

5 January 2021

Dear Colleagues

A very Happy New Year to you all – let us hope that 2021 will eventually prove to be a more normal year with fewer challenges.

We are acutely aware that for many a break was not possible, given that you continued to monitor the spread of the virus in your local communities throughout the Christmas break and in some cases right up to New Years day.

The uncertainties and frustrations following yesterday's announcement are understandable but there is much hope amid the chaos. In this season of epiphany Isaiah (60:1-2) offers us the following words of inspirational encouragement emphasising that we are not alone on this journey and a world, plunged in gloom, is suddenly bathed in divine light.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you"

This latest announcement has brought a flood of new school closures, we do not underestimate how difficult these arrangements are for you and your staff and we do not take lightly the work involved in continuing to teach children both remotely and vulnerable and key worker children in school.

The Rev Revd Canon Nigel Genders - Chief Education Officer for the Church of England recently most aptly wrote.

"Schools are facing seemingly impossible decisions with pressure on both sides. It is time to take the politics out of those choices. Politicians, professional associations and school leaders and governors need to come together to enable wise decisions for the future because what we do in our schools impacts on real children and their families, our staff and the whole community".

We are in awe at your capacity, determination, resilience, and commitment to continue to do the very best for our children and young people – thank you - society is truly indebted.

Regular practical resources for collective worship and RE are being sent as soon as they are produced to help to save some time and carry a tiny part of your burden. Please watch your inboxes for these materials and pass them on to the most appropriate people.

You remain in our prayers – please do let us know how best we can support you.

With all best wishes

John, Virginia, Caroline, and Teresa