

27<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Parents,

The children are continuing to enjoy their exciting historical Learning Adventure, 'The Museum of Ancient Wonders'. It has been wonderful to see the children so enthused about the different aspects of ancient history that they have been learning about, including the detailed knowledge and understanding they demonstrate through their writing, discussions, creativity and play. Following their explorations of ancient Britain [Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages], the children have moved on to explore a contrasting period or civilisation from ancient history. In Year 1, the children are carrying out a study of the ancient Greeks, whilst children in Year 2 are exploring the ancient Egyptians. In Year 3, children are studying the Romans, whilst Year 4 children are developing an overview of ancient British history taking them up to the Anglo-Saxons. The Learning Adventure will conclude at the end of next week, when the children will participate in a range of finale activities to celebrate their learning during the project.

Earlier in the autumn term, the school was nominated by Dorset Music Service and awarded the national 'Music Mark', in recognition of the school's commitment to providing a high quality music education for all children and young people. Congratulations to everyone!

As the current national lockdown ends soon and a new-tiered approach commences, it is important that we will all continue to be vigilant to avoid the spread of the virus and ensure the health and safety of our whole school community. 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, 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. 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 and help to keep everyone safe. Your support and cooperation is much appreciated.

### **Staff News**

The school has recently made an additional staffing appointment. We look forward to welcoming Miss Woodman to our school next week, who will join our teaching assistant team, initially working with our Foundation children.

### **Reading and Staff Emails**

Recently, you have received a letter about communicating with your child's teacher about their reading progress. You will now be able to contact your child's teacher direct via email [please see separate letter for details]. When contacting your child's teacher about your child's reading, you may wish to comment on some of the following:

- Your child's level of confidence with the text they have read.
- Any aspects of the text that your child found challenging.
- Any additional reading that your child has completed.
- Your child's enjoyment of their reading.
- Any words of encouragement/praise for your child that you would like to share with your child's teacher.
- You might also ask the teacher for further guidance about how to support your child's reading at home.

We very much hope that you find the new teacher email contact system useful in helping to support your child's reading at home.

## **Christmas Events and Activities**

Due to the current exceptional circumstances this year, the school will not be able to hold all our different Christmas events and activities, particularly those where parents join us in school, such as our Christmas decoration events and our performances. The children will however, take part in a range of exciting events and learning activities linked to Christmas, enabling this to be a very special and enjoyable time.

In line with our curriculum approach, the school will be launching an exciting Learning Adventure linked to the theme of Christmas, which will last for two weeks from Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December. The Learning Adventure will provide a highly stimulating context for the children's learning about Christmas, and will include teachers and children going into role through the use of our Mantle of the Expert approach. There will be imaginary characters for them to meet and some very important Christmas related problems to solve. During the Learning Adventure, the children will engage in purposeful writing opportunities, learn about the Christmas story as part of the RE curriculum and take part in a range of arts activities, including making Christmas decorations and creating their Christmas cards. The Learning Adventure will culminate on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December with a special Christmas celebration within classes, including children being able to wear their own/party clothes to school. We are very much looking forward to enabling children to experience the awe and wonder of Christmas through this special project.

In addition to our Christmas themed Learning Adventure, the children will also be working on preparing and filming a special Christmas message from each class. These messages will be made available for parents to watch and enjoy via Microsoft Teams at the end of the term.

Due to COVID-19 guidelines, the school will not be able to have its own special Rushcombe post box and internal post system as usual. You may wish to consider exchanging Christmas cards beyond the school, however, if you wish your child to exchange Christmas cards with some of their friends in their class, you may choose to send cards prior to the end of term each Monday. The cards will then be quarantined for a period of time before being handed out. Please note that we will only be able to facilitate the handing out of Christmas cards to children in your child's class and not to children in other classes/year groups.

If you order school packed lunches, Chartwells will be providing a Christmas packed lunch on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December. The school has been advised that the festive menu is now available online to order and that if you have previously chosen the alternative option, this will automatically transfer to the vegetarian option, however, you may go online to amend this or place an order if you wish, up until the cut-off point of midnight on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December.

## **Year 1 Hearing Checks**

On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December, the school nurse will be in school to complete catch up hearing checks for those children in Year 1 who did not have their hearing check completed in the previous year. We understand the Nursing Team have contacted the relevant families directly.

## **Friends of Rushcombe**

You may be aware that the Friends of Rushcombe have organised that if parents make purchases online through 'easyfunding' [<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/>], this can raise funds to provide additional resources, equipment and opportunities for all the children in our school. 'Easyfundraising' is a website and app that turns everyday shopping into free donations for a cause or charity. We would be most grateful if you would consider using this to enable funds to be raised for our school. Thank you.

## **Keeping Children Safe Online**

The internet can be an immensely helpful and interesting tool for children and teenagers educationally, as well as recreationally. The NSPCC have some really great tips and resources to help understand the risks and keep children safe and happy, whilst accessing the internet. Please see the following link for more details:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

## **Headlice**

Recently there have been a few cases of headlice in school. Please check your child's hair regularly for any signs of adult lice or their eggs. If you do find signs of headlice, you should treat your child's hair with the appropriate

treatment and check the rest of your family for any infestations. Everyone's cooperation will reduce the frequency of cases in our school. Thank you.

### **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 details 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.]

### **Dorset Council Coronavirus Guidelines for Parents and Helpline Information**

Please see the following link for additional information and guidelines about Coronavirus and a confidential helpline number for those who may need advice if you are worried about work and/or money.

<https://mailchi.mp/dorsetcouncil/latest-coronavirus-covid-19-news-and-information-17-march-3121566>

**Finally**

We understand that this is a difficult time for everyone as we all face different challenges and adapt to different expectations. The health, safety and wellbeing of all our children, staff and wider community is of paramount importance. 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