

Date: 17 March 2020

Dear All,

Message to Headteachers in the Chester DBE Family of Schools

We are all having to cope with unprecedented uncertainty and considerable anxiety in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic. Staff and children will be concerned about their own health, and that of their friends and relatives. There has also been much concern and speculation in the media about whether schools might need to close for a period, with all the disruption that would bring. Of course we will need to follow the official guidance from the government, the Department for Education and Public Health England as it is published.

In the light of the latest information and guidance from the government in relation to avoiding social gatherings and non-essential travel, Church House is closing today until the end of May which means we have postponed all of our training courses and network meetings for this period.

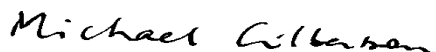
We recognise the need for you to be in school at this time and to be available to your school community and to respond to the ever-changing picture and we, as a DBE, will continue to support you regardless of the closure of Church House with senior officers available through email or mobile phone.

Meanwhile, we wanted to assure you of our prayers for you, your staff, your children and their families. We know what a challenging time this is, and in particular the weight of responsibility you will be feeling as headteachers. We give thanks for all you are doing in your schools and communities. If we or other DBE officers can be of assistance, please get in touch. Senior officers will be working from home and picking up emails as usual and available on their mobile numbers.

The Church of England has provided this prayer, which many are finding helpful:

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord,
Amen.

Yours in Christ,



Michael Gilbertson **Chair, Chester DBE**



Chris Penn **Director of Education, Chester DBE**