

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to extend the gratitude of the DES to all those working in our Diocesan schools at this difficult time as you offer support to our children and young people, their families and our wider parish communities. Schools are now closed for many of our pupils for the considerable future, but we do wish to thank you for what you have done to assist them in continuing their learning at home and offering the practical and pastoral support that they will need in the days and weeks ahead.

We are particularly grateful for the way in which you have cooperated with the government's request to find ways of offering educational provision to the children of key workers and vulnerable children beginning this coming week. This provision is obviously going to be important to those who must assist in supporting the sick and the needy at this very difficult time and the maintenance of key services. I know that for many of you, this has meant additional challenges with detailed plans and preparations being made. It has demanded the willingness and support for so many to serve the common good of Catholic education and our wider community at this critical time. This is also a sure and certain sign that as a Catholic community we are always willing to put the gospel in action to care for the needs of our neighbour.

The DES will remain operative whilst schools are closed. Adam Hardy and the staff can be contacted by email and phone. They will do their best to assist you at this time. Please remember to inform the DES of any critical incidents that take place over the next few weeks concerning your school.

There will be a dedicated page on the DES website to provide you with updated news from the DfE, the Catholic Education Service and the Bishops Conference of England and Wales on responding to the Covid-19 situation. The page will also contain any key information about DES work with our schools that may be impacted by the Covid-19 situation. Additionally, the Catholic Education Team at the DES are putting together a resource page for use in schools and at home. This will also feature some prayer and spirituality resources to use at this time. Please keep an eye on this page as it continues to develop.

Finally, at this time it is important to pray for all those who have become ill, for those working to stop the spread of the Covid-19 virus, those who are assisting the sick and for the safety and well being of our children and families and those who are most vulnerable in our society.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

Fr Jonathan Veasey

Lead Trustee for Catholic Education