

**Diocese of Carlisle Board of Education**

**Heads Huddle Notes**

**Tuesday 19th & Thursday 21st January**

**Reflection:**

A choice of reflections this week. The first, was a Bible passage which I was directed to by someone helping me to find strength. However, you may prefer the second which was recommended to one of our Headteachers by a colleague following a difficult email exchange with a parent who was proving hard to satisfy!

 

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

**Frustration:** was a word which came up over and over again in this week’s huddle: frustration of parents who are juggling home schooling with home working; frustration of school staff who are working so hard and facing constant difficulties – IT issues (including inappropriate comments online from pupils or parents), parents who aren’t happy because they want more **or** less for their children to do at home; frustration of Headteachers who are still constantly responding to changes in policy by the government.

**Importance of collaboration:** we hear repeatedly how much practical and emotional support Headteachers receive from colleagues. We discussed this week how powerful being in touch with other local schools can be, whether formally via a cluster meeting or informally via email/phone/WhatsApp etc. We heard examples of joint decision taking in clusters and even agreeing a model letter to go out to parents from each school in the cluster making Headteachers feel more confident and their decisions having more weight with parents.

**Onerous responsibility:** Headteachers who have worked hard to build excellent relationships with staff are now finding staff are relying on them in areas in which Headteachers are not confident advising (for example, whether schools are safe). In many schools, staff do not feel safe but chose not to hand in section 44 letters because they didn’t want to let down their Headteachers who they wanted to support. In fact, several Headteachers felt it would have been helpful if they had as it would have made the decision for them about closing the school as there would have been no choice and it would have sent a message to the government that schools cannot just go on taking more and more risks indefinitely.

**Managing parents’ expectations:** we all agreed that this has been made extra difficult by the changes in policy from the government. In particular, the change from pupils with one critical worker parent being entitled to a school place (on 5th January) to only those who absolutely needed it (a week later) caused lots of Headteachers to have to be the bearers of bad news. We all agreed that managing parents’ expectations is difficult and that it’s impossible to please everyone. We all agreed that there are sadly, some parents who will never be happy. We discussed the importance of managing communications and expectations carefully so that we are not drawn into lengthy email chains, especially late at night or over the weekend or creating expectations of immediate reponses.

**Show your working:** several Headteachers have benefited from their willingness to be open and honest with parents. Often once parents understand the difficult role you are managing (perhaps because of your own personal circumstances or because of staff shortages) they are a little more understanding.

**Information sharing from the Diocese:**

**Collective Worship Resources:**

Hannah Fishwick, Children and Families Minister for Ulverston and the Furness Deanery, who has been providing weekly collective worship videos will be beginning her maternity leave later this term. If your school does not have access to worship resources from your local church and you would like to receive recorded worship videos from another church during Hannah’s materntiy, please contact Charlotte (details below) who will ensure that you get a weekly act of collective worship for as long as the lockdown continues.

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich Collective Worship planning:**

[1608133073.pdf (d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net)](https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/5f214e41ab1e4/content/pages/documents/1608133073.pdf)

**RE:**

We are very conscious that our RE scheme of work is in need of updating and that some of the links are no longer working. It is a very high priority for us. However (showing our working here!) we currently have very limited capacity to produce something new. We are still looking for a couple more people who might be interested in joining a working party to help update our scheme. Do get in touch with Vanessa if you are interested. We are also looking into whether there are any alternative (affordable) schemes available as an interim measure. If you have ideas or resources you would like to share, do please let us know.

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**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)

**Children’s Mental Health Week**

February 1st – 7th

The theme for this year is ‘Express Yourself’. In Cumbria we are asking children to share with us the ways they express feelings, and thoughts about what has helped them cope or what they have learned in this time from the COVID pandemic or maybe what they wished they had known at the start.

There a number of ways to get involved:

•Draw a picture

•Write a poem

•Produce a short piece of writing (200 – 400 words)

•Make music, write a song (audio only)

•Send a photo of an object that helped you cope with ups and downs (something you made; your goldfish; houseplant; fave book/game.

Cumbria CC will be collating contributions and sharing via the CSCP and cumbria.gov.uk websites. They have £50 of prize vouchers to give away, every entry will be entered into a prize draw.

Please send your contributions in digital format to Lucy.Pye@cumbria.gov.uk by the end of Wednesday 27th January to be entered in the competition and to education@carlislediocese.org.uk to be included in our celebratory huddle notes later this term.

**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/>



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**Next Week’s Events**

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| Monday 25th  | 2.00 – 4.00pm | RE Training | Part 1 of 3: Understanding Christianity | RE Leaders & Teachers | Penny HollanderLaura Watson | £175 per school *[includes teaching resources]* |
| Tuesday 26th | 3.45 – 4.30pm | Heads Huddle | Sustainable schools: decarbonisation | Headteachers | Vanessa O’Dea | Core |
| Thursday 28th | \*10.00 – 11.30am**OR**1.30 – 3.00 pm | Peer Support Network | Well-being & resilience | School Leaders | Ruth Houston & Andy Wolfe | None – funded by Cumbria CC |



**For more information or to book a place at any of our events, courses of training sessions, please email:**

**education@carlislediocese.org.uk**