



**Shirley Junior
School PTFA**
Parents, Teachers & Friends
Association
Charity Number 1108417

15 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

BE KIND AT CHRISTMAS

You may remember back in July the Chairs of the Junior School PTFA and FOSIS sent out some "Guiding Principles" which we would encourage everyone within our community to do their best to uphold; this includes parents, carers, teachers, school leadership and children. In particular, once the excitement of Christmas has passed and we trudge our way through winter; please consider these guiding principles before addressing any issues with the school directly or on parent led social media channels.

Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.

Teachers and Parents alike have been fighting battles behind the scenes both at work and at home. We have all been trying to juggle new ways of working, schooling and parenting with many of us also caring for vulnerable and shielding members of our own family too. On top of that we're all trying to provide reassurance and a sense of normality to our children who are fed up with washing their hands and with not being able to play with all their friends.

Be kind to yourself too. It's been a tough year and this is an anxious time for everyone and it's totally OK not to feel OK. The school understands how hard this year has been for children and parents alike; we ask that you try and understand how hard it is for the school staff too.

Trust the intent

Our teachers always have and always will have the best interests of our children at heart. Whilst school decisions may sometimes conflict with what you think is best for your child, please remember that they are trying to balance the needs of approximately 630 children across the two schools, each with individual needs and in landscape that is constantly changing. We should trust that everything they do they do with the best of intentions. As some poet once said "to err is human", mistakes are inevitable especially when people are exhausted (parents and teachers alike) and issues are emotive.

Seek to understand

There is a rationale behind every decision that is being made. You might not agree with every decision but we want to ensure that you understand why that decision has been made. If you don't understand the rationale then ask the school or your class representative; you're probably not alone and the school will be happy to provide clarification to everyone.

Don't shoot the messenger

Whilst the school is making some decisions, there are a significant number of requirements being placed on them by the Department for Education; it is probable that these requirements are as frustrating for them as they are for you but they can't tell you that!

School Community Support

We're all in this together, so if you have questions or concerns then please do raise them with your class rep who will collate them and feed them back to the school regularly to save the school having to answer the same question 630 times. Also, if you or your child is struggling then please do speak with Karen Allen.

We continue to feel such a strong sense of community with our school at the heart of that community – by working together, guided by these principles, our children will thrive in the safety, security and comfort of the community that is our school.

We hope you all have a lovely break over the Christmas period,
Yours faithfully,

Annette Hixon
Headteacher

Jo Tearle
Deputy Headteacher

Jen Bleack
SJS PTFA Chair

Nicola Howarth
SJS PTFA Chair