



**Dear Friends of St. Anthony's Nursery School, Malawi, Dec 2020**

Wow, what a year!! I hope this finds you well in what has been a really challenging, worrying and difficult time. It's certainly been like no other in the 18 years the nursery school has been open. Sadly, but not surprisingly due to the risk of coronavirus in Malawi the nursery school closed its doors on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March and didn't reopen until Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October – the longest it has ever been shut. Staff took care of the building during this period but I asked them to stay apart and away from work as much as possible. They were paid as normal over the entire period and I actually gave them extra to ensure they could stay home and keep their families safe and well. Thankfully everyone seems ok, I am not aware of anyone testing positive and the levels of infection in Malawi have stayed very low, a miracle really as their healthcare system really couldn't cope with what we have seen here in Europe.

The older children that were at school in March when the doors closed have stayed on (as they didn't get to graduate in July) and will finish their education this Christmas - we will then have a new intake of children in January. The staff have carefully thought about all the necessary items they need to reopen and keep everyone safe - they purchased lots of masks, hand sanitizer, handwashing buckets and portable blackboards that can be used outside to teach the children. A huge thanks to Marchesi Rotary in Norwich for helping fund these items and help me get the school set up for what is the "new normal".

We are still looking to set up a shelter for when the rains come, install mains water for hand washing and I intend to buy 2 digital thermometers for checking the children's temperature as they are unable to purchase these in Malawi.

Despite restrictions I managed to send another 2 blue drums full of books, toys, clothes in early September and they safely made it to the school in late October – I will do the same in early 2021 as it's a really easy way to get equipment and supplies to the team. The staff have all just purchased fertiliser (I always give them enough funds to buy 2 bags each) to plant their maize and ensure they have enough food for the year ahead.

Sadly, any intentions we had of starting the building project to install a kitchen and store area have been put on hold – we will revisit this in 2021. The safety and wellbeing of all in Malawi has of course taken precedence.

I hope next year will run a little more smoothly and the 160 children will receive a full year of education. I must thank my staff for taking care of the school and children and ensuring this situation has been handled with care and all the necessary precautions.

A little bit of kindness and generosity goes a very long way in Malawi so thank you for continuing to support the nursery school, it's been a very tough year all round. I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas – please take care and let's all hope for a brighter 2021!

**With very best wishes, Gina x**

**St. Anthony's Nursery School** [www.thenurserymalawi.co.uk](http://www.thenurserymalawi.co.uk)  
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**Please send any donations by cheque payable to 'The Nursery School'**



**Thank you!**



This is my favourite photo of all the children outside. When I look at this picture, I realise how many children in Malawi we are helping 😊



Just a few photos from the last 12 months: lots of new equipment, toys, books, football kits and clothes. Thankfully a few things to smile about 😊

