

9th March 2021



Dear Parents,

Welcome back everyone! It is so lovely to see everyone again.

The children have made a positive start back at school. They are settling back in to their classes, trying hard with their learning and are enjoying seeing their friends and the staff again.

We appreciate that many families may have a range of emotions about their child/ren returning to school, especially after them having been at home for a number of weeks and with the on-going concerns about COVID-19 in all our minds. The health, safety and wellbeing of all our children, staff and wider community is of paramount importance. The children are adapting well to the different arrangements put in place, so that we can reduce risks and safeguard the children and staff, as much as we can. It must be recognised that the school cannot eliminate all risk. We appreciate your support in helping us to sustain the health, safety and wellbeing of our whole school community.

We are most grateful for all you have done to support your child/ren's learning at home and we look forward to continuing to work with you all. It has been so lovely to continue to receive many kind messages of support, positive feedback and to see the many wonderful examples of the children's learning via Microsoft Teams and photos from different children and families. We are pleased to see how the children have continued to develop during the spring term including how they have continued to adapt to the many changes, whether they were in school or at home and how they tried so very hard with all their learning. We continue to be committed to providing high quality education for all the children in partnership with you.

It is wonderful that the children will now be able to experience the school's exciting new Learning Adventure, 'The Extraordinary Story Factory', in school with their friends and teachers. This week, the teachers have planned a range of motivating stimuli linked to the Learning Adventure, inspiring children's love of learning and supporting them to settle back into school. By focusing upon the wonders of learning and providing a warm and welcoming environment, where children feel safe and valued, we aim to provide a highly positive transition back to school for all children. Over the next few weeks, teachers will also carry out assessments of children's learning in maths and English, so that they can gain an accurate picture of children's learning following the national school closures, and make appropriate plans to enable them to continue to flourish and develop.

World Book Day

Thank you for the highly positive feedback about our recent World Book Day event. We are delighted that the children enjoyed listening to the different stories and guessing the various readers. Well done everyone and thank you to the staff for participating in the Masked Reader event. We hope you all keep reading and sharing books together.

Red Nose Day

As part of Comic Relief's Red Nose Day, the children will be able to wear non-uniform to school on Friday 19th March. If you wish to make a donation, please see the following link: <https://donation.comicrelief.com/>

Foundation Vision Screening

A reminder that 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 22nd March, to assess the children's eyesight. If you do **not** wish your child to participate, please ensure you complete and return the 'opt-out' form by the 15th March, sent out previously via ParentMail. Thank you.

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Parent Teacher Consultations

Our next parent teacher consultations will be held on Tuesday 30th March, Wednesday 31st March and Thursday 1st April. You will be able to make a telephone appointment using the online electronic booking system in due course [further information will follow soon]. Each telephone appointment will be allocated a 10 minute slot. There will be approximately a short gap between appointments to enable staff to ring the next person. Staff will endeavour to keep to time and ring you as close to your time slot as possible. This is an opportunity for you to discuss how your child has settled back to school and to discuss their progress with their class teacher/s. Our teaching team look forward to talking to you soon.

Minimising Risk to the School Community

With the continued infection rates, including the more highly transmittable variants of Coronavirus, and as restrictions begin to be relaxed, 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. Everyone's support in minimising the possibility of anyone becoming unwell and the need to self-isolate, is important. As a school community working together, we can also reduce the risks by:

- **limiting contact with people outside of our households – from Monday 8th March different households should continue to not mix unless they are in a support/childcare bubble or meeting one person from another household for exercise and recreation outdoors**
- **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**

When dropping off or collecting your child/ren from school, please adhere to the following safety measures:

- **Continued use of the one-way system on the playground**
- **Maintaining strict and appropriate social distancing at all times**
- **Utilising a face mask/cover during drop off and collection times [unless you have a pre-existing health condition]**
- **Ensuring only one person accompanies your child to school [avoiding extra people accompanying your child to school where this is not necessary]**
- **Continued use of 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**
- **Ensuring your time on the school grounds is 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**
- **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**

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

Following concerns raised by some local residents, we would also kindly ask that parents and families avoid congregating on pathways in the residential areas surrounding the school. Ensuring that all members of our school community continue to apply social distancing guidelines will be an important way of minimising risk of transmission over the coming weeks, including helping to ensure that year groups remain open and that children can continue to attend school.

Coronavirus [Covid-19] Guidance

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 10 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, 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.

Asymptomatic Testing Information for Parents and Adults in Households with Children at School [Rapid Lateral Flow Tests]

The Government have recently announced, that all **adults** without symptoms, who live in households with school age children, can now access regular rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing. Test kits can either be collected or ordered online, as set out below. **Children of primary school age (and below) without symptoms are not being asked to take a test.** Secondary school and college students will continue to access testing through their school or college. Undertaking regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing helps reduce transmission of the virus. Parents and other adults in households with children at school or college, who do not have symptoms, can now access regular, rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing. This includes childcare and support bubbles. Tests are fast, easy and completely free. There are [different ways](#) for a household, childcare or support bubble to collect their rapid lateral flow tests to take at home, twice-weekly:

- through your employer, if they offer testing to employees
- by collecting a home test kit from a local test site – anyone aged 18 or over can collect 2 packs of 7 tests
- by ordering a home test kit online – please do not order online if you can access testing through other routes, this frees up home delivery for those who need it most

See link above for further details. If you have any queries about the tests, please call 119 (free from mobiles and landlines). Lines are open every day from 7am to 11pm. Please note that, for anybody demonstrating symptoms of coronavirus, they should continue to book a PCR test through the NHS website.

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.

School Uniform Orders

If you wish to order items of school uniform, please email the school office with your requirements. Once the order is ready, a member of the office team will contact you to arrange a time for collection. Payment can be made with either a cheque made payable to Rushcombe First School or the exact cash in a sealed named envelope. On arrival at the school office, we ask that you please wear a face mask and wait behind the line, adhering to social distancing. Thank you.

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 1 st April	Last day of the spring term
Monday 19 th April	School closed for a staff training day
Tuesday 20 th April	Children return to school for the summer term
Monday 3 rd May	School closed – May Bank Holiday
Monday 31 st May – Friday 4 th June	Summer half term holiday
Friday 23 rd July	Last day of the summer term
Monday 6 th September	Autumn term commences for the children

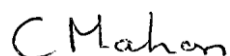
Please see the attached new academic year calendar including training days for further details.

Finally

Thank you for your continued support, understanding and patience as we deal with this ever changing, difficult and complex situation. By working together, we hope that we can ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our whole school community. We will continue to keep you updated as the situation develops and more information is available.

I would also like to thank the staff for their continued hard work, dedication and support throughout these unprecedented times.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs C Mahon
Headteacher

Att. Dorset School Term Dates: 2021 – 2022 Academic Year, including training days.