



OAKDENE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Ashton Avenue, Rainhill, Merseyside, L35 0QQ
Tel:01744 678410 email: oakdene@sthelens.org.uk

Headteacher: Mrs. H. Lee

18th December 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I just want to start my last letter of 2020 with a HUGE WELL DONE AND THANK YOU to everyone! We have got through this challenging term without having to close any bubbles and attendance in school has been excellent. We have an attendance rate of 98% which is far higher than normal for the Autumn Term so a huge thank you and well done. We are so proud of all our children. This term hasn't been easy for them and they have worked so hard even when they have been very tired (especially this week). We have tried to put in place as much as possible for the children to give them a lovely Christmas experience in school. The Wizard of Oz production for Years 1 - 6 started our festivities and since then we have recorded the Nativity for Year 2 Parents, had a festive fun run, watched a Christmas film for the afternoon, organised a reverse Advent calendar, recorded Christmas songs, held a virtual Carol Service, had Christmas Dinners with our classes, made cards for the local community, made decorations for our school Christmas tree, Reception, Y1 & Y2 watched a live performance of the Gruffalo, had a visit from Santa (with snow!) and sung all together as a school outside!. WOW! These events are in addition to Christmas Maths (requested by School Council) and lots of other activities in class. Even though we haven't been able to hold events in school we hope that we have given the children a Christmas to remember in the year of Covid-19.

I cannot thank all our Staff enough for all the hard work and dedication they have all shown to our wonderful children. Without the Staff's constant vigilance and attentiveness our children would not have developed as well as they have this term. We all remember the children coming back eagerly in September and it has been great to see them settling into their classes and catching up on their learning. Our staff have constantly monitored and reviewed what has been taught to ensure all our children make progress. Coupled with regular hand washing, sanitising, washing tables and keeping away from other bubbles, great learning has taken place and I want to thank all our Staff team for their dedication and support.

Our children have just been amazing. Who would have thought a year ago that 'sanitise' would be part of their daily vocabulary; that they wouldn't be able to see friends in different classes but would just get on with it and would sit in rows ('like in the olden days' as said to me) for all their learning? Our children have adapted really well and I want to thank them for always keeping to our School Values in difficult times.

And to you - our Parents - you have been so supportive, thank you. You have all understood the need for why we have implanted the procedures in school and you have complied with everything. From dropping children off on the Junior playground to not dropping items off in school (unless absolutely necessary); from wearing masks to following our one-way system; and from ensuring your children only bring the essential items to keeping up with homework in these uncertain times - I thank you. With very few places available to visit recently I am sure it has



been difficult to keep the children entertained and we are so grateful that you have been able to motivate the children. Let's hope next year sees a brighter future ahead for us all.

Sharing Songs and the Carol Service

You may well have seen the children singing songs in their classes via our website site, facebook page or YouTube channel. We are delighted that we have been able to sing in school in our bubbles and the fantastic mixing and editing work has been undertaken by Mr. Weston who has done a superb job of collating all the songs.

As we could not get to St. Ann's Church this term, we wanted everyone to share in our Carol Service and Mr. Weston has, once again, engineered a great performance of this special 'virtual' event. Our children did so well with the singing and our readers and soloists are a true credit to you. Please take a look at the songs and Carol Service: the link on this page on our website will take you to the first of our festive recordings and from there you can scroll through them all <https://www.oakdeneprimaryschool.co.uk/page/oakdene-christmas-2020/88809>.

Mr. Weston has even made the staff look good in a rendition of the traditional end of term Christmas extravaganza of the Staff singing 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'. Normally Mr. Weston can't control the staff on the last day of term when this normally takes place! We hope you enjoy our actions. Again, thank you to Mr. Weston for all the time he has taken to edit these performances. It definitely would have taken him hours to make us all look good!!

Yesterday we even had all the school outside singing carols and songs. We were able to socially distance on the playground and treated our neighbours to some seasonal singing. It was so lovely to see our whole school family together (if a little bit apart) and enjoying great singing. Our Reception children even got to see their Year 6 buddies in person and the Staff were quite emotional seeing everyone together 😊.

Mass Testing in Schools

You may have heard in the media this week that there will be a roll out of the lateral flow tests in schools after Christmas. This will definitely not start in Primary Schools when we come back into school in January and we will keep you posted on developments regarding this plan.

Bearing this in mind, please can you continue to ensure that your child washes their hands regularly, follows the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' mantra when children have runny noses and that they are ready to stay away from other class bubbles when we get back into school in January. We know it will be a difficult time for all our children over the festive period and we want to ensure that we come back to the safe and clean environment that we have continued to maintain throughout this period.

Cases in the Holidays

As you will be aware, if your child tests positive for Coronavirus at the beginning of the holiday there may well be the need for your child's class to self-isolate to reduce the spread of the virus. As stated in an earlier letter you will need to email school as soon as your child tests positive for Coronavirus. If you think your child has Covid-19 symptoms of high temperature or new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your child's sense of smell or taste, please book a test and, if you can, inform school that you have a test booked. As soon as the test result is received please email school with the result. If the test is positive please follow this procedure:

1. Email school at oakdene@sthelens.org.uk
2. On the email please ensure you include:
 - Your name (it's not always obvious from the email address)
 - Child's full name
 - Date of birth

- Address
 - Mobile phone number for Test and Trace to contact you
 - Please indicate any other children who attend Oakdene (other than siblings) who your child may have come into contact with outside of school
 - First day of onset of symptoms.
3. Please remember that this email address will be monitored at some point between 10.00am and 12.00pm until 23rd December. After that time you only need to email School if your child will not be in on 5th January. Please include the reason for your child's absence.
 4. A text will be sent to close contacts of any child or staff member who tests positive in the first week of the holidays to tell them to self-isolate. This may well be followed up by a call from the Test and Trace service.
 5. If you are returning from a country which is not on the travel corridor list and you have to isolate, please inform school by email before 5th January.

I really do not want to have to send texts out which would then indicate that you would be self-isolating over Christmas and, if I have to do this, I am truly sorry. We all want our families to enjoy this special time and hope that you can share it with some members of your family.

Once again, I ask that you do not put anything on social media (including WhatsApp) or share information with other school contacts about possible symptoms, testing plans or results as this may worry a lot of people unnecessarily.

Staff Presents to the Children

This year is slightly different in that the Staff have decided to give the children something to remember Christmas by. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 were treated to a live performance of *The Gruffalo* and each Junior Class have adopted an animal at Chester Zoo (2 types of otter, a jaguar and a red panda). The plaques will be displayed at Chester Zoo in the coming months so, if you are able to get there perhaps in the Summer, look out for our adoption plaques next to these animal enclosures. The children chose the animals as a class and we will receive information about the animals in the new year.

Parent Governor Election

Thank you so much for voting for our next Parent Governor. We had a fantastic response and I would like to thank Miss. Swetnam, Mr. Kehoe and Mrs. Kelly for standing to be a Governor at Oakdene. This is a big commitment to make and we appreciate all the Parents standing as candidates. Following a rigorous counting process this week, Mrs. Kelly has been appointed as Parent Governor for a term of office of four years. Congratulations to Mrs. Kelly and once again, thank you to all the candidates.

Congratulations to our Sports Stars

Recently our school took part in a virtual Pentathlon. All times were recorded and submitted as part of the St. Helens tournament and St. Helens Youth Games. We are delighted that we had a wide range of winners who all received medals from Mr. Hodgkinson yesterday. Well done to Oliver, Eleanor and Blake in Year 1, Llewyn, Isla, Harry and Elsie in Year 2, Edie and Alfie in Year 4 and Noah, Claudia and Amelia in Year 5 who all won the St. Helens competitions. A special well done to Oliver, Llewyn, Edie and Alfie who won against the whole of Merseyside schools. How great it is that our children can compete virtually against other schools in these very strange times? Our thanks go to Mr. Hodgkinson who organised all the events.

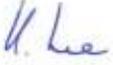
All the staff would like to pass on their thanks to everyone for their cards, good wishes and gifts at this time. We all want to thank Parents for their dedication and support to everyone at Oakdene during all of the Covid



pandemic. We really do hope that you can spend some quality time with close family over the holidays and wish you a very Happy Christmas and let's hope for a much more normal 2021.

School re-opens on Tuesday 5th January 2021 when all social distancing, staggered start and finish times, hand washing procedures and keeping bubbles separate will continue as it has been operating this term.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'H. Lee'.

H. Lee
Headteacher