

Dear Parents,

As part of our new special Christmas focused Learning Adventure, over Friday evening and the weekend, the classrooms were transformed in to Christmas Wonderlands ready for the children to enjoy on Monday morning. Thank you to all the staff who have worked hard to ensure the school looks so lovely and bright for everyone. I would like to also take this opportunity to thank Haskins Garden Centre for their kind donation of a beautiful Christmas tree for the school, which is sited in the playground.

This week, our wondrous Christmas Learning Adventure has started across the school, with a range of exciting and curious events in all of the classrooms. Here's an overview of what has been taking place in the different year groups:

In Foundation, the children walked into their classrooms on Monday morning to find some very small footsteps leading to the Christmas fireplace in Oak class (along with a very, very small letter) and that Ash class had been transformed into the North Pole. The children were visited by a Christmas elf, who told them they were very worried that things would not be ready in time for Christmas. As a result, the children have offered to help out, and are helping to get the presents ready, feed the reindeer and prepare Santa's sleigh.

In Year 1, after seeing all of the Christmas decorations in the classroom, the children received a letter from Buddy and Budwina the elves. The letter told them about a terrible problem with the elves' workshop in the North Pole - apparently there had been a flood in the workshop and everything had been ruined! The Year 1 children have agreed that the elves can use their Year 1 classroom as the new workshop and that they are happy to help get everything ready for Christmas!

In Year 2, when the children walked into their Christmas classrooms on Monday morning, they discovered that each of them had been given the job of being an elf. They have also been visited by Mrs Elf, who keeps on getting up to no good by taking down the decorations and turning off the Christmas lights! The children have discovered that there are many more elves like this, who are trying to ruin Christmas for everyone! As a result, the children will be trying to save Christmas from the mischievous elves, by teaching them about the real meaning of Christmas.

In Year 3, the children came into school on Monday morning to discover that they had been visited by two arctic foxes, who were looking for help to solve an important problem, but they didn't say what it was. In order to find out more, the children wrote letters to the arctic foxes in the North Pole, and were told that there were no lights, decorations or music in Santa's workshop this year - what could be going on? As a result, the children have written to the elves in the North Pole to find out if they can provide any more information about what is happening in Santa's workshop.

In Year 4, when the children walked into their classroom on Monday morning, they discovered gingerbread crumbs and ginger footprints on the floor. They then heard a small voice coming from one of the presents under the tree, which they opened and discovered a gingerbread character called 'Ginger'. After talking with Ginger, the children watched some video footage of gingerbread people in the classroom at night, getting up to all sorts of unusual things - what could they be getting up to? The children are continuing to investigate these mysterious goings on.

The Learning Adventure will culminate on Friday 18th December with a special Christmas celebration within classes, including children being able to wear their own/party clothes to school. In addition to our Christmas themed Learning Adventure, the children will also be making Christmas cards and decorations, and filming a special Christmas message from each class. We are very much looking forward to enabling children to experience the awe and wonder of Christmas through the range of activities they will be taking part in.

Coronavirus - Minimising Risk to the School Community

With the commencement of the new-tiered approach and Christmas approaching, **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.** Everyone's support in minimising the possibility of anyone becoming unwell and the need to self-isolate, is essential, including helping to minimise the possibility of people needing to self-isolate over the Christmas period. **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.

Contact Tracing by the School over the Christmas Holiday

It is very much hoped that everyone remains well and safe. We have been advised by Dorset Council that discussions between the Department for Education and Public Health England has led to a decision that schools will need to have a contact available for contact tracing for the school up to December 24th and then not again until the start of term. For the first 6 days after teaching ends, **if a pupil or staff member tests positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, the school is asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation**, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school. During the school holidays, the school will monitor office emails. **It is important that if a member of the school community tests positive up to and including 24th December, having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, that the school is informed**, so that we can take appropriate actions in conjunction with the Department for Education, Public Health England and the Local Authority, including advising the relevant close contacts of the need to self-isolate.

If a member of your family tests positive from December 25th onwards, the school will not be required to carry out contact tracing, but it is still important that you inform the school of the positive case, so that we can agree with you when your child will be able to return to school.

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

Winter Mini Reading Challenge

The Library Service has advised schools that a new online Reading Challenge has recently commenced. Children can start the Reading Challenge by visiting www.wintermini.org.uk. We wish everybody happy reading and look forward to hearing about your fabulous reading over the winter.

Christmas Post

A reminder 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.

Friends of Rushcombe

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 'easyfunding' to enable funds to be raised for our school. Thank you.

Year 1 Hearing Checks

On Monday 14th 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.

Foundation Vision Screening

All families with a child in Foundation have recently received a letter, explaining that a member of the Vision Screening Team, from Royal Bournemouth Hospital, will be in school on Monday 18th January, to assess all children's eyesight in Foundation Stage. If you do not wish your child to participate, please ensure you complete and return the 'opt-out' form by the 18th December, sent out previously, via ParentMail. 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>

If you need help with access to food, warm clothes or need someone to talk to then support is available.

[Find out about support available](#)

Dorset Council Winter Coats and Warm Pyjamas Appeal

Dorset Council have launched an appeal for people to donate new, or nearly new, winter coats and warm pyjamas that are suitable for children ages 3-12. They will accept coats and jackets in all shapes and sizes – although heavy-duty styles are the most needed, particularly if they are weather-resistant. Dorset Council are also collecting new warm children's pyjamas. If you are not sure if your donations are in a good enough condition, Dorset Council ask people to only give what you would want to receive yourself. There are drop off points across the Dorset Council area including Wimborne – [please take a look at the media release for how and when you can make your donation](#).

How it works - and how to pick up a coat or warm pyjamas

There will be one week where people can drop off items, an isolation period for the clothing to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and then a week where families can drop-in and pick-up coats and pyjamas. No checks, forms or pre-booking – simply help where it's needed.

- **Drop-off: Friday 4 – Thursday 10 December (subject to individual opening times)**
- **Pick-up: Monday 14 – Sunday 20 December (subject to individual opening times)**

Drop-off and pick-up venues are located all over Dorset. The full list can be [found here](#) and new venues will continue to be added.

[Find drop-off and pick-up points near you](#)

Finally

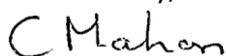
I would like to thank you all for your continued support, understanding and cooperation during this autumn term. By working together, we hope that we can ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our whole school community.

I would also like to thank all the staff for their continued hard work, commitment and dedication during these exceptional times.

I wish you all a very happy and healthy Christmas and New Year.

The children will finish on Friday 18th December, at their usual staggered time, and I look forward to welcoming everyone back on Tuesday 5th January 2021.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs C Mahon
Headteacher