



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

“Supporting Catholic schools to provide excellent education where pupils flourish, and Christ is made known to all.”

June 2020

Dear chair

On behalf of Bishop Alan, Father Stephen and Rob Simpson thank you for all you have done for your school community and for Catholic education in these challenging times. [Bishop Marcus Stock, Chairman of the Catholic Education Service, has also expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all who are working in Catholic education.](#)

This twice-termly chairs mailing is part of our commitment to support you and keep you up-to-date with educational developments and good practice, both locally and nationally. I hope you will find it a useful summary.

Diocese of Brentwood News

‘Racism is an evil which must be opposed’

Bishop Declan Lang, Lead Bishop for International Affairs and Bishop Paul McAleenan, Lead Bishop for Racial Justice have [published a message on the evil of racism.](#)

Publication of Formation in Virtues

The Bishops of the Department of Catholic Education and Formation have approved a new document entitled [Formation in Virtues: Educating the Whole Person](#)

This is an introduction to Catholic formation in virtues for Catholic educators designed to encourage schools to consider how formation and the virtues can be embedded in all aspects of Catholic school life.

School exclusions during the coronavirus pandemic

[CES have issued guidance](#) summarising the revised [Regulations](#) applying to exclusions occurring between 1 June 2020 and 24 September 2020 inclusive and the DfE [statutory guidance](#).

This is to assist governors in any conversations that they might have with schools regarding the appropriate processes for reviewing exclusions at this time.

Launch of RSE Online Training

CES have launched a [free online course on the new statutory RSHE \(Relationship, Sex and Health Education\) curriculum](#). This training is suitable for governors as well as headteachers, teachers and parents.

The training comprises of 6 modules:

1. Teaching RSHE in a Catholic Context
2. RSHE Statutory Guidance
3. RSHE Policy and Guidance

4. The Role of Parents
5. CES Model Curriculum
6. Resources and External Visitors

They have also provided a useful [governor audit for monitoring RSE](#)
This is a checklist to support the school's processes of self-evaluation and should be completed in partnership with governors and those responsible for RSE in the school.

Please see *DfE News* below for an update on implementation of RSE.

Model casual worker contracts and guidance note on employment status
CES have now completed work on model casual worker contracts for schools and academies and these have been uploaded onto the CES website. They have also produced a guidance note on employment status to assist schools in understanding the three main types of employee and which contract should be issued.

Updated Appraisal Policies

Updated appraisal policies are [now available to download from the CES website](#) in fully amendable word format.

Your appraisal policy should be based on this model policy. Substantial changes should not be made without discussing with the Diocese first.

Senior School Appointments

Please remember that the Diocese **must** be involved at all stages of the appointment of an executive headteacher, headteacher, deputy headteacher and RE lead.

In the Diocese of Brentwood, it is a requirement that the headteacher, deputy headteacher, RE coordinator, head of RE and school lay chaplains are practising Catholics at the time of application. 'Practising Catholic' is listed unambiguously as the first essential criteria. A positive faith reference is essential and the priest is explicitly asked to comment upon an applicant's commitment to Catholic beliefs and practices. The Diocesan Proforma for obtaining the priest's reference should always be used.

School Admissions: Certificate of Catholic Practice

A number of enquiries have been received about the operation of the Certificate of Catholic Practice in the context of the extraordinary events of this year. In particular, there have been questions whether admission authorities of schools where they use the Certificate of Catholic Practice should make a unilateral decision no longer to require the Certificates this year, whether they should apply for in-year variations, and what instructions, if any, should be given to clergy administering the scheme.

At this stage, the CES advises that there is no reason why the Certificate of Catholic Practice cannot be used by schools that require it in accordance with the existing admission arrangements, and therefore no need for in-year variations of admission arrangements.

For ease of reference, here is the link to the [Bishops' Conference's Certificate of Catholic Practice, and associated guidance for clergy](#)

Wellbeing - Update from Brentwood Catholic Children's Society (BCCS)

BCCS will continue to work remotely to support children and their families with therapeutic work until the end of the summer term. This is working well via Zoom, telephone or through parents if they are young. However, BCCS are happy to review this arrangement with individual schools should requirements change as the term progresses.

BCCS have also been providing supervision/ reflective discussions and support to school staff. These may serve to support any staff who are themselves feeling anxious around the return to school. Schools wishing to receive this provision should contact lpicton@bccs.org.uk.

The [BCCS website has useful resources designed to help parents instigate or respond to dialogue around their child's wellbeing](#) (with specific help in talking to children about Coronavirus, Coping with Grief and Loss, and Mindfulness

Governor Recruitment

Since we are currently unable to hold a face-to-face governor recruitment event, we have launched an [online recruitment campaign](#) for foundation governors. We are also working with the local parishes, *Inspiring Governance* and *Governors for Schools* to look for suitable governors for our schools.

We have asked clerks to advise us of [foundation governor vacancies](#) but if your school is not shown and you need support in filling a foundation governor vacancy please [get in touch](#).

Governor Development

In light of the ongoing government requirements for social distancing, we have made the difficult decision to postpone our face-to-face workshops for the remainder of this term and into the autumn term. We do this reluctantly but feel that it is the right thing to do given the current situation.

Faithful Governance

It is so important that governors keep up to date with the latest legislation and good practice and reflect on their responsibilities as a governor in a Catholic school, so I am delighted that 23 governing bodies have now nominated their first wave of 5 foundation governors for the online App we have developed in collaboration with Anspear.

I appreciate that the benefits of face-to-face training are hard to replicate but at this difficult time, I hope governors will find the online course particularly useful in developing their knowledge and skills. You can [preview a demo version here](#)

Please advise Sophie of the first 5 foundation governors you are nominating for your school [by using this link](#) so we can send them the access code to start their learning.

Safeguarding Update

Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers
As previously advised, DfE have produced [detailed interim safeguarding guidance for schools](#) for the COVID-19 period which is relevant to all schools.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) remains the overarching statutory safeguarding guidance that schools must follow; the purpose of the interim guidance is to support governing boards, proprietors, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads (DSL) to keep their children safe during the period that schools and colleges are operating in a way that is very different to normal.

Monitoring of safeguarding of children both in and out of school remains a key part of the governing body's role. Please take special note of the [Interim DfE Safeguarding Action Checklist](#)

Online Safety Considerations for Reopening

The SWGfL has created a [useful guidance sheet to help schools welcome pupils as they return from lockdown](#).

Ofsted News

Inspection Reports during COVID-19

As you know, Ofsted have suspended all routine inspections of schools, though urgent inspections where specific concerns have been raised are still going ahead.

A number of schools have contacted Ofsted asking them to publish the report of their recent inspection. Ofsted had said that they would publish those reports only when providers reopen as normal for all children but they are now writing to all providers with reports in the pipeline to ask whether they would like their report published as soon as possible. If they say yes, they will publish their report shortly.

DfE News

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (RSE)

DfE has been working to assess the impact of coronavirus on the implementation of RSE. The subjects will still become compulsory from 1 September 2020. However, schools will have flexibility to decide how they discharge their duties effectively.

If a school is unable to begin teaching until summer term 2021 they will need to decide how much of the content they will be able to cover and should still be able to demonstrate how they will cover the entirety of the curriculum in the future.

In summary, from 1 September 2020, Relationships Education, Health Education, and Relationships and Sex Education will still be compulsory. However:

From 1 September 2020 to the end of the spring term 2021	Following an assessment of preparedness, schools should commence teaching as soon as practically possible or use the time to prepare to deliver the new curriculum. This includes engaging parents on their policy as well as planning their curriculum provision.
By the start of the summer term 2021	All schools should have begun teaching the subjects.

Temporary Pupils Guidance

DfE has made [an amendment to the School Attendance Guidance for Schools](#) to make it clear that pupils attending schools on a temporary basis remain on the roll at their original school.

Arrangements in relation to Newly Qualified Teachers

The government has issued [guidance in relation to NQTs and the impact of the Coronavirus to support the implementation of The Education \(School Teachers' Qualifications and Induction Arrangements\) \(England\) \(Coronavirus\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2020 which come into force on 21 May 2020](#). NQTs who are currently completing their statutory induction period will be able to complete it this academic year as expected provided that they meet the Teachers' Standards.

Holding Virtual Meetings

Although all non-urgent business should be delayed, governing bodies should continue to function, carry out urgent business and make business critical decisions via alternative arrangements such as video or teleconferencing. Many of you have already successfully managed headteacher recruitment and headteacher appraisal mid-year reviews in this way.

If you are using video conferencing platforms to continue to meet as a governing body, then you must consider the security of the platforms that you are using. Please also remember that all parties will need to agree to these arrangements – you may find this [model protocol for virtual meetings](#) useful.

Preparing for wider opening of schools

Schools have been starting to put into practice the plans they have made for a phased return of some pupils (primary schools from 1 June, and secondary schools from 15 June), in accordance with [DfE guidance](#). DfE have also updated the [Schools Q&A](#) on actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak.

You have probably read that DfE have now dropped plans for all primary year groups to return to school for a month before the summer break. However, they have announced that they expect all children to be back in school in September.

The DfE guidance is non-statutory. At the current time, schools are not being legally compelled to re-open. This could happen at some point in the future, **but at the moment the decision about whether and how to move towards wider opening is a decision for each governing body or academy trust board.**

It is important that governors and trustees work together closely with school leaders and support them to ensure that all decisions taken are in the best interests of staff and pupils.

It is not going to be possible for any governing body or board to state that there is no risk involved in re-opening, but what governing bodies and boards **must** do is ensure school leaders conduct **a thorough risk assessment** before opening to determine what the risks might be and how they might reasonably be mitigated. It is for governing bodies and trust boards to interrogate those risk assessments and to provide support to school leaders in making decisions about whether or not, and in what format, schools might be reopened.

Every school will be different and each school will face different challenges; the risks identified and the ways of mitigating those risks will differ from school to school and area to area and it is important that all governing bodies and boards take appropriate decisions based on what is reasonably practicable in their own circumstances.

[DfE has provided an update for governing bodies in maintained schools](#) and for [trustees and academy governors](#) to support them in making decisions about wider re-opening.

Latest Research

Impact of the Pandemic on Disadvantaged Pupils

[The Sutton Trust has published a briefing paper looking at how school closures are likely to impact on disadvantaged young people](#) through their time in education and into the workplace, finding that 'the closure of schools is likely to have a considerable impact for all pupils, but the largest impact is likely to fall on those from the poorest families'. They will be carrying out further research looking at the challenges in greater detail and making policy recommendations on how best to lessen the impact of the pandemic on these young people.

A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic (Barry Carpenter and Matthew Carpenter)

This is a thought-provoking [piece about what everyone involved in schools will need to think about when more children return to their classrooms](#).

Barry and Matthew write, 'When the children return to school there needs to be a Recovery Curriculum in place. Suddenly daily routines have evaporated and with it, any known curriculum framework'. 'For most children their daily goal in going to school is not just to learn but to see their friends and to feel a sense of self-worth that only a peer group can offer. You cannot underestimate the impact of the loss of that social interaction.'

Five ways to help children heal when schools reopen (Mary Meredith)

Mary Meredith is Head of Inclusion at Lincolnshire County Council. Recently Mary wrote an [article on her blog 'Five ways to help children heal when schools reopen'](#).

The five headings are:

1. Hold a formal act of remembrance as a community
2. Place relationships front and centre and build social capital
3. Identify and support children in most need of social buffering
4. Reaffirm boundaries, rules and routines as safety measures
5. Re-evaluate and reaffirm core values, recognising all

Thank you for all that you do for your school. I would also like to reassure you that the BDES team will continue to be available to support you by phone, email, on-line and in person where the government guidance permits.

With best wishes and prayers



Debbi Botham
Governance Development Officer
Diocese of Brentwood

A: Cathedral House, Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 8AT

T: 01277 265284

E: debbibotham@dioceseofbrentwood.org

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