**To           :              Headteachers; Chairs of Governors; Foundation Governors; Ex-officio clergy; Deputy Headteachers; RE Coordinators**

(and please forward widely to your contacts & networks)

**From     :               Jeff Williams**

**Date      :               9th March 2022**

**Re           :              Fortnightly bulletin and resources from the Diocesan Education Team**

Dear colleagues

**Bereavement** affects people in different ways, and creeps up or directly hits people at different times – with deep grief sometimes being experienced even before a loved-one or friend dies.

I’ve recently been listening to a wide range of conversations on a podcast series called **‘Happy Place’** and is refreshing in that the conversations are with significant and interesting people, who are not the usual ‘celebrities’. Impacting on me was the conversation with a former finance director from Sweden, Bjorn Natthiko Lindeblad, who gave up his high-powered role to become a teacher. He later renounced everything and lived in **Thailand’s jungle for 17 years** as a Buddhist Forest Monk. He returned to society, married, and wrote a book based on his default approach to any potentially challenging encounter, or meeting with someone who may evoke a defensive attitude in him by silently repeating to himself **‘I may be wrong’**. The book, ‘I may be wrong’, already a Sunday Times Bestseller was published last month – four weeks after Bjorn’s **death from ALS,** which is a progressive nervous system disease that affects cells in the brain and spinal cord, causing loss of muscle control.

The podcast was therefore recorded in his dying weeks, and is understandably even more poignant when listening to his reflections. His family and friends consequently began grieving and experienced bereavement even before his anticipated death.

At the weekend, I walked through a **Commonwealth War Graves cemetery** near our home, and was even more struck than previously with the number of well-tended, gleaming white headstones with the names of **young men aged 18 who had perished** during the World wars. Listening to the news later that day, it was clear that many **Ukranian women** are already feeling an uninvited and unanticipated sense of being bereft and grieving, as they rush to safety from their beloved country -  while their neighbours, friends, brothers, sons and fathers face death.

These are perplexing, scary and upsetting times for us all as adults, leave alone children. The Christian message of **Hope** (which is much deeper than just ‘wishful thinking’), and Christian beliefs about **death and eternity** are even more relevant in these times. As parents, family, friends or teachers, trying to explain the current situation to children in age-appropriate, sensitive ways, can be a real challenge. There are many resources and much advice, from the D*f*E, Christian charities and individuals – as well as a host of children’s books about refugees, that I commend to you. These are collated for you in the attached document, with a wealth of websites, blogs, books and links to videos and programmes that I hope you will find helpful and informative. Do please have a look and feel free to share widely. The **Department for Education (D*f*E)** has [published a blog](https://url6.mailanyone.net/v1/?m=1nQ7Vy-0001wr-4q&i=57e1b682&c=JTiacLqSGdowYgSdQiVjkFKjHyzO0Ctnbcgvi2pUYJmKPxXX8jtDY9ebIrJtRd9naPocc4oHPPLp7F8_Qh6HV-t4Grulu4qVIntwR-ial3On8JDZaxvbx3_h1Q7vFpObtg5VusiV2dbGYrVzbCaGa6xhMSDlA5esikrClYBGikmZgWrn7u9Y3HzAT3eZiCPc5imy2A3fEy9lncN4_0WEVJ6FIAPET6tAvG1Mb-qHQ2riy2s25EHdapz0mlocd4q1ouuDntKb-S2PQQbIXgGET6PO9bcwhPO_3J6TUwwjGA0) with the aim of helping schools and families talk to pupils about the conflict in Ukraine.  The blog encourages teachers to be “comfortable without an answer for everything – and help your pupils feel comfortable with that too”. The Children’s Commissioner has also [spoken on the issue, writing in Schools Week](https://url6.mailanyone.net/v1/?m=1nQ7Vy-0001wr-4q&i=57e1b682&c=6Y0ZDMP1_F_oN1vcA04542rOaK_ZjoyQeyZl4EmQY_pkTK5kcCO5TwKEoj7HHGOvQUIUTLURhs0qtgOzAMsOBc3bZA4bBF7zSzjPKpZPtecYYsB9_STb0aSwKkP_20HE04knCrBsF-1hedHILkLnCPLYASHZx6kOiwrEw3kiScVvgSG7L3nm0n4EsV5JsNVHGRww4VLoKgiGViRyhKk3gt61Rx0J7o1FVLHHrqFR-wYZJyoQQzCW364tWfWEh9Rx6R8Aaw3hzJs690Zkso85TD4S7g22aJ5sQfTChAxejX8) that **“children today are a generation that feel connected across the world through social media…we should not hide what is happening but support children in understanding it”.**

Last week I met the founder of **Winchester City of Sanctuary**, and have also been looking at the materials on the **Southampton City of Sanctuary** and **Portsmouth City of Sanctuary** websites. Do please consider the resources and guidance for schools that can be even more proactive in building a welcoming and inclusive society <https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/>    **Bournemouth ‘City Area’ of Sanctuary** is preparing to welcome and support refugees, and working closely with all organisations and groups who will be involved in their childcare, living support, language support, medical care, housing, education and recreation. Rebecca Fell, CEO of the International Care Network (ICN), has encouraged our colleague Ian Terry, Vicar of Bournemouth Town Centre parish to be the Dorset and local schools’ contact for ***Schools of Sanctuary*,** which I support unreservedly and commend Ian to colleagues in that area of our diocese.

Grief over the creeping loss of world stability and peace is already tangible. Bereavement from killings is already spreading. So I thank you for all you are considering doing in your communities and schools. Multiple examples of small actions cumulate in deep impact. Educating communities and seeking people’s support will change perceptions, attitudes and society, and importantly the lives of refugees.

With best wishes найкращі побажання

Thank you Дякую тобі and bless you благословить вас

**Jeff**

**Resources, websites, videos, TV programmes & children’s books on The Ukraine crisis** **and refugees in general -** are collated in the attached document **‘Ukraine - the refugee crisis’.**

**Termly Briefings :** as mentioned in the separate invite-mailing, for this term these will remain online. At your request we have spread the meetings over different days and weeks, with one in the morning, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. There will be some updates at the meetings, but I anticipate leading these with a single-item agenda : **the government’s Education White Paper**, publication is imminent. Please contact my pa Sam.powell@portsmouth.anglican.org for a MS Teams link to your preferred date - these sessions are open to all in the circulation of this email. **Tuesday 29th March 6pm;  Friday 1st April 9.30am; Wednesday 6th April 1.30pm**

**Summer Term – IMPORTANT - Briefings :** Would all recipients, but particularly Head Teachers, Chairs of Governors, Foundation & Ex-Officio Governors **please hold** one of the following online diary slots when I can share national, regional and diocesan policy and logistics regarding the imminent White Paper and proposed consequent legislation, and how this impacts on our diocesan schools & the ramifications in our specific and geographical context, in  light of the Secretary of State’s anticipated statement. Briefings will be online, evening, afternoon and morning, to maximise engagement, culminating in an **in-person meeting**. Please book an MS Teams invite with my pa Sam.powell@portsmouth.anglican.org for one of the above online meetings, but additionally the in-person meeting (we require numbers to confirm a venue). Thank you.

Wed 16 June evening  – 6pm online

Mon 20 June afternoon – 1.30pm online

Mon 27 June morning – 9.30am online

Thurs 30 June  – 2pm in person

**Springs Dance Company** : workshops on Biblical themes for teachers and schools – please see attached flyers.

**Understanding Christianity Training** We are offering some free, online training on creative ways to teach the ‘God’ units in Understanding Christianity. This will take place on **29th or 31st March from 4:00 – 5:30,** and would be useful for any classroom teachers hoping to improve their subject knowledge or gain practical teaching ideas. Please contact Jane.Kelly@portsmouth.anglican.org for further information or a Microsoft Teams link.

**Salisbury Diocese RE Conference** Salisbury colleagues are inviting teachers from Winchester and Portsmouth Dioceses to their annual RE conference, which will be held online on **Thursday 31st March,** at a cost of £50. This year’s focus is on teaching Islam and Humanism. Please see the attached for more information.

**Free Easter Music Resources** [Pop UK](https://www.popuk.org/) offer songs and teaching videos to help children explore Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. These are now free for all primary schools.

**Admissions policies** – **VA, Foundation schools and Academies**: January 31st marked the end of the consultation window to communicate proposed changes to admissions policies for the 2023-2024 academic year. Thank you to those schools that have consulted and subsequently sent in their determined policies. The deadline for all governing body admissions authorities to determine their 2023-2024 policy, regardless of whether any changes have been made, was 28th February. Once this process has been completed, please send us a copy of your determined policy to: robert.sanders@portsmouth.anglican.org **Policies must be published on school/admissions authority websites by 15th March.**

**Training and meetings** : We are returning to work from the office and engaging in more in-person meetings and training events, but will permanently offer some of our training online, given the exponential growth in attendance. If you would like bespoke training for your SLT, Governors or Staff, please contact my PA Sam.powell@portsmouth.anglican.org These sessions are already available generally :

**Collective Worship in a Church of England School – Wednesday 16th March 6.30 and Monday 4th April 6.30**

**The Role of Foundation Governors *(for new governors)* – Wednesday 30th March 6.30**

Jeff Williams

Director of Education

Diocese of WINCHESTER &

Diocese of PORTSMOUTH

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