

24th March 2021



Dear Parents,

We are delighted with how the children have illustrated their continued enthusiasm to be back in school and their positive engagement with their learning.

Over the last couple of weeks of the spring term, the children will be continuing their 'Extraordinary Story Factory' Learning Adventure, including engaging in different creative writing tasks and exploring a range of curriculum areas. In addition, children will continue to participate in a wide range of opportunities to support their emotional health and wellbeing. In order to promote positive mental health, the school will be holding a 'Happiness Day' on the last day of term, Thursday 1st April, when children will be able to wear colourful clothes to school, or an outfit that represents them. On this day, the children will take part in a variety of activities, exploring themes linked to positive self-image, understanding emotions, dealing with worries and experiencing joy. During the day, children will reflect upon the many wonderful things about themselves and the world around them, learning more about the things that make them happy and supporting their emotional wellbeing.

Thank you to everyone who recently contributed to Comic Relief as part of our non-uniform day. The children enjoyed wearing many different outfits and costumes.

I would like to thank everyone for their support in helping us to sustain the health, 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. 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.

Operation Encompass

The school has been given the opportunity to take part in a project that will run jointly between schools and Dorset Police. Operation Encompass is the notification to schools when an incident of domestic abuse takes place within a child's family enabling this information to be shared with the schools. Operation Encompass will ensure that senior safeguarding members of the school staff [Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Mahon; Deputy Safeguarding Leads: Mr White and Mrs Hancock], known as a Key Adults, are trained to allow them to receive information from the police and to use the information that has been shared, in confidence, ensuring that the school is able to make provision for possible difficulties experienced by children, or their families, who have been involved in a domestic abuse incident. By taking part in Operation Encompass, we aim to provide the best possible support for any children and their families, and believe that this will be beneficial for all those involved.

Parent Teacher Consultations

A reminder that our next parent teacher consultations will be held on Tuesday 30th March, Wednesday 31st March and Thursday 1st April. Telephone appointments using the online electronic booking system are now available. Each telephone appointment will be allocated a 10 minute slot. There will be 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

As the current phase of national lockdown potentially ends soon and restrictions begin to relax, 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 important. As a school community working together, we can also reduce the risks by:

- **limiting contact with people outside of our households – currently 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**

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 PCR test. A PCR 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.

Contact Tracing by the School over the Easter Holidays

We very much hope that everyone remains safe and well. We have been advised by the Department for Education that schools will need to continue to be available for contact tracing during the Easter holidays, for the first 6 days of the Easter holidays. During the school holidays, the school will monitor office emails. It is important that **if your child tests positive, 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 your child develops their symptoms more than 48 hours after being in school [from Sunday 4th April onwards], the school will not be required to carry out contact tracing.

If your child or a member of your household tests positive for Coronavirus, 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. You should contact the school by email in this circumstance. We appreciate your support in helping us to sustain the health, safety and wellbeing of our whole school community

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 and PE Kit Orders

A reminder, that if you are purchasing new items for the summer term, the children wear the following items:

- Grey trousers, shorts, skirts or pinafore dress as appropriate [trousers should be grey school type/tailored trousers and not fashion or casual trousers]
- Red and white striped or checked summer dress
- White shirt, blouse or polo shirt [white & red polo shirts with the school logo are available]
- Rushcombe red school sweatshirt with logo – all children should have a school sweatshirt [no cardigans please]
- Black, grey, white or red socks or tights as appropriate
- Black flat sensible school shoes [no trainers, pumps or slip on shoes should be worn please]

For PE all children are required to wear the following:

- Rushcombe white PE t-shirt with logo
- Rushcombe Red PE shorts
- Plain black trainers or plimsolls can be worn

As you are aware, our range of uniform items has been extended to include fleeces and polo shirts. Please make sure that all items of clothing are labelled to prevent them from getting lost around the school. In addition, small plain silver or gold stud earrings are the only jewellery allowed. Hair accessories, such as hairbands, should be in appropriate school colours. Thank you for your continued support of the uniform guidelines.

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.

Safety in the School Grounds and the Surrounding Environment

We would appreciate it if you could ensure that children do not ride their scooters or bicycles in the playground and that additional care is taken whilst riding/pushing bikes and scooters on the pathway adjacent to the school

gates. Please can we also remind you that to ensure the health and safety of all our children, no dogs are allowed on the school grounds. We would appreciate it if dogs are not left tied up very close to the school gates. Thank you for your co-operation in keeping our school environment a safe place to be during these busy times of the day.

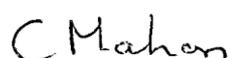
Finally

I would like to thank you all for your continued support, understanding and cooperation throughout the spring term. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their continued hard work, commitment and dedication during these exceptional times.

I wish you all a happy Easter and a good break.

The children will finish on Thursday 1st April, at their usual staggered time, and I look forward to welcoming everyone back on Tuesday 20th April for the summer term.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Mahon". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Mrs C Mahon
Headteacher