



Adele's Blog

Christmas Edition



It's Nearly Christmaaaaaaaaaaaaaas!



Christmas is fast approaching and I am not ready or feeling in the Christmas spirit at all yet. After what can only be described as a terrible year, I am trying to summon up the energy to give the kids an enjoyable Christmas. We do not do elf on a shelf. We do not put our decorations up until the week before Christmas. We try and limit the amount of time we talk about Christmas as it is a long time for a child who finds it difficult to manage emotions to deal with from the end of November. Excitement, anticipation, have I been naughty or nice?, will Santa bring me presents have all been things to deal with every Christmas but this year, further questions like why doesn't Santa have to quarantine when he travels so far and why is Santa not in a bubble when everybody else is and why is Santa allowed to go to everybody's house when we can't go see auntie and cousins? It really does show how much they actually do listen and take in and how difficult this year really must have been for our young people.

My son will eat pigs in blankets, Yorkshire puddings and potato waffles for his Christmas dinner. He may have a slice of Christmas cake and he may or may not join us at the table. Over the years I have learned that to some, Christmas is about eating a turkey dinner, it's about playing a game with the family in the evening, it's about sitting down together to watch whatever is on the TV. For our families and children, it's very individual and what makes my son happy is what we go along with. It's about taking stock of the things that you do have and not despairing about the things your children might not enjoy doing that you did when you were younger and celebrated Christmas. It's really about what you make it. Don't feel guilty about the things you might think they are missing out on and make new Christmas memories with your family. I hope you have an enjoyable Christmas and from all of us at the Parents Forum for Bradford and Airedale we really do wish you a merry Christmas.

2020 Summed Up – Aaaaarrggghhhh!



I have been working at the Parents Forum for just short of a year now and oh my goodness what a crazy year it has been. None of us have known life like this (except maybe people who were alive during the war effort). After just starting to find my feet in a new office, with new people and starting to go to events and meeting you lovely families it all changed with the blink of an eye. Six weeks after starting work the first lockdown happened. It was scary and as all of us that work at PFBA have young people with special educational needs, we knew firsthand what you were all going through too. We found ourselves turning the front room or bedroom into an office, becoming a teacher (not a very good one in my case), having more caring responsibilities than we already had before with no respite, we were separated from our families and friends and we weren't supposed to leave the house unless it was essential. My son was offered a space at school but I didn't take them up and decided to keep him at home instead. I know many of you were in similar situations. Our children's lives have been massively disrupted this year and for my son, every time he has had to isolate or go back to school it has become more and more difficult every time. I know that some of your children have not even been able to return to school yet and we salute each and every one of you for your strength, support, love and courage. I have often thought that as parents we are also key workers and hopefully now we have a vaccine on the horizon, 2021 might be the beginning of a return to a more normal life but maybe even a better life. So cheers and here's to a better 2021. Let's face it, it couldn't be much worse.



Local Authority & PFBA New Year Listening Event



The Parents Forum has been working with Health, Education and Social Care partners to help create the best way to listen and respond to what parent/carers, young people and families tell us. Working co-productively helps ensure that the view of parents, carers and families are heard and provides opportunities to help build better services. With this in mind, the Local Authority and PFBA are working together to host a listening event on 27th January 2021 with the focus being on education. There will be a presentation of what the partnership working has achieved over the last 12 months but also the opportunity for parents and carers to have their say on what issues are important to them and to have the right people hear about these issues. It will be virtual, as everything has to be at the minute, but it's a really good chance to say what you want to say to the people that make the decisions. Places will need to be booked as we anticipate it will be quite a busy event so please watch out on PFBA social media and website for further information about the event itself and how to book onto it.

2021 Wish List

Aside from the obvious end to covid 19 and life going back to "normal", I have been thinking a lot about what I would want from 2021 if I had a magic wand and I would really like to hear what you would put on a wish list if you could have anything. This would be my top 3....

- 1) For school to be easier for my boy. For him to get up in a morning and be looking forward to going to school rather than dreading it and unable to go sometimes
- 2) For there to be some kind of support for my daughter now that she is too old for children's services and desperate to live a more independent life
- 3) For me to feel less guilt about the things I feel my children miss out on and the family as a whole miss out on

Please drop me an email adele@pfba.org.uk and let me know what you would wish for if you could have anything in 2021. I'd love to see if we are all wishing along the same lines and to have a think about what we can do together to make a difference.

From everyone at the Parents Forum for Bradford and Airedale we would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.



Adele