

Updated Information and Guidance to Parents about their Children Returning to School in March 2021

We look forward to welcoming your child/ren back to school on Monday 8th March.

Please find below additional information, guidance and resources regarding the reopening of Rushcombe First School to all children in March.

The Department for Education has identified a system of controls that are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection'.

Prevention:

- ensure that those who are required to stay at home/have coronavirus [COVID-19] symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
- ensure face coverings are used in recommended circumstances
- clean hands thoroughly and more often than usual
- ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- maintain enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces
- minimise contact between individuals, across the school site and maintain social distancing, wherever possible
- keep occupied spaces well ventilated
- ensure individuals wear the appropriate personal protective equipment [PPE], where necessary
- promote and engage in asymptomatic testing, where available

Response to any Infection:

- promote and engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- manage and report confirmed cases of coronavirus [COVID-19] amongst the school community
- contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

The school have made contingency plans for any COVID-19 outbreaks, including arrangements for home learning if staff and children have to self-isolate and are based at home.

Groupings

The children will continue to be grouped according to their class and year group. Your child will only be able to play and learn with the children in their identified class/year group. The children will be taught by their teacher/s as usual although the school will endeavour to make alternative arrangements if your child/ren's teachers become unwell or unavailable.

School Day and Staggered Timings

The children will receive the full amount of teaching hours, in line with our normal provision [pre Covid-19], although there will be a staggered start and finish to the school day - this is to reduce the number of people arriving and leaving the school at one time. This will minimise contact across the school community whilst allowing siblings to arrive/depart at the same time and help everyone to follow the appropriate social/physical distancing expectations. The school is not able to create a safe one-way system and only has one suitable main gate to the playground and school grounds. Time slots will be 10 minutes long - it is essential that families arrive and leave during their designated time slot. If you are late, the school will not have additional staff to facilitate your child's entrance to school. Similarly, it is important that children are collected within their designated time slot, to enable the staff to facilitate the safe exit from the building for all children. We appreciate your support and cooperation in helping us to sustain the wellbeing of our whole school community.

There will be three staggered drop off and collection times. Each family will be allocated a designated time slot and it will be 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 are aware that some families utilise off-site wrap around care and if that this is the case, the usual school timings will apply. Please note timings are subject to change.

Exit and Entry to School and Rooms

The children will come through the school main gates as usual. The school does not have the ability to create a safe one way system. A member of the staff team will welcome your child and guide him/her to their relevant room/year group where they will be greeted by a member of staff. You will need to say goodbye in the designated areas in the playground - parents are not able to enter classrooms/the school building. We request that, wherever possible, only one person brings your child to school, for example, one parent only. If you need to bring siblings with you, they must stay with you.

Learning Environments – Rooms and the Outdoors

In line with current government guidelines, each room will be organised so that tables are mainly facing the same direction with furniture minimised increasing the space between children/furniture. Children will be based mainly at a table and will sit side by side with another child/other children. Each child will be provided with a plastic zip wallet/individual tray with key resources. Soft furnishings, soft toys and toys that are hard to clean have been minimised in classrooms including surface/interactive displays – general resources and equipment have been minimised in each room. All classrooms/spaces will utilise natural ventilation where possible – relevant windows/doors will be kept open whilst in use. Each room will be provided with cleaning resources. Staff will utilise the outdoor environment where possible, but this will need to take account of weather conditions, for example, inclement or hot conditions will limit the amount of time that can be spent outside.

If your child is Anxious/Worried or Reluctant to Leave you

We recognise that this is an anxious time for the children and we will endeavour to reassure them as much as possible. I know that in the past we would take a child by the hand or even give them a cuddle to enable the parent to leave, however, taking social/physical distancing into consideration, we are currently unable to support in this way and it may be necessary for you to take your child home again. If you have to take your child home, we are happy for you to try again later in the day when all groups are in school [please contact the school office by telephone to arrange an appropriate time] or the next day.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

We are aware that recent times including the lockdown period has been a difficult time for many people, including our children. Children may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus [COVID-19] outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. The return to school will allow social interaction with peers and teachers, which can benefit emotional health and wellbeing. The school will be providing support for your child/ren's wellbeing within their classroom and through our curriculum provision. This will include:

- supporting the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement
- addressing and equipping children to respond to issues linked to coronavirus [COVID-19]
- supporting children with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing

If your child is particularly/significantly anxious about returning to school or experiencing bereavement, please contact the school office by email or telephone and somebody will be in contact in due course.

School Uniform

The national guidelines indicate that the children will wear school uniform. Your child/ren will also require their PE kit for PE sessions. We are aware that a number of the children left their PE kits and/or wellington boots in school prior to the recent national school closure. Once the children have returned to school, these items will be available to the children and they can take them home to be washed and checked for sizing, if appropriate.

Physical/Social Distancing

In order to reduce the risk of spreading the virus within school, staff will maintain their distance from children and other staff as much as possible. In addition, we ask that parents maintain strict social/physical distancing from each other and staff when dropping their child/ren off and collecting their children from school. We would also appreciate it if you could encourage your child/ren to follow the national recommended practices, such as, physical/ social distancing at all times, sneezing/coughing into their elbow and thorough hand washing.

Resources and Equipment

Each child will be provided with their own resource pack/tray by the school, so no learning equipment will be required to be brought into school. You will need to provide your child with their own named water bottle, reading bag and lunch box. Please support us in keeping all non-essential items including large bags at home.

Lunchtime and Snacks

You will need to provide a packed lunch or order a packed lunch from Chartwells. If you are ordering a lunch, please order online in the usual way. You may also wish to provide your child with an additional drink and snack. All children will eat their lunch either in their room or in the school grounds with their class. We would be grateful if you could ensure that your child can open the different contents of their lunch box, such as, packets etc. and that they have their own spoon/fork, if they require one.

Curriculum Provision

The school will continue to teach an ambitious and broad curriculum from the start but we will make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover any important missed content. Modification to the curriculum may be required at the beginning, so teaching time can be prioritised to address any significant gaps in the children's knowledge, skills and understanding. Initial priority will be given to exploring aspects of the curriculum from the last half term, which the children may need to consolidate as a result of the national school closures. Teachers will carry out assessments of your child's learning at an early point ensuring that curriculum planning builds upon your child's starting points.

The school will continue to deliver the curriculum through our highly engaging Learning Adventure approach, which provides purposeful and motivating contexts for learning. We are committed to the ongoing endeavour of providing the most effective approaches for teaching and learning, adapting these where required in line with government guidelines. When your child returns to school, we hope that the familiarity of our Learning Adventure approach and aspects such as the Learning Heroes, will help your child to settle back into school and continue to foster their love of learning.

Children will explore all areas of the curriculum. Some curriculum subjects, such as, PE and music will require adaption in line with national government advice. Singing or instrument playing will not take place in any large groups, such as, choirs or assemblies, due to the potential additional risk of infection in environments where people are singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments. For PE sessions, children will be kept in consistent groups and sports equipment cleaned between each use by different individual groups. Outdoor PE/sports will be prioritised, where possible, and distance between children will be maximised as much as possible.

Whilst the school will be providing a broad and balanced curriculum, including exploration of all curriculum areas, some of the approaches and activities that we would normally use will either not be able to take place or will be adapted. It is anticipated that activities that require the sharing of resources, working together or touching artefacts etc. will be limited. However, teachers will look to ensure that alternative approaches are utilised to explore concepts and to develop social skills. Some resources may be used to support learning within the classroom, as they can be cleaned. The exploratory and social aspects, which underpin the Early Years Foundation curriculum, will also not be possible to deliver to the same degree, due to restrictions on the use of the

environment/resources and the need for social distancing. The Foundation teachers will plan the curriculum, taking into account the current restrictions, whilst ensuring that the children experience a range of motivating learning experiences, which support the full breadth of the Early Years Foundation curriculum.

The children will be able to take reading books home although the reading books will then be required to be quarantined on return. This will continue to have an impact on our usual arrangements for changing reading books. As a result, children will bring home a reading book every Thursday and return their reading book on a Monday. The reading book that your child reads at home will be different to the reading materials they will read with in school, therefore your child will not need to bring their reading bag into school on days other than Thursday [to take their reading book home] and on a Monday [to return their reading book]. Paper-based Reading Logs [which we have used in the past] will no longer be used for communications between home and school under the current circumstances. You can continue to communicate with your child's teacher about their reading progress via email. In order to supplement the weekly reading book that your child will bring home from school, you will continue to be able to access the class accounts on the Oxford Owl reading website, alongside other resources previously signposted. We recommend that children read for at least 10 minutes a day at home, alongside the reading activities that they will complete in school.

The school has arrangements in place for the possible return to remote learning/education, either due to local lockdowns or individuals/groups of children needing to self-isolate and will update parents in due course/as required.

Playtimes

The children will remain in their class/year groups for playtimes and will have designated times slots and/or areas within the school grounds.

Extra-Curricular/After-School Clubs

The school will not initially be providing extra-curricular/after school clubs, however, when it is appropriate consideration will be given to introducing these again.

External Childcare Providers

Where parents use external childcare providers prior and after school or out of school extra-curricular activities for their children, the Department for Education guidance, indicates that parents should limit their use of multiple out-of-school settings providers, and only use one out-of-school setting in addition to school, as far as possible.

School Office and Messages for Staff

The school office will be partially open to parents and visitors, but 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.

Personal Hygiene and Cleaning

All adults and children will be encouraged/reminded to frequently wash and dry their hands thoroughly including on arrival at the setting, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing. In rooms with available sinks, children will use soap and disposable hand towels. If a sink is not nearby/available, hand sanitiser will be utilised. Children will be guided to use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze into and use identified bins for tissue waste ('catch it, bin it, kill it'). They will also be encouraged not to touch their mouth, eyes and nose. During the day, staff will clean surfaces and objects regularly touched, such as, door handles, taps, table tops/surfaces, switches/buttons etc. more frequently than usual and each day County's contracted cleaners will clean the school.

If a child/someone is ill or unwell

We want to keep our whole school community safe and well so please do not send your child in if they are unwell or feeling under the weather. It is essential that more stringent illness protocols are in place and that everyone follows the government/Public Health England guidance. **Your child must not come in to school if they or anyone in your household is displaying any symptoms of Covid 19, however mild.** Please contact the school office to inform them of your child's absence. If we believe that your child is unwell whilst they are at school, we will contact you to ask you to collect them. We will continue to follow the government guidance strictly regarding any staff or children who develop symptoms or become unwell including working closely with Public Health England regarding any confirmed cases of COVID 19. You will need to be able to collect your child if we are unable to look after them safely due to staff absence, or there is a suspected/confirmed case.

It is important that anyone with symptoms is tested. A test can be booked 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/the relevant agency who will advise us of the course of action.

If you or your family have been overseas

In line with government guidance, anyone arriving in England must quarantine for 10 days and [take 2 coronavirus test while you are in quarantine](#). If you have been in a country on the travel ban red list in the 10 days before you arrive, you will need to [quarantine in a government approved hotel](#). This information is subject to change.

Prescribed Medication including Inhalers and/or Epi-Pens

If your child requires regular medication/an Epi-Pen or inhaler, please contact the school office to discuss and ensure it is handed in to school.

PPE

The government has advised that young children are not required to wear face coverings/masks. Staff may wear facemasks or visors and will wear the necessary PPE when they are dealing with a child who requires first aid or if someone is unwell with potential symptoms of COVID19. Staff may also wear PPE in other circumstances, when it is required. We would be grateful if you could talk to your child about this and prepare them for possibly seeing members of staff wearing gloves, aprons, masks and/or visors.

Please see the following resources and/or links which you may wish to use to help prepare your child's return to school:

The e-Bug project is led by Public Health England and has a dedicated webpage for learning resources on hand washing and respiratory hygiene. <https://e-bug.eu/>

You may wish to share 'My Back to School Bubble' e-storybook for parents/carers to read with younger children to help them understand new COVID-19 protective measures and tackle anxiety about returning to school. All resources are free and can be accessed from [e-Bug's COVID-19 webpage](#)

A social story about returning to school.

[Returning to School During Covid-19](#)

Social Stories 4 Kids are stories written by Heather Androsoff and developed to support children's social and emotional development at school and at home. Parents and teachers can use these social stories to teach children specific skills with the help of explicit language and visuals. The skills covered in these books are life skills that support children's development in social settings as they learn and grow.

A video about PPE.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/Xs03DKhul74> – PPE explained for children (Livability Victoria Education production)

The school will continue to keep you updated as the situation develops or changes and more information is available. We thank you for your continued support and understanding during these difficult and uncertain times.