**To           :              Headteachers; Chairs of Governors; Ex-Officio Clergy; Foundation Governors**

**From     :               Jeff Williams**

**Date      :               27 May 2020**

**Re           :              Weekly email and resources from The Diocesan Education Team**

Dear colleagues

As we approach the partial expansion of school provision, in the myriad of creative ways in which our schools are approaching this, I wanted to take the opportunity to thank Leadership Teams and Governors for spending so much time reflecting on the risks, challenges and benefits, and for the detailed plans they have developed. Clearly what we are doing is being watched with interest from the three other constituent countries of the UK, where school buildings remain closed to children, other than those from the specified Key Worker families, and those deemed vulnerable.

The ways in which businesses, shops and others are responding in the initial relaxation of lockdown requirements, makes one think that for the foreseeable future, life will not return to ‘normal’. An interesting word in itself, as it generates important questions about what is actually *normal* in a range of contexts, beyond the Covid 19 discussion. What is normal for some, is, never has been, or never will be for others. What’s normal in one country, community or society, is not necessarily so in another. What is most definitely normal for our schools, are the underpinning values and ethos – which have been exemplified beyond measure during this period, and will continue to be normal in whatever form learning and school will be in the months ahead. Having such a cornerstone on which to anchor ourselves when times become troubled, testing or perplexing, brings security and refuge, and often inspires and galvanises us.

I’m pleased to have found time during this period to consider some of the new ‘normal’ in my family and friendship circles, and will definitely build on and embed them as restrictions are relaxed. Equally, things that I previously routinely did, because they’d become normalised, I will strive hard to ditch and put aside, even if for specified days and seasons.

Wishing you strength, resilience and humility in the immediate weeks ahead, when the new normal for schools is tested and revised.

Thank you for all you do and are,

Best wishes

***Jeff***

**Storytime** : Do enjoy this week’s story – **Smelly Louie**, which I know will appeal to many and especially resonate with those of us who have dogs! I’m grateful to **The Very Rev’d Catherine Ogle, Dean of Winchester** who has chosen this book and reads it with her own dog paying attention  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGQ6-cohFf8>

**Resources** : Our weekly package of resources for families, friends and others is attached. Feel free to share them among your networks. Four of this week’s resource attachments relate to **Pentecost**, so would be ideal for sharing with parishes.

**Safeguarding** : We hear of the sad increased incidence of domestic abuse during the Lockdown period, as well as innovative ways that pharmacies, shops and others have responded to support those at risk of, or who are being abused. Anecdotally I’m hearing that social workers and child protection agencies are preparing for a rise in casework and referrals as school provision broadens next week. Teachers and support staff have often been at the front line of spotting the signs and signals of abuse of children and young people. While the majority of children and young people have been away from those who genuinely care for the child’s whole health and wellbeing, sadly we know that some abuse will have increased; and in these very challenging times, some forms of abuse will have begun in families where previously there was no apparent or obvious indicator.

I’m privileged with colleagues to sit on Safeguarding panels and LA Groups, and wanted to share the attached leaflets with you, with a request that you might gently bring them to the attention of others, so that  we might all work to support and care for children at risk of abuse.

**People and their pups :** It’s lovely to see Dean Catherine with her dog in this week’s video. As a way of bringing you some joy, and a sideways link or introduction to people who work across the two dioceses, each week I’ll share a few photos of their dogs. It would be good to receive any photos of Headteachers’ dogs or School Dogs for future weeks! Thank you.

Attached is a photo of **Colin Harbidge’s dog, Brock.** Colin is Head of Operations in Winchester Diocese. Colin has aptly titled his photo : *‘The wise person builds his bouncy house upon the Brock’*?!!!! Also attached is a photo of eight week old **Leia** – this puppy belongs to **Lauren McDermott,** PA to The Diocesan Secretary in Portsmouth Diocese.

Thank you again for all you do and are.

Best wishes

**Jeff**

Jeff Williams

Director of Education

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