from loneliness. Support from Caritas Westminster has included sourcing food using well established connections in food distribution charities, advising on risk assessments amid new social distancing rules, recruiting and training more volunteers and accessing funding through internal or external grants. A key initiative during this time has been our emergency food voucher scheme, distributed to those in need by parishes, several of whom have worked in conjunction with their local schools. [See news for more information]

How can Caritas Westminster help you?

We know schools have been at the forefront of helping families over the last few months and are often the ones to know when a family is struggling. We understand a lot of these problems, such as food poverty and digital exclusion come down to the financial struggles families are facing. We are aware many schools are finding families who are struggling due to a lack of access to the internet and digital devices. Caritas Westminster is keen to support you to help those who need it most.

Poverty & Digital Exclusion: Please complete our survey here and share your experiences with us, so we can identify where the need is and how we can better help your school and families. Please contact us directly at caritaswestminster@rcdow.org.uk if you have an immediate and/or specific need.

COMPLETE SURVEY HERE

Helping those in Financial Crisis: - Caritas are currently offering training and resources to help signpost those in financial need and other topics – you can find out more here.

Making Sense of the Covid-19 pandemic through Catholic Social Teaching

We understand that this time has been challenging for teachers and students, and have prepared the following set of resources for year 6 & 7 students.

These use our core values; the six Catholic Social Teaching themes, to help students to make sense of the pandemic and the way we respond to it.

This is in the form of 4 lessons, which can be used with year 6 and 7 students in the last 4-5 weeks of term.

Building Community & Participation: - If you like these resources, then many more are available through our 'Caritas Ambassadors' programme. We know students are already engaged to help those in their local community through activities such as food collections, and letter writing to tackle elderly isolation, and we'd like to support you to develop this further. If you would like more information about this, for primary or secondary schools, please get in touch with us at caritaswestminster@rcdow.org.uk

2. Personnel Updates

Appraisal Policies

The CES have recently updated their model Appraisal Policies. These can be found at <http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/employment-documents/model-policies-and-procedures/itemlist/category/77-england-schools>

Please ensure that your policies are updated before the annual ratification by governors in the Autumn term. We expect an updated Capability Policy soon.

Staff Risk Assessments

You should have been provided with pro-forma Risk Assessments to use with colleagues who are concerned about returning to work. We have been told that some colleagues from the BAME community feel that the standard assessments do not fully take account of the additional risks to BAME people. You may find the attached resource helpful.

3. DfE Updates

Covid-19 Update - Governance

The DfE published a message from the Secretary of State and FAQs about the key issues being faced by those governing schools at this time:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update/governance-update-april-2020>

Please note also the latest Schools Q&A: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing>

Actions for Early Years Providers: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>

Mental Wellbeing Resources

Practical materials for primary and secondary schools to use to train staff about teaching mental wellbeing. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing>

RSHE Update Summary

The Department remains committed to supporting all schools in their preparations to deliver these subjects. In light of these circumstances, the Department wants to reassure schools that they have flexibility over how they discharge their duty within the first year of compulsory teaching.

Schools who assess that they are prepared to deliver teaching and have met the requirements set out in the statutory guidance are encouraged to begin delivering teaching from 1 September 2020, or whenever is practicable to do so within the first few weeks of the new school year.

Schools that assess that they have been unable to adequately meet the requirements because of the lost time and competing priorities should aim to start preparations to deliver the new curriculum and to commence teaching the new content no later than the start of the Summer Term 2021. To ensure teaching begins as soon as possible, schools are encouraged to take a phased approach (if needed) when introducing these subjects. Schools should consider prioritising curriculum content on mental health and wellbeing, as knowledge on supporting your own and others' wellbeing will be important as pupils return to schools.

4. Prayer and Worship Resources

Weekly Rosary

Please join us each week as we pray a decade of the Rosary together. This Friday, June 12th, we recite the Fourth Luminous Mystery: The Transfiguration.

You can join via YouTube <https://youtu.be/cScihLQWiIM> or alternatively download the powerpoint [here](#)

Weekly Beatitude Assembly

Please click [here](#) for a Primary and a Secondary Powerpoint resource that can be used with students

Pope's prayer intention for June: the Heart of Jesus

This month, during which the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart occurs, the Holy Father asks that 'we pray that all those who suffer may find their way in life, allowing themselves to be touched by the Heart of Jesus.' See The Pope's Prayer Intention Video [here](#)

Novena to the Sacred Heart – concluding on 19th June 2020.

There is a long-standing tradition in the Church of dedicating nine days of prayer to the Heart of Christ, concluding on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart on 19th June. Many parishes and schools already pray this Novena every year and there are many beautiful variations. This year, we present a version, composed by the Pope's Prayer Network Director in London, which will be available online at www.popesglobalprayer.net. Each day of the Novena is presented in an Ignatian way, suggesting a Spiritual Exercise each day.

CAFOD National Assembly 18th June

CAFOD are delivering an online assembly to share how the lives of others around the world are being impacted by Coronavirus. This will take place on Thursday 18 June at 10am, on [CAFOD's YouTube page](#). (This will be available beforehand in case teachers want to check the content beforehand, and of course, you will be able to watch it together at a later time of your choosing.)

5. Mental Health Focus – Children Returning to School

The Government have recognised the importance of looking after the mental health/wellbeing of children as they return to school in the coming weeks and months producing advice for parents [Click Here](#)

Many charities who work in mental health have created resources that support this endeavour.

The **Anna Freud Centre** has produced a guide entitled **‘Managing the Transition Back to School.’** It includes a series of helpful steps that schools can take to support children and young people during this time of uncertainty and potential anxiety:

- Keeping familiar routines
- Promotion of safe spaces for discussion
- Safe spaces for children and young people
- Trusted Adults to provide reassurance and assistance
- Identifying clear processes for children’s questions
- Continuing to work closely with families
- Understanding the needs of children and young people
- A whole school approach

To download the document [Click Here](#)

Another Useful guide entitles **‘Managing unexpected endings and transitions.’** can be downed by [Clicking Here](#)

Place2Be has a resource based on themes to support children’s mental health on returning to school:

- Self-Efficacy
- Hope
- Gratitude
- Connectedness

To download the document [Click Here](#)

Young Minds charity have a wide range of resources to support the mental health and well-being of young people. A helpful resource for staff on what to look out for when supporting the mental health and well-being of young people. To download the resource [Click Here](#)

The **Mental Health Foundation** has useful advice on supporting the mental health and well-being of children returning to school: [Click Here](#)

6. Pupil Placement Planning and Capital Projects

1st Planner – Demographic Survey

Phase 2 of this project is now underway. 1st Planner is preparing an introductory video for schools. Within the next few weeks, 1st Planner will begin to contact Heads, Governors and other colleagues in the 4 Local Authority areas identified as part of the Pilot Study.

- Tower Hamlets
- Kensington and Chelsea
- Westminster
- Camden

In Phase 2, 1st Planner will begin to look at the specifics of individual schools and the communities they serve. The visioning exercises will begin to explore the processes for ensuring a healthy, engaging and vibrant Catholic School provision that is designed for the 21st Century and beyond. The local knowledge of School Leaders and Governors will help to shape the development of viable options and track demographic change.

Capital

VASCA 2020/21

23 Projects are now live on Statlog. School Leaders and Governors from those 23 schools, with the support of their Building Consultants, are fully engaged in the process of scoping and procuring the essential work approved by the education Commission.

A further 10 schools will join the live project group as soon as the named consultants have accepted the commissions. School colleagues are asked to reconfirm the project once their consultant is onboard so please be alert to this step.

10 offers of funding have not received responses.

URN	Site	LA	Consultant	Project Title
139122	St Richard Reynolds Catholic High School	London Borough of Richmond upon Thames	DHP	Sports hall replacement flooring and associated works
100494	Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School	London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	Choose a New Consultant	Safeguarding & educational therapy unit
117488	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and Nursery	Hertfordshire County Council	Choose a New Consultant	Flat roof renewal - phase 1
133288	St Elizabeth Catholic Primary School	London Borough of Tower Hamlets	Choose a New Consultant	Condition works to heating distribution system and built fabric
102039	St Monica's Catholic Primary School	London Borough of Enfield	Choose a New Consultant	Asbestos removal, roofing & associated works
102425	St Mary's Catholic Primary School	London Borough of Hillingdon	DHP	Safeguarding Improvement Works
100503	All Saints Catholic College	London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	Wilby & Burnett	Phase 2 H&S Repairs, Windows And Science Lab Refurbishment.
101337	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	London Borough of Barnet	Choose a New Consultant	Roof Refurbishment And Associated Works
102545	Gunnersbury Catholic School	London Borough of Hounslow	DHP	Emergency Boiler Replacement Works
117488	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and Nursery	Hertfordshire County Council	Synergy Construction and Property Consultants LLP	Boiler Replacement And Associated Work

Please contact Statlog for assistance if you cannot access the system.

Statlog

The initial training session with consultants was very positive. Training was provided in the use of:

- The Strategic Survey Tool
- Site Manager Tests (Statutory Compliance), and
- Contractor Tests (Statutory Compliance)

Schools seeking consent from the Diocesan Trustees to manage Minor Works Projects at a local level must ensure:

- a) That the Statutory Compliance aspects of Statlog are fully operational on their site(s), and
- b) That their Survey data is up to date in Statlog

Once both elements are in place, School Business Managers can apply for permission to manage Minor Works Projects themselves. Until written consent is provided, the current protocols remain in effect and schools must engage their retained building consultant when undertaking any Capital Work.

Please do not delay. If you are hoping for VASCA Funding in the future, you do need to ensure that the needs of your school are correctly recorded in Statlog. If they are not in the system by January 2021, you will not be eligible for VASCA funding in 2021/22.

Priority School Building Programme

Project managers continue to monitor the progress of schools in this scheme. Some contractors can make headway whilst ensuring social distancing.