

**Diocese of Carlisle Board of Education**

**Heads Huddle Notes**

**Tuesday 8th December**

**Reflection:**

**Thank you to Leaders:**

For the sleepless nights spent running through script after script of decisions.

For the absorption of other people’s messes;

For thinking for others;

For the willingness to shoulder the burden for others.

For coming back again and again to an issue

when everyone else has left the building,

because

Someone Has To Do It and It’s The Right Thing To Do.

For being the one who walks to the edge and stares out at the future,

the uncertainty and the dreams,

and batters it into a recognisable, workable shape

to gift to those others.

For the relentless toil;

For the guilt suffered day by day;

For the dishwashers and the sick children

and the patience with those who need leadership and despise their need too.

For the headaches, the backaches, the self-aches and the soul aches;

For the courage,

Thank you

**Feedback from Headteachers: themes of the week**

**Christmas Hope:**

It was lovely to hear how again how schools are preparing for Christmas including some lovely plans (for staff as much as pupils!) for the last week of term.

**Closing the gap:**

Phonics screening – we feel your pain!

It’s generally the younger pupils who have the greatest gaps. Older pupils are catching up well. It’s been tricky to find the right balance between catching up and ensuring pupils still get a balanced curriculum, are happy at school and not stressed.

**COVID Logistics:**

We discussed the difficulty of dealing with the endless difficulties of bubble management and with parents who have become increasingly blazé about their own children’s unwellness and/or symptoms.

We also discussed Headteachers’ legitimate ongoing concerns about being expected to work as contact tracers should pupils test positive after the end of term. Not only will this result in additional work and stress for Headteachers, it may create ill will with families as Headteachers are the ‘bearers of bad news’.

**WAND:**

Free school meal vouchers. Concerns were discussed around the tight timing and the process for ensuring pupils who need vouchers will get them in time (some issues around downloading vouchers and some confusion over communicating with the local authority).

**DfE End of term guidance:**

We discussed the confusion caused by the DfE guidance suggesting that schools could use Friday 18th December as an INSET day. This appears to be so that if term ends for pupils on 17th December, no contact tracing will be expected of school staff on Christmas Eve. However, the late timing of this message means that plans are already in place for the last day of term, for January INSET days and the upheaval to school plans and to parents who will have childcare arranged would be immense.

Advice from Cumbria CC and PHA is not to close on 18th December:

***“Public Health Cumbria****have assured us that, whilst some parts of the country require a six-day Track and Trace window, in Cumbria there is a robust 48-hour Track and Trace system meaning that the additional day's closure is not necessary and as a headteacher in Cumbria you would not be required to provide T&T information from Monday 21st December (when you can happily switch your phone off!).*

*In Cumbria, I understand that primary headteachers in some clusters have decided to discuss and agree a joint cluster approach for their communities.*

*At the end of the day, the decision to close your school is the responsibility of your Governors but the advice from Cumbria will be not to close on Friday 18th December.*

*I hope that this goes some way to clarifying the confusion that the DfE announcement caused yesterday.“*

**Information sharing from the Diocese:**

**COVID issues:**

Vanessa will feed concerns to the local authority via the Ecuation Group and report back.

**Ofsted and SIAMS update:**

As you may well have seen this week, Ofsted have announced that their routine inspections will not resume **before** Summer term 2021. This, in turn, means that SIAMS inspections will not resume **before** Summer term 2021. We will, of course, keep you updated (once government decisions have been finalised) about arrangements for inspections and implications for our schools. Please be assured that we are truly sorry not to be able to give you any further guidance at this time and know that we share in your frustration.

**Conference planning:**

We are beginning to get excited about looking forwards … to a hope filled 2021 … which can include an inspiring conference … which will inspire us and lift us up. We are currently putting together what we hope will be an uplifting, thought provoking and helpful day. We would be grateful for any thoughts or views you may have including, in particular, whether you would prefer a face-to-face or an online gathering. We appreciate that both have their pros and cons.



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**Events Programme 2021**

Our events programme for Spring and Summer terms is now available and attached.

To book a place of any of our courses, training sessions or events or for more information, please email **education@carlislediocese.org.uk**(apart from Teaching Islam with Confidence which you can book directly with the Course Leader via the attached flyer).

Lots of our events are provided free of charge as part of our Core support.

If you have purchased the Enhanced Package in our Partnership Agreement, don’t forget to make use of your **free training places** at our Enhanced events.

We look forward to welcoming you to our sessions in 2021.

**Heads Huddles will continue**

**every Tuesday afternoon at 3.45pm**

**Please join us when you can.**

[**https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85053449378?pwd=dDBUa3NKdXozVHJoeWxnUUNab2FKQT09**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85053449378?pwd=dDBUa3NKdXozVHJoeWxnUUNab2FKQT09)

**Next Week**

**Tuesday 15th December, 3.45pm**

**Final Huddle of the Term**

We would love you to join us for a celebratory huddle. **Please do bring along some pictures, anecdotes or items to share** so we can see how you have been celebrating this term. We can’t wait to see and hear how you have been staying positive and enjoying your time in school.

