



Willow Brook News

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Dear Willow Brook families,

Half term is finally within touching distance and what is better than a fine autumn day to lift spirits and get us there! School has started to find a rhythm and children have adjusted to their new environment and routines, and we can but hope that the winter months ahead continue to build positively on what has been quite an unprecedented start.



The teaching staff were pleased to have the opportunity to talk with you this week for parents' evenings. Whilst we run all other meetings online using Teams, we opted for the safer option of telephones on this occasion as the current Wi-Fi in school often struggles in the early evening and we wanted to make sure that we were as efficient with timing and connections as possible! This is something that is, thankfully, being upgraded in the next fortnight.



Thank you so much for your generous contributions to our harvest collection last Friday morning. Thanks to Jack, who loved delivering his trailer filled with fruit and vegetables across the playground, and our fabulous Friends Committee who gave up their early morning to collect and gather! The Friary were delighted when they arrived and send their appreciation too.

We were delighted to receive a delivery from Moore's Garden Centre at the end of last week, which enabled our children to have the experience of potting their own bulbs! They had great fun getting their hands in the compost and even though some of our

Year 2's were convinced that they had planted dandelions, I can assure you that daffodils should grow! Moore's have always been very generous to Willow Brook. They always make sure that the school has a magnificent Christmas tree and have often helped us with fundraising prizes and gardening advice. We appreciate their generosity and support in getting our young gardeners equipped and motivated!





It has been a pleasure this week to meet each class individually and start our 2020 Class Council process. Listening to the children's opinions and thoughts continues to be an essential part of school life, and this week they were keen to tell me all about lockdown, the things that they had missed in school, how they felt their parents might have got on if Ofsted had visited and observed lessons at home and, most importantly, how life in their bubbles makes them feel. Understanding that school council meetings over the next few months will be virtual, nominating themselves for the honour of wearing that council badge was perhaps a little more daunting than usual. With only Year 1 to vote tomorrow, it has been a joy to see their confidence and pride as they wore their badges for the first time – I thought I'd share that with you.



Miss Johnston will be in school tomorrow for her final visit before she returns after half term. She cannot wait to get back to Year 2 for three days a week. Miss Scott will be with us until the end of term to provide some continuity in the classroom. She is aiming to move to work for the NHS in January, eager to use her passion and skills in children's wellbeing and mental health... although she is starting to feel quite at home at Willow Brook now...



Miss Phillips is also moving onwards and upwards to a new role in a school in Edwalton after half term. I hope that she too might reach her ultimate ambition of training to teach in Early Years in time. I thank her for all the energy and sporting enthusiasm she has brought to the school during her 3 years at Willow Brook. She has certainly grown in confidence and found her rightful place in a classroom.



After three attempts, I am finally having long overdue surgery in half term. (The hospital was rather busy in March and I was rather busy on September 1st!) I will, hopefully, be recovering at home for a short time in November but did not want you to feel my absence was anything untoward.



Finally, I would like to send a message to the parents of our wonderful new Reception children. In the hardest of circumstances, your children have started school and now, I hope, feel very much a part of our family. You have not had the chance to come into school to read, share coffee and cake or chat, nor have you seen your children scooped up and welcomed by our older pupils. But you have given your children the confidence and support they needed to take the first brave steps of their new journey and I look forward to watching them learn and grow with us. I have missed Reception's wonderful volume today (and the squeaky wheels of their bikes and scooters!). To Mrs Broadhead and Mrs Cotton too, who are self-isolating with you over the next week, I hope you are all safe and well and enjoy a well-deserved break.

I wish you all a very happy half term full of family and fun. Recharge your batteries ready for the weeks ahead!

With my very best wishes,

Louise Ballard