



12 December 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: 'It's a waiting game' (December 2023)

Advent marks the season of waiting, expectantly, to celebrate the birth of Christ. For some, the month of December being a dark season, can be a time of longing, whether that be for the lights and warmth of Christmas festivities or time spent with loved ones.

However, we can also find periods of waiting quite difficult. A sense of impatience, frustration or even loss of hope can ensue as that thing you are waiting for just does not seem to arrive. Justin Welby recently said, 'waiting confronts the illusion that we are in control. It's very easy to believe this in our modern world, where technology provides us with any information we can dream of instantly, where our infrastructure and modern medicine insulates us from our precariousness and fragility. Waiting reminds us of the powerlessness in our lives ... we recognise our inability to predict the future, to know the outcome of situations we long to see resolved. To realise we are not in control of many aspects of our lives can feel hugely shocking and destabilising.'

The Christmas period of Advent is full of stories of waiting, of anticipation and hope. The wise men spent years searching, religious people spent years waiting for their Messiah, even Mary spent months waiting for the birth. Waiting doesn't come naturally to us and it can be a real challenge to teach children to be patient in our modern world of fast-food drive-thrus, same day shopping deliveries and on demand TV. The rushing around and busy-ness of life means that things happen quickly and often without the need to wait. When we teach children however, we are ultimately preparing them for life and the shocks that it can bring, including how to be patient and have control, achieving their very best to ultimately give them increased options in their future. Giving young people the skills to control the future well is one of the main purposes behind a good education. I like the proverb that asks for, 'the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference' (Reinhold Neibuhr). Or as a Year 7 pupil said to me recently, 'there's no point worrying about things that have happened as you can't control it now. Just make sure the future is different.' Our young people are just amazing!

They have been producing some remarkable films about what it means to them to be a Finham Park School student and how they are being equipped for their future. Students have titled it, 'Why the lion roars – a Finham docu-series'. (Links can be found below).

- Episode 1 – Courageous lions (<https://youtu.be/Dvh4GfO8Dx8>)
- Episode 2 – Kind lions (<https://youtu.be/rgBOeIoTh4E>)
- Episode 3 – Lions with ambition (<https://youtu.be/jgOLRbbZhDo>)
- Episode 4 – Persevering lions (<https://youtu.be/nUyEyg3Dn3E>)
- Episode 5 – The Pride of lions (<https://youtu.be/KcoZHdv-3g>)

As you wait for Christmas, I hope your plans include rest, recovery and reset and you can approach the coming year with confidence in the future. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours faithfully,

Mr C Bishop (Headteacher)

