

June 2020

Support Staff Edition

Please circulate to all support staff

We greatly value the work of all support staff in our schools, whatever your role. In these difficult times we know that some of you will have continued to work in school, but some will not. Either way, many of you will be holding your schools and communities in your thoughts and prayers, as you are in ours. You are not forgotten. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all you do. - The Education Team

Pause for thought: Every part valued

Every individual in your staff team plays their part in making school run smoothly and so enabling it to be a happy and healthy place for pupils to learn. Not only do they give commitment, but also compassion and a love of children and young people. The bible asserts that *the body is not one member, but many*. (1 Corinthians 12:14) This is not only a simple and clear message about teamwork, but it asserts the essential value and interdependence of each person. Have a look at this 30 second video – [Moon Landing](#). The people who make up your school community, just like the body of Christ (i.e. the church), are a team. Working together in unity, the unique contribution each one of you makes is crucial and valued. What special part do you play in school? What would be missing if you weren't there? What would someone else have to do?

Embracing Change

Each of you provides different types of support in your school, like cogs in a well-oiled machine. Over the last couple of months, this has been disrupted as schools have had to work in a very different way so that key workers can go about their vital jobs and so that our most vulnerable children and young people have somewhere safe to go. This has meant that everyone has had to adapt and do things differently, including things which have not normally been part of their role. Even as schools return, new patterns of working will most likely remain for some time. But change and adaptation can be difficult.

Staff well-being can be seriously impacted by change and insecurity. How can this be minimised? There are many factors that can support this, but three are essential:

- (1) Clear and effective communication – people feel better about change when they have a clear understanding of what it involves and why it is essential.
- (2) Support and training, where possible, with new tasks – everyone in school is willing to do their bit. It is, however, a reasonable expectation to receive support and guidance with tasks that are new to you so that you can complete them efficiently and effectively.
- (3) A listening ear – Any new situation has challenges, but the stresses of these are reduced if we know there is someone who will listen to us if and when

Your diocesan adviser, school, local authority, trades union or multi-academy trust may provide training for you. There are also some opportunities and free courses to explore [here](#) with The Open University.

Contact your named adviser for further support

we need to share. Not only this, but listening in this way enables people to share their own solutions, thus helping everyone have ownership of the way forward.

Coping together with the challenges schools are facing in this way, will mean that everyone's sense of belonging and teamwork will be enhanced.

Moving Forward

The goal of everyone in school over the coming months will be to enable pupils to rediscover their own sense of belonging in the school community and to settle back into their learning. Key to this will be relationships, particularly with the adults who care for them. Whatever your role, this could include you, as Rita Pierson eloquently explains in this brilliant TED talk: [Every Kid Needs a Champion](#).

There is uncertainty about what the future holds. However, one thing is certain, your experience, dedication, resourcefulness and determination, your compassion and your love will be invaluable in supporting your schools and your pupils as they all gradually return to school. We thank you for all you have done and will do in the months to come.

Digging Deeper:

- To celebrate the work of support staff, look at starsinourschools.uk/.
- [Well-Being Reflection Piece](#) – Diocesan Education Team
- If you have financial worries the teachingstafftrust.org.uk/ may be able to help.
- The health and wellbeing of the education workforce is the focus of Education Support, at www.educationsupport.org.uk/