

The year 2020 has been a very different year.....

..... there was no escaping the news, the stories, the worry and the unknown.



As a family with 4 boys, 3 of whom have Hypohidrotic Ectodermal Dysplasia, we have our own challenges to overcome as well as a hectic schedule of work, school, after school clubs and doctors' appointments. In March of this year, given the circumstances and quickly changing guidance and the fact our children would be classified as vulnerable, we took the decision to withdraw them from school earlier than directed by the government and I started my life as working from home full time.

And so, our shielding journey began.....

We took this opportunity with both hands and made as many positives as we could, making home schooling as fun as possible, taking the opportunity to teach the boys things they wouldn't necessarily be doing in school and definitely in a way they wouldn't do so in a classroom. The new style classroom brought cooking classes, and lots of arts and crafts. There was also some of

dad's 'life' lessons, which included a practical lesson of how to change a plug.

This change in circumstances was new to everyone, but the children were so resilient and took it in their stride and thrived in this environment, not to mention Ben who really enjoyed having some extra sidekicks around during the day.

Now with shielding, we can't say it was all fun, games and smiles. After time, the inability to actually go anywhere and enjoy some time out was a challenge and, of course, had its up and downs, as I am sure most families did, but we still take the positives of being able to have this extended time as a family, together.

The scary reality of Covid 19 occasionally hit us. Having the 3 affected children, the thought of them getting coronavirus was extremely scary considering their health was not as optimal as it could be, especially our youngest Ben, who, if he had the slightest bug, would be admitted to hospital. Over his life he has been admitted to hospital almost every other week.

In came lockdown, and this allowed his health to be built up and we managed an amazing 12 weeks with no illnesses, which for us was a blessing to see him thriving and seeing another side to life that doesn't consist of doctors and needles. The fact that everyone was well, and appointments had stopped, there was a weight lifted. Everyone was healthy and there were no stresses of who needs time out of school for this appointment, or no need for 4 hours round trips to specialist hospitals.

Moving on further into the year, we approached the summer period. The usually stressful time of having to get the kids ready and into school on hot days, when all they wanted to do was stay somewhere cool. Well this summer was different, there was no stress or worry of them over heating, no need to get in and out of cars on a school run. Looking back, how many people can say they went to school in just boxer shorts! Then come the 'summer holidays', spending their entire days in and out of paddling pools and eating their weight in ice lollies, for a child it was a great life.

Supporting a normal lifestyle

Roll on September....



Summer has now been and gone, we are 7 months into this lockdown period and starting to come out the other side, albeit still with the worry of coronavirus being present. It was a nervous time with our eldest starting secondary school, so not only going back to school, but to a school he has never been to before, with people he has never met and, of course, he missed out on the simplest of things such as the transfer day.

The first meeting with teachers being held over video call was a worrying thought. Would we convey the right information, would they pick things up?

Well, the new school have been brilliant and made the process and transition a lot easier and effortless. Of course,

there are hiccups, it is all new to them, but the most important thing is they are willing to listen and learn.

Since having all children back at school, some previous issues have returned, with illness and fatigue, as it has been quite the change from our daily routine during lockdown and returning back to 'normality.

The world has changed, and this is the new normal..... it's how we adapt.

Zoe McDonald

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