

**Diocese of Carlisle Board of Education**

**Heads Huddle Notes**

**Tuesday 5th January**

**Reflection: Psalm 46**

God is our refuge and strength,
    an ever-present help in trouble.
**2**Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
    and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
**3**though its waters roar and foam
    and the mountains quake with their surging.

**4**There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
    the holy place where the Most High dwells.
**5**God is within her, she will not fall;
    God will help her at break of day.
**6**Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
    he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

**7**The Lord Almighty is with us;
    the God of Jacob is our fortress.

**8**Come and see what the Lord has done,
    the desolations he has brought on the earth.
**9**He makes wars cease
    to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
    he burns the shieldswith fire.
**10**He says, “Be still, and know that I am God;
    I will be exalted among the nations,
    I will be exalted in the earth.”

**11**The Lord Almighty is with us;
    the God of Jacob is our fortress.

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

**Frustration and exhaustion:**

School leaders had spent much of their Christmas holiday planning and preparing for pupils to return to school as safely as possible. They felt frustrated to have wasted their time doing so, only to have an announcement made that schools would close as soon as term had started. Had the decision been made sooner, staff could have had some much needed rest or been preparing for remote learning instead. Headteachers are starting the term already exhausted and do not feel refreshed or that they have had a proper break.

**Staffing and anxiety:**

Staff are understandably anxious. They are concerned about whether it is safe to be in school at all. In one school represented at the huddle, all staff had handed in section 44 letters. The decision to move to remote learning for the majority of pupils had therefore been well received. However, those staff who are still working in school remain anxious – not just for themselves but for their families – they are concerned about bringing COVID home from school (especially if they live with vulnerable family members). Staffing in the smallest schools is particularly difficult – where one or two members of staff are either ill or vulnerable, there is no “slack” for providing cover in school. Headteachers and staff members are also facing personal difficulties with their own lack of childcare which is making covering in-school teaching even harder.

**Pupils in school:**

The numbers of families taking up the offer of a place (either because their child is vulnerable or because they are critical workers) varies massively from none to half the school. In many schools, numbers were very small (but still require at least two staff members to be present which adds to the staffing difficulties outlined above).

**Remote learning:**

All schools felt that they were providing higher quality remote learning now than during the first lockdown (partly because of parental expectations and needs – they can’t home school again; and partly because schools are more prepared than they were in March and have had the chance to train staff and practise delivering remote learning). The ways in which remote learning is being delivered varied hugely from school to school. From a paper only (collect from and drop back off at school) system at one extreme through to daily live online learning at the other extreme. Lots of schools are using online resources for “keeping in touch” even if not for actual teaching. Online resources being used include: zoom, teams, class dojo, tapestry, seesaw and google classroom. It was noted that using live online teaching can present problems for families who are sharing hardware or don’t have sufficient bandwidth to enable two siblings to live stream at the same time. One school is timetabling online lessons to ensure that siblings are not both needed online at the same time. Top tip from one Headteacher – xbox and playstation can be used for zoom meetings!

**Government technology scheme:**

Notwithstanding the repeated references to technology being made available to pupils who need it, none of the schools present had received the technology they had ordered via this scheme.

**Vaccinations:**

Knowing that school staff are on the priority list for vaccinations would be reasurring for staff. Currently, the government has confirmed that teaching staff do not fall into a high priority category. The diocese is aware that some staff will refuse to work in school if pupil numbers increase because they don’t consider it safe. It is important that the anxiety and difficulty surrounding keeping schools open for pupils who need it is known by those taking the decisions about school closures. We will continue to work closely with schools and our colleagues in the local authority on this point. We discussed the possibility of inviting parents to join in supporting vaccinations for school staff by use of a model letter.

**Information sharing from the Diocese:**

**Additional huddles:**

We will be hosting a second huddle each week this half term to give you a second opporutnity to catch up with colleagues and the diocesan team for some mutual support and to ask and answer one another’s questions. Do feel free to join us as often or as little as suits you. If you can’t make it to a huddle but have questions or want a confidential listening ear, don’t hesitate to get in touch.

**Nursery provision:**

Further guidance is expected for schools with a nursery provision.

**Free school meals:**

There is a mixed model for ensuring pupils who need them get their meals – vouchers, local delivery by schools/community. The fire service is helping out in some areas where there is real need and no other solution.

**Teaching Islam training postponed:**

Apologies – the course leader has had to cancel for personal reasons. We will reschedule the course for the summer term.

**Do not fear? - why it's ok to be feeling anxious**

If you are feeling the need of a little reassurance at the moment, you might enjoy this short mind & soul video from Kate Middleton: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5XiOFsCDMU>

**Collective Worship Resources:**

Hannah Fishwick, Children and Families Minister for Ulverston and the Furness Deanery, is continuing to record weekly collective worship videos which she will circulate on a weekly basis together with complementary resources and activities. Those schools who have been using them have found them to be excellent. If you would like to be added to the circulation list, please contact Charlotte (details below).

Faith at Home have also added new content for this term which can be found here:

[**https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/faith-home/i-am-school-leader#na**](https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/faith-home/i-am-school-leader#na)



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**Next Week’s Events**

**\*Monday 11th, 6.30pm – 8.00pm**

Peer Support Network: Community and Living Well Together (for Governors)

**Tuesday 12th, 3.45pm – 4.30pm**

Heads Huddle

**\*Wednesday 13th, 4.00pm – 6.00pm**

Peer Support Network: Community and Living Well Together (for Governors)

**Thursday 14th, 10.30am – 12pm**

Role of a Clerk in a Church School

**Thursday 14th, 3.45pm – 4.30pm**

Heads Huddle

**\****Choose either session – same content at each*

Our full events programme is attached.

To book a place or for more information contact education@carlislediocese.org.uk

**Heads Huddles will continue**

**each Tuesday and Thursday 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)

**Holocaust Memorial Day Resources**

**Wednesday 27th January 2021**

Thanks to generous funding support from the Marks Family Charitable Trust, the National Literacy Trust is teaming up with award-winning author Tom Palmer to produce free classroom resources to help schools commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day throughout the week beginning Monday 25 January 2021. Resources are suitable for use with pupils aged 9+. They include:

         A five-part instalment story

         An assembly film

         Supporting lesson plan and worksheets

         A live Q&A event with Tom Palmer.

The five-part story will be set in the present day about the visit of a Holocaust survivor to a UK school and how the children prepare and reflect on the experience. The survivor will be Yossi, one of the main characters from Tom’s book *After the War*, 75 years on from his liberation, age 91. The story will be from the point of view of the pupils and will be aimed at Y5 to Y8. It is not essential to have read *After the War*beforehand (but you can read Chapter 1 of the book for free here: <https://www.tompalmer.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/After-the-War_chapter-sample.pdf> . There is more about it here:

<https://tompalmer.co.uk/after-the-war/>

Further links for schools are available here:

<https://tompalmer.co.uk/holocaust-memorial-day-resources-and-competition/>

You can register your interest now:

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/sport-and-literacy/holocaust-memorial-story-tom-palmer/>

