

Dear Parents,

May I start by wishing you a happy New Year and let's hope 2021 brings restored normality.

I also wanted to share some great photos of some of the lovely activities leading up to Christmas. Despite a serious amount of risk management, we still managed to enjoy many of the usual festive activities. These began with our sponsored fancy dress walk, where, thanks to the amazing generosity of all you parents and friends of Overley, the children and staff earned a fantastic £550 for their chosen charity. This year, the children voted to use the money to purchase gifts and food for Telford Food Bank. Children made selections, made lists, used click and collect and some even went shopping. Each class put together hampers and gifts which were dropped off, to be distributed to others in need, in time for Christmas.



We got ourselves into the festive spirit in the usual way with the annual Christmas tree light switch on. However, this year was different, as parents and friends of Overley were not able to attend, although the attendance of all school, care and domestic staff in the evening helped create a great atmosphere which was very much enjoyed by all.



Near our Wellingtonia Christmas tree, we had a life-size nativity scene, the characters for which having been created, with the help of all the children, during art lessons. We also had an open fire with hot chocolate and delicious cakes made by the children during their cooking sessions. All children were involved in some way. Forest School ensured that Santa's Grotto was suitably equipped as Santa arrived in style on his sleigh along Tweet Street. The very well timed arrival of the snow was greeted with delight by children and staff alike. A wonderful evening was had by all with lots of singing and dancing to the accompaniment of Peter and the tunes of Steve's disco.

I really hope you enjoyed watching the festive film we made in December. Staff and all children had great fun taking part and we are looking forward to making a sequel during the spring term as the weather becomes milder. Of course it wouldn't be Christmas without the school Christmas party, this year celebrated in class bubbles. There was good food, followed by a live virtual performance of the pantomime Rapunzel.



We have had to say goodbye to Sarah Morgan who has stood down as our interim Chair of Governors and Sharon Earney who also, due to other commitments, has had to stand down as Governor, for their invaluable service to Overley. We wish them both our very best wishes and good luck in their new ventures.

I am sure you will all join me in welcoming our new Chair of Governors, Liz Hynes. Liz brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm as well as a passion for Special Educational Needs and I am very much looking forward to working alongside her and the Governing body in 2021.

A message from Liz

Hi, I'm Liz and a relatively new parent with George moving to Overley in July last year (2020). Previously George had been at The Bridge in Hadley where I have been a governor for the past 4 years and Chair of Governors for 2 of those. During this time I supported and held the senior leadership of the school to account to ensure that standards had been maintained and continued to be outstanding. I have been asked and continue to be Chair of Governors at The Bridge.

In 'lockdown 1' when hormones combined with the pandemic, as a family we had to admit defeat (or was it?) and look for a residential school for George. Weeks of searching for 'the best for George' led to a call with Bev. From that moment on I knew I had found a school and a 'home' that was 'the best' for George. For me it is about the passion to be the best, and that is what I saw reflected time and again both in school staff and home.

During George's transition to Overley Hall, I shared my experience as a Governor at The Bridge with Bev. Knowing that the Governing Board needed an experienced Chair of Governors to replace the interim Chair, Bev asked if I would be interested in applying. The prospect of becoming a governor of a fledgling board interested me and so I jumped at the chance.

In my first Governing Body meeting I was voted in as a Governor and nominated as Chair. I am honoured that along with the board we have the opportunity to work alongside the senior leadership team (and staff) to ensure that standards are maintained and Overley is seen as a beacon of excellence in the field.



I look forward to meeting you all and am exciting about the journey that we are undertaking together.

In an effort to reduce the impact of the dreadful Covid 19 pandemic, in compliance with guidance from the government and The Department for Education, we have set up a test centre for asymptomatic, mass testing using the thirty minute lateral flow devices (LFDs). This has involved the transformation of the library into a fully functional test site and extending job descriptions to include 'test operative duties'.



I thank all staff involved, for their dedication and professionalism throughout the last few weeks and congratulate them on passing their Covid testing training. We are well on our way to offering weekly testing for all staff who work at Overley and two tests initial tests for children of year 7 and above. Such testing allows us to quickly identify and action any positive

cases. It also allows us to serial-test, over seven consecutive days, those who have come into contact with anyone who has tested positive. This means they can then continue to work unless they have a positive LFD test or develop Covid 19 symptoms. This could help ensure a high level of staffing even if any of our staff or children are highlighted through 'test and trace'.

Thank you to all those staff and parents who have already given their consent for us to carry out testing. This significantly helps keep our community safe.

As soon as all staff and young people for whom we have received consent have been tested, all parents will receive a call from Steve and will be offered fortnightly test times in our new test centre. As long as Covid rules allow, these tests are designed to enable you to visit your child. I am sure you will give your support and understanding for this process. With high rates of Covid 19 infection nationally, it is imperative that anyone visiting Overley Hall needs to be tested and to have a negative test result to ensure the health and safety of our children and staff. We thank you for your cooperation during these difficult times.

Once again I would like to wish you a very Happy New Year

Kind regards

Beverley