

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORATE

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Dear Parents,

As we near the end of the strangest year in recent memory, it's an opportunity to reflect on how Dodford First School has weathered the storms of the last nine months, and to look forward to the year ahead.

First and foremost, the school has remained open throughout, offering the children of essential workers physical facilities through the first lockdown, and working with parents to keep their children's education going for those who weren't allowed to attend 'in real life'. Of course there were blips, and of course we would all have preferred to have had individual, made to measure programmes for each of our children, but in the absence of such luxuries, educational materials were prepared and made available to all the children to allow them to work at home.

Our second achievement was to normalise (as much as one can) life with COVID-19. The children understand and adhere to their bubbles, and the school has introduced sensible aids to wellbeing such as the outdoor days for all, and the class 'feelings monsters'. Staff are also on the lookout for signs of undue worry or stress, and have all been trained to help their charges deal with these issues.

We have even managed to build in some of the spirit of Christmas, with the virtual pantomime, the outdoor carol service, and even the chance to have their photos taken (in their favourite seasonal jumper!) by the Christmas tree.

All of us should celebrate that we have managed to minimise the negative impact of the coronavirus, and begin to plan for the new year, and how we can help our children flourish.

In the short term, the pandemic arrangements will need to stand, and we hope that parents, as well children, will continue to respect and follow the rules of social distancing and interaction. It's worth reminding ourselves that the concern is less about the children themselves becoming ill (most youngsters with COVID suffer few, if any symptoms), but the potentially dangerous impact of the illness on their parents and grandparents.

Once the vaccination programme has been well embedded, then hopefully the rules will be allowed to relax, but until then, we will need to continue to be vigilant, and protect ourselves and each other from the common enemy. When life begins to get back to normal, we can also start thinking about how we might make even better our children's experience of growing up in the buzzing, busy, communal place that we call our school.

Have a healthy and peaceful break, and let's all look forward to a positive, exciting year ahead.

With all best wishes,

Dr Jonathan Shapiro
Chair of Governors

