

19th December 2023

Dear Riverside families,

I hope that you are all well.

Today marks the final day of term and what a term it has been! I really hope that your child has enjoyed it, has learnt some new things and made some new connections. We know that school life looks different for every Riverside child and this term has brought so many personal achievements, from taking a first step, saying a first word, writing a first sentence, being OK in new spaces, trying new foods, calculating a harder sum, welcoming a new sibling, contributing to the wider community, advocating for others, coping with loss, making a new friend and finding a voice (in whichever form this takes). We never underestimate the importance and significance of reaching these milestones, nor the effort taken by your child (and you) to get there. We will never tire of proudly shouting about them from the rooftops.

We have ended the term with an understandably joyful focus, although we would like to think that such seasonal spirit and festive fun is a feature of everyday life at Riverside School. We want your children to love coming into school; we want them to feel safe and happy in their surroundings and we want them to feel truly valued for the wonderfully unique and special children they are.

Over the past three weeks we have offered 25 Immersive Experiences and each primary class across all four sites has had a personalised 'Twas the Night show. If you were able to join your child and their class for the experience, I really hope you enjoyed it. And if your child is secondary-aged, you have their show to look forward to in the Spring Term – further details will follow soon.

In previous letters, I have referred to our website and hope that it provides you with the type of information you require. Whether you are interested in details about our curriculum or classroom approaches, training videos, e-safety advice, resources for home, Makaton stories or helpful contacts, please visit www.riversideschool.org.uk. You will also find copies of all of our school policies and, as we have recently updated our Regulation Support policy (previously referred to as our Behaviour Management policy), I have copied the link here, as it really reflects who we are and what we stand for when it comes to supporting our pupils when, quite simply, they may just need a little more support: <https://www.riversideschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=1714&type=pdf>.

Further to recent updates about our hydrotherapy pool, I am pleased to let you know that final maintenance and refurbishment work is underway and we are very much hoping to be in a position to re-open the pool in the Spring Term. Unfortunately, I am unable to confirm a date at this stage but contractors will continue to work after we break up and we will be clearer about the timescale on our return in January. Once again, I would like to thank you for your patience and understanding.

You may recall that we sent out a preliminary COVID vaccination link a while back and we are currently liaising with our NHS colleagues to set a date in the Spring Term. Please look out for further

details soon.

At this time of year, we often talk about celebrations, family get-togethers and sharing special moments. And rightly so. But we feel that it is also important to acknowledge that many people, both near and far, for one reason or another may not be experiencing these at the moment. So, in addition to the words above, perhaps we can also add the words hope, peace and understanding, kindness, unity and love, and let's wish that these will spread a little more freely around the world, at a time when they are so desperately needed.

To end this term, we are delighted to share this year's staff Makaton Sing and Sign, "[Step into Christmas](#)". We hope you enjoy it.

Wishing you all a safe, happy and healthy Christmas and we look forward to seeing your children again on Wednesday 3rd January.

With very best wishes,



Steve Solomons
Headteacher