

4<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope you all had a good half term break. The children have settled back in to school well and are enjoying their learning.

We begin our exciting new Learning Adventure this week, which is called 'The Museum of Ancient Wonders'. The Learning Adventure will provide a highly stimulating exploration of the history curriculum, with children and teachers going into role as part of our Mantle of the Expert approach to explore a range of historical events and people. During their time at Rushcombe First School, children are provided with a comprehensive grounding in the ancient history of Britain, exploring the key changes between the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. This knowledge and understanding of ancient Britain is consolidated and extended within each year group, including children making use of our extensive grounds and facilities to explore the Iron Age roundhouse and mock archaeological evidence of Stone Age and Bronze Age camps. In addition to this, children will also learn about another ancient civilisation or an aspect of ancient Britain, depending upon their year group. The children's historical learning will also provide a range of opportunities to explore other curriculum areas, including purposeful contexts for writing, philosophical thinking and the arts. We look forward to sharing further details about the Learning Adventure in due course.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the parent teacher consultations recently, it is a good opportunity to discuss your child's progress and for us to work together in supporting your child.

Further to the recent government announcement and decision, **schools will remain open** during a further period of national lockdown. However, with the increase in local and national infection rates, we will all have to be even more vigilant to avoid the spread of the virus and ensure the health and safety of our whole school community. **We would appreciate it if parents would consider wearing a face mask/covering during drop off and collection times [unless you have a pre-existing health condition].** As a school community working together, we can also reduce the risks by:

- **limiting contact with people outside of our households – from Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November different households should not mix unless they are in a support/childcare bubble or meeting one person from another household for exercise and recreation outdoors** [Government guidance indicates parents are able to form a childcare bubble with another household for the purposes of informal childcare, where the child is 13 or under. As above, some households will also be able to benefit from being in a [support bubble](#), which allows single adult households to join another household.]
- **making sure that children and staff do not attend school if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus – it will be necessary to send a child/adult home if they become unwell**
- **self-isolating if you or anyone in your household has symptoms of Covid-19 immediately and booking a test for anyone with symptoms - if you are waiting for a test result you and your whole household must self-isolate until you get the result**
- **if you or someone in your household receives a positive test result or have been identified as a close contact, you must self-isolate for the required time period**
- **expecting everyone to continue to follow the guidance in and out of school regarding contact and social/physical distancing, including wearing facemasks where required and particularly when the appropriate social distancing is difficult to maintain**
- **promoting regular hand washing for at least 20 seconds with water and soap or use of sanitiser and ensuring good respiratory hygiene by promoting the catch it, bin it, kill it approach**

We appreciate your support in helping us to sustain the safety and wellbeing of our whole school community.

### **Staff News**

Congratulations to Mr Hancock and his wife who have recently welcomed a beautiful baby daughter. Everyone is doing well and we wish them all the best for the future. Mr Hancock will be taking a short period of paternity leave and will be returning to school soon.

### **Winter's Coming**

Now that the colder weather is here, please could you ensure that your child brings a coat to school, as we aim for the children to go out to play and get some fresh air every day. We would also be grateful if you could ensure that your child has suitable clothing for outdoor PE and learning, such as, wellington boots, leggings/jogging bottoms and waterproof outer layer. Please make sure that all items of clothing are labelled to prevent them from getting lost around the school. If you require any further uniform items, please contact the school office by phone or email, where most items can be purchased.

### **Flu Immunisation**

A reminder that on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November, all children are able to have the nasal flu vaccination at school. You will need to have completed the online consent form if you wish your child to have the flu vaccination. Please complete the online form at least two working days prior to the date of the session at school to ensure that the nursing team have time to check the form and contact you if there are any queries. The nursing team will be wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) for the immunisation session as per the guidelines from Public Health England. Please see separate information sent prior to the half term break for further details.

### **Year 2 Phonic Screening Check**

As you are aware, the Year 2 children will now be completing the Phonic Screening Check during this half of the autumn term. Our Year 2 teaching team are continuing to consolidate and develop the Year 2 children's phonic skills in preparation for the assessment later in the autumn term. In the last academic year, we held phonic information sessions and shared a wide range of resources with parents. The Year 2 team have sent out some further details and resources, which you can find by logging into your child's Microsoft Teams account. We would appreciate it if you could continue to support your children with regular reading and to practise their phonic skills and knowledge.

### **Foundation Stage Admissions for 2021**

A reminder that any parents wishing their child to come to Rushcombe First School in September 2021, for children born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017, need to apply for a school place. Applications should be completed on-line at [www.dorsetforyou.com/schooladmissions](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/schooladmissions).

The closing date for all applications is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Unfortunately, due to the current exceptional circumstances, I am unable to meet parents and show them around the school. However, I am more than happy to speak on the phone. Please pass this message on to any families you may know. If you need any advice or further information, please contact the school office.

### **Year 4 Transfer to Middle Schools**

A reminder that if you have a child transferring to middle school in September 2021, applications should be completed on-line via the local authority website at [www.dorsetforyou.com/schooladmissions](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/schooladmissions). The closing date for all applications is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

### **Staggered Drop off and Collection**

A reminder that there are three staggered drop off and collection times. Each family has been allocated a designated time slot and it is important that families arrive and leave during their designated time slot:

- Families with a **surname commencing A – E** will drop off between **8.30 am – 8.40 am** and pick up between **2.45 pm – 2.55 pm**.
- Families with a **surname commencing F – M** will drop off between **8.40 am – 8.50 am** and pick up between **2.55 pm – 3.05 pm**.
- Families with a **surname commencing N – Z** will drop off between **8.50 am – 9.00 am** and pick up between **3.05 pm – 3.15 pm**.

**We would appreciate it if everyone continues to keep to the school's staggered system for school drop off and collection times, including the use of the one-way system on the playground, maintaining appropriate social distancing and ensuring only one person accompanies your child to school.** In order to ensure that the staggered timings work effectively to enable social distancing, please continue to keep to your allocated time slot and to leave the school grounds promptly after drop off/collection. **Please also continue to use the red lines outside each year group to queue for drop off/collection, ensuring that parents do not come any further forward than the red line nearest to your child's year group entrance - this is to ensure appropriate social distancing for both parents and staff.** If you have any messages for your child's teacher, please contact them via the school office email, rather than relaying messages on the door in the morning - this will help to ensure that the staggered timings work effectively. **In addition, please make your time on the school grounds as short as possible, including avoiding congregating with other parents/families. This includes ensuring that the area around the school gates are kept clear and that pathways around the school [including the pathways outside the main gates and around the car park] are used for socially distanced entry and exit purposes only.** The school gates will be closed just after 9.00 am. Your support and cooperation is appreciated.

### **School Office and Messages for Staff**

A reminder that **the school office is only partially open to parents and visitors and we ask that you refrain from visiting the school office wherever this can be avoided. In the first instance, we request that all communications are made via email or phone to the school office,** including any messages for your child's teacher. A telephone appointment to speak with a member of staff will be made for you if necessary. If you need to visit the school office for essential reasons [or if agreed with a member of the school office], the entrance area has been marked with physical/social distancing demarcations and there is a taped line by the office window to ensure the appropriate social/physical distance is in place. In the office foyer, there are two boxes/containers, one for paperwork, such as, letters/permission slips, and one for objects/parcels. Entrance to other areas of the school will not be permitted, unless by prior agreement/appointment. We would be grateful if you could wear a face mask/covering when visiting the school office, unless you have a medical exemption.

### **Safety in the School Grounds and the Surrounding Environment**

We would appreciate it if you could ensure that children do not ride their scooters or bicycles in the playground and that additional care is taken whilst riding/pushing bikes and scooters on the pathway adjacent to the school gates. Please can we also remind you that to ensure the health and safety of all our children, no dogs are allowed on the school grounds. We would appreciate it if dogs are not left tied up close to the school gates. Thank you for your co-operation in keeping our school environment a safe place to be during these busy times of the day.

### **Coronavirus [Covid-19] Guidance [Please see separate letter for more detailed information.]**

Please remember that if your child or any member of the household have symptoms of coronavirus infection [COVID-19], **however mild**, you will all need to stay at home for 14 days from when the symptoms started. The most common symptoms of coronavirus [COVID-19] are:

- **High temperature [feels hot to touch on the back or chest – a temperature of 37.6 degrees and above]**
- **New continuous cough [this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)]**
- **Loss or change to your normal sense of smell or taste [anosmia]**

More detail of the symptoms can be found: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/>

**It is important that anyone with symptoms is tested.** If your child presents with Covid-19 symptoms, they will not be able to come to school and you should book a test. A test can be booked or ordered online via NHS UK, using the following link: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-for-coronavirus/> **It is essential that the school is advised of the test outcome.** Where the child or staff member tests negative, they can return to school, if they are well enough, and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation. If there is a confirmed case in school, it may be necessary for other children/groups of children and staff to isolate at home. We will work closely with Public Health England who will advise us of the course of action.

If your child appears to present with any of these symptoms when they are in school, we will contact you and you will be advised to follow the [COVID-19: guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection guidance](#).

You can seek further medical advice from NHS 111 and you can also use the Department for Education coronavirus helpline, which is available to answer questions about COVID-19 on T: 0800 046 8687. The helpline is open between 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday) and 10am to 4pm (Saturday to Sunday).

The school will endeavour to remain open for all children, however, if there are confirmed case/s or insufficient safe staffing levels, the school may have to close or partially close for a period of time. The school will keep parents updated with any decisions by parentmail as soon as they can. If in the event that children have to self-isolate at home or that our school has to be partially/closed, teaching staff will provide home learning for each child/year group via Microsoft Teams [Please see previous letters for further details.]

### **Finally**

We understand that this is a difficult and concerning time, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support, understanding and cooperation. The health, safety and wellbeing of all our children, staff and wider community is of paramount importance. I have been particularly touched by the many thoughtful and kind messages the school has received. I would also like to thank the staff for their ongoing hard work, commitment and dedication in these exceptional times.

The school will continue to keep you updated as the situation develops or changes and more information is available. We appreciate your support in helping us to sustain the safety and wellbeing of our whole school community.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs C Mahon  
Headteacher