

Head Teachers' Bulletin – 29th September

Dates for the diary

Heads' Forum – Tue 3rd Oct 9.30-11.00 at the Pastoral Centre

Subject Leaders' Network Meetings – Wed 11th Oct

Trust Mass – Thus 19th Oct

Early Years' Mini-Conference – Wed 1st Nov 9am-3pm @ St Catherine's

Heads' Conference – Thus & Fri 9th & 10th Nov

Writing Leads Mini-Conference – Thus 23rd Nov 9am-12pm @ Pastoral Centre

Actions from this Bulletin

Reminders from previous bulletins for things still outstanding (from some or all schools)

If you haven't responded and are struggling with anything, please drop us a line so that we can get in touch to work out how we can help:

- **Pass on the flyers (shared on 22nd Sept) about the writing and early years mini-conferences to your writing and early years' leads. We hope you can support them to book a place**

New Updates (since last bulletin)

Prayer and Liturgy Directory

You will have received from the schools' department an email with a copy of the Prayer and Liturgy Directory and a letter which includes a link where you can order printed copies should you wish.

There is also a link to some free training to support the new RE Directory highlighted on the letter. It is helpful for me to know if anyone is undertaking CPD so that we can draw on that expertise across the Trust, so if any school has a colleague who is interested in the training, please let me know.

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You will note in the letter that there will be further support with the RE Directory and Prayer and Liturgy Directory. We will liaise with Alan and with St Francis to work out the best way of delivering and supporting this work together.

COVID Guidance

A couple of you have been in touch about guidance in relation to Covid, given that cases are currently rising.

This is an area it is helpful having a Deputy Director for Healthcare as the chair of the Trust! Kev has kindly shared the following:

The Chief Medical Officer wrote out to schools earlier in the month with guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance>

I would share this with families and I think the same rules should apply for staff:

Schools are not health/ social care settings.

Cold/flu/ COVID symptoms shouldn't stop people coming to school. A raised temperature or severe symptoms are good reasons to stay home- as we would normally recommend.

Testing positive does not equate to being infectious and so I would be guided by symptoms rather than LFDs.

There is a rising level of COVID in the community so there will be more positive tests around.

Staff sickness absence should be managed in line with the normal policy with no different approach for days missed due to COVID.

Please note that the sickness absence policy already requires that absence triggers do not automatically lead to informal or formal action, but that each case should be considered on merit. This allows for reasonable judgement to be made where, for example, someone has had time off with covid or other flu like symptoms, so there does not need to be a different approach specific to Covid.

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CIF Papers & SCA

I am aware that you will recently have received an email about CIF bids for this year. I can confirm that, for schools in the Trust this is no longer relevant and you can ignore the message. We have been in touch with the Diocesan property department to ensure that they have a clear picture of which schools this is relevant for and which schools it is not.

On the subject of School Condition Allocation (SCA) funding, we are approaching the end of our first 'bonus' window for applications. Thanks to those schools who have got bids in. Once the deadline passes, we will review the bids in line with the scoring criteria set out and get back to you.

We will then move into what will become the normal bidding cycle. While this process mirrors CIF to an extent, we will also be able to build up over time a picture of need and other areas for development so even where work is not funded immediately, we can add it to a longer term plan. The development of this plan will also be supported by the condition improvement surveys that we are commissioning.

Budget visits

Thank you to everyone who has already responded to our request to organise meetings in school with Adnan and I. These are for schools in the Trust only at this point and they are a follow up to the budget setting and forecasting work that we did over the summer term.

These visits will help us to identify more accurately where there is scope for savings this year and in the future and where there are areas that we must protect. It will also give us additional information to help with the statutory audit and our longer term financial strategy.

All the time, we are building up a more and more detailed understanding of each school. This is the first time we have had this understanding as a shared picture and it will enable to see where there are opportunities for efficiency savings, ways we can support one another in difficult financial times and ways we can ensure that we make the most out of our common resources in the areas that are most important to us.

Requests for information

Thank you for your continued responses to the requests for information related to the audit, governors and heads' reports, returns about the Trust mass, etc.

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As we build up more information, we will need to ask less often and, as we develop ways for sharing data we aim to reduce the work associated with sharing information.

Please do continue to be prompt with responses and, if there is a problem, let us know as soon as possible. The hardest thing for colleagues in the central team to manage is when there is no response at all as the requests for information are always linked to decisions and deadlines which impact everyone if delayed.

Notes from Previous Bulletins

Heads' Forum

Our first Heads' Forum of the year will be on Tue 3rd October, at the Pastoral Centre (9.30-11.00am). This is for Heads of schools in the Trust and those schools who have asked to be Associate Members.

In this first Forum, we will focus on school improvement, with updates on work happening this year and an opportunity to discuss and feedback on that.

We will also spend some time in discussion around cost reduction activity and longer term financial planning in the Trust. This will complement meetings in each school that Adnan and I will be arranging with you over the coming weeks.

Subject Leaders' Network Meetings

Thank you to everyone for your responses about the subject leader network meetings. Anita has sent out links to the meetings to all of the subject leaders using the details you shared with us. If there are colleagues in your school who haven't received the information, it means we don't yet have their contact details. Please send them on to Anita ASAP and we will get the information out to staff. I have attached with this bulletin an overview of how the subject leader network meetings will run.

Mini-Conferences for Early Years and Writing Leads

These two mini-conferences have been planned as a follow up to last year's writing moderation and some of the things that emerged from those discussions. They offer an opportunity for Early Years' Leads and then Writing Leads to come together for some training input and to be able to

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share their perspectives on the curriculum to help inform our thinking as leaders across the Trust. I have attached flyers for the events. Please share these with your early years and writing leads.

I hope that you are able to release them to attend and be part of this work as I believe it can be really powerful.