

18th November 2020

Dear Parents,

I would like to thank everyone for their support in helping us to sustain the safety and wellbeing of our whole school community. Please continue 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, utilising a face mask/cover during drop off and collection times [unless you have a pre-existing health condition] and ensuring only one person accompanies your child to school. It is very much appreciated.

Thank you to everyone who recently contributed to Children in Need as part of our non-uniform day. The children enjoyed wearing many different outfits and costumes – we even had our own Pudsey Bear in the form of Mrs Horton in her onesie!

The children are continuing to enjoy our exciting new Learning Adventure, 'The Museum of Ancient Wonders'. During the first phase of the Learning Adventure, children have been learning about ancient Britain during the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages. As part of their studies, children learn about the key changes between these periods, for example, exploring the move from hunter gatherers in the Stone Age to more permanent settlements and early farming by the Iron Age. Children's learning about ancient Britain is planned progressively, so that each year group builds upon and extends the learning from the previous year group, whilst providing scope for classes to develop their own routes of inquiry in response to the children's interests. It has also been wonderful to see different year groups utilising the resources in our outdoor grounds to help develop children's understanding of ancient Britain, including using the woodlands to explore the Stone Age hunter gatherers, and visiting the Iron Age roundhouse to learn about the development of shelters/homes. We look forward to sharing details about the next phase of our Learning Adventure in due course.

Staff News

Congratulations to Mrs Sutcliffe and her husband who have recently welcomed a beautiful baby son. Everyone is doing well and we wish them all the best for the future. Mrs Sutcliffe will continue to be on maternity leave for a period of time and I will update you further later in the year.

Universal Infant Free School Meals [Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2]

As you are aware, all children in Foundation and Key Stage 1 [Year 1 and Year 2] are entitled to a free school meal. Parents who wish to order a free packed lunch for their child, should use Chartwells online ordering system [<https://dorset.mealselector.co.uk>]. Please note the on-line ordering system requires parents to order their child's meals up until the cut off time of midnight on Sunday – 7 days before the full week in which the meals are to be served. It is recommended that parents complete their child's order for the whole term.

Free School Meals

For those families that are entitled to a free school meal due to income, it is important that your child is registered for the free school meal. If you would like to find out if you are eligible, please visit the online eligibility checker at <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/free-school-meals>. This online form only takes a few moments to complete and will give you an immediate response. We would encourage you to do this, as the school also receives much needed additional funding for each child that is registered. Once an award is made, please inform the school office. Meals are ordered on-line via the Chartwells website, as above. If you have any queries, please contact the school office.

School Uniform Award

If your child does qualify for a free school meal [due to income] and the award is granted by the Local Authority, the Governing Body of Rushcombe First School has agreed that those children who are in receipt of a free school meal award will also be eligible to receive a one off annual school uniform award. This will include the following: one Rushcombe First School sweatshirt, one Rushcombe PE t-shirt, one pair of red shorts and one Rushcombe book bag. The items can be claimed once at any time during each academic year.

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.

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](#).

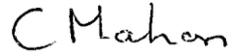
You can seek further medical advice from NHS 111 and you can also use the Department for Education coronavirus helpline, which is available to answer questions about COVID-19 on T: 0800 046 8687. The helpline is open between 8am to 6pm (Monday to Friday) and 10am to 4pm (Saturday to Sunday).

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

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support, understanding and cooperation. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Mahon". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Mrs C Mahon
Headteacher