



The Rt Revd & Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally
Bishop of London
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Dear Head Teachers,

Thank you for all the hard work that you have been doing to prepare your schools to receive children back for what must be the strangest of half terms. I am aware that many of you have been keeping your schools partially open for the children of key workers and I am enormously grateful to you and your staff for all that you have done. As children begin to return to schools in larger numbers, I know how much planning and organisation has had to go into making sure that you are keeping the children safe while caring well for your staff.

This is desperately important. Our schools serve some of the neediest communities in the capital. Even those who are less deprived have faced enormous disruption to their education. Many of our most vulnerable young people are at risk of being seriously put back by the interruption to their regular education. I know one Year Six teacher who has told me that the children who have returned to her class are unmistakably behind; and this is despite the fact that they have been engaging with the online lessons which she has been providing during the first half of term.

The education we attempt to offer in our schools seeks to enable children to flourish with life in all its fullness. (John 10.10) The lockdown has diminished our life together so that even more than before our children need to learn the deep lessons of how to be wise in the ways of God in a changed world; how to live well together when we are socially distanced and need our communities to function well; how to have hope in the face of the dis-ease of this world; and how to continue through everything to show dignity and respect to others in a world whose inequalities have been savagely exposed. The fullness of life in Christ is so clearly needed for us all.

Thank you for all the hard work that goes into this. Please would you pass my sincere gratitude to all those who are supporting your work; both those who are back at school and those who are as yet not able to return. What you are doing is of enormous importance to our young people and to our society.

Jesus said, "do not be afraid little flock." (Luke 12:32) Through all of the ups and downs of this world Jesus supports and cares for all his children. This means that we can have confidence in Him even in difficult times. May you be richly blessed in the work that you are doing. We look forward to the time when our schools can function once again fully. Thank you for all that you are doing now to enable this phased reopening to begin for our children.

With every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Sarah". The plus sign is a simple cross, and the name "Sarah" is written in a cursive, flowing script.

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Bishop of London