

Newsletter 1 Autumn Term 2021

10th September 2021

Dear Parents,

Welcome back everyone! I hope you are all well and have had a good summer. The children have made a positive start back at school – they are settling in well to their new classes and illustrating enthusiasm for their learning.

I would like to thank you all for your support, good wishes and gifts to the staff and myself at the end of the academic year. It is very much appreciated. We look forward to working with you in the new academic year and are committed to providing high quality education for all the children in partnership with you.

Over the summer holidays, the new outdoor Early Years Foundation area and improvements to the Foundation base have been completed and the Year 4 classrooms have been decorated. Further works are planned in the forthcoming year.

A special welcome also goes to all our new children and their families joining our school this year, including all the children in our Early Years Foundation Stage base. I would also like to welcome Miss Bryant and Mr Perry to the staff team. I am sure everyone joining Rushcombe First School this term, will soon feel at home.

Our new Learning Adventure for this half term has been introduced to children in Years 1 - 4 during their first week back in school [our Early Years Foundation children will be introduced to their Learning Adventure over the coming weeks]. The Learning Adventure will provide children with the opportunity to explore a range of curriculum areas, including a particular focus upon aspects of the science curriculum linked to the natural environment. We look forward to sharing further details about the Learning Adventure over the coming weeks.

Minimising Risk to the School Community

As you will be aware, the government has eased legal restrictions linked to the coronavirus pandemic, whilst also emphasising the need for caution and personal responsibility. Although restrictions have been lifted, the increasing number of cases, nationally and locally, are a reminder that we are still living with COVID-19 and we all need to continue to consider the risks. The health, safety and wellbeing of all our children, staff and wider community is of paramount importance. It is important that we remain considerate of vulnerable members of our community, as well as limiting the possibility of people becoming unwell. **On this basis, the school is therefore asking everyone to continue to be vigilant and take care, including maintaining some of the systems and protocols we have put in place on our school grounds, such as, the one way system at drop off/collection times including using the playground markings, utilising our new timings and considering the wearing of masks when it is busy** (unless you have a pre- existing health condition). We also ask parents to avoid congregating in groups on the school site, and to ensure that only one person accompanies your child to school. By taking these measures we can look to reduce opportunities for the virus to transmit, with the aim of ensuring the wellbeing of all and enabling children to remain in school. Your continued support, understanding and cooperation is appreciated.

School Day and Timings – Drop Off and Collection

Many thanks to parents and children for keeping to the school's system for school drop off and collection times, including the use of the one-way system on the playground. In order to ensure that the staggered timings work effectively and limit the number of people arriving and leaving the school at one time, please make every effort to keep to your allocated time slot and to leave the school grounds promptly after drop off/collection. Please also continue to use 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 enable social distancing for both parents and staff.

Rushcombe First School
Hanham Road, Corfe Mullen
Wimborne, Dorset
BH21 3PX

Tel: 01202 695722
Fax: 01202 657890
E-mail: office@rushcombe.dorset.sch.uk
Web: www.rushcombe.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs C Mahon

There are three staggered drop off and collection times. Each family has been allocated a designated time slot and it will be helpful that families arrive and leave during their designated time slot:

Families with a **surname commencing A – E** will drop off between **8.30 am – 8.35 am** and pick up between **3.00 pm – 3.05 pm**.

Families with a **surname commencing F – M** will drop off between **8.35 am – 8.40 am** and pick up between **3.05 pm – 3.10 pm**.

Families with a **surname commencing N – Z** will drop off between **8.40 am – 8.45 am** and pick up between **3.10 pm – 3.15 pm**.

We are aware that a few families may need to use a different time slot due to other commitments. We appreciate your support and cooperation in helping us to sustain the wellbeing of our whole school community. Please note timings are subject to change.

For those new children joining our Early Years Foundation Base this academic year, please see separate details previously sent for the timings of the induction period.

Year Group and Class Names

As you are aware, each class has a name based on different trees in our environment and the year group teachers are as follows:

Early Years Foundation Stage [Ash and Oak]	Mr McCormick, Miss Lamper and Mrs Holmes
Year 1 [Elm and Pine]	Mrs Webb, Mrs Carvell and Mrs Sinclair
Year 2 [Chestnut and Willow]	Mrs Joyner, Miss Cosgrove and Mrs Ely
Year 3 [Beech and Maple]	Mr Preston, Mr Perry and Mr Hancock
Year 4 [Hawthorn and Rowan]	Miss Hardy, Miss Bryant and Mrs Sutcliffe

Reading at Home

Today, children will be bringing home their first reading book of the academic year. Regular reading is vital and should be the main focus of home learning, with children spending approximately 10 to 20 minutes a day either reading with an adult or if they are fluent readers, reading on their own. It is important that children have opportunities to discuss their reading to enhance their understanding and comprehension. We would appreciate it if children could bring their reading bag and book each day so that staff can continue to hear the children read regularly.

In order to supplement the weekly reading book that your child will bring home from school, children in Years 1-4 can also continue to use the Oxford Owl reading website:

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/find-a-book/library-page/>

The website will enable your child to access a range of eBooks online, including levelled books from the main reading scheme used in school, *Oxford Reading Tree*. Log in details for this resource are as follows:

Pine class	Username: rushpine	Password:lizard
Elm class	Username: rushelm	Password:tiger
Willow class	Username: rushwillow	Password:snake
Chestnut class	Username: rushchestnut	Password:lion
Beech class	Username: rushbeech	Password:monkey
Maple class	Username: rushmaple	Password:badger
Hawthorn class	Username: rushhawthorn	Password:gibbon
Rowan class	Username: rushrowan	Password:sloth

For children in our Early Years Foundation Stage, they will bring home two books on a weekly basis, one of which will be targeted directly at their phonic skills, and the other which will be intended as a picture book for parents to read with their child to develop their love of story. Initially the children will only bring home the picture book and the phonic book will be added soon.

If you would like to communicate with your child's teacher/s about their reading progress, please contact them via the class email address:

Elm Class: elm@rushcombe.dorset.sch.uk

Pine Class: pine@rushcombe.dorset.sch.uk

Willow Class: willow@rushcombe.dorset.sch.uk

Chestnut Class: chestnut@rushcombe.dorset.sch.uk

Beech Class: beech@rushcombe.dorset.sch.uk

Maple Class: maple@rushcombe.dorset.sch.uk

Rowan Class: rowan@rushcombe.dorset.sch.uk

Hawthorn Class: hawthorn@rushcombe.dorset.sch.uk

A contact email address for those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage will follow in due course.

The email address provided is an official school email address, which is only intended for the express use of communicating with your child's teacher about your child's reading progress or their home learning. All other queries should continue to be addressed through the main school office email (office@rushcombe.dorset.sch.uk).

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.

We ask that parents restrict the number of emails they send to the teacher about their child's reading to one per week. Parents may choose to contact the teacher on a weekly basis about their child's reading, or alternatively, you may choose to contact your child's teacher less frequently. Your child's teacher will respond to all comments about reading, but please be patient when awaiting a response, as the teacher will be responding to multiple parents, alongside their other planning and assessment responsibilities. We would appreciate it if you could email your child's teacher by the Wednesday of each week.

Please note that this email system is not intended for use by children - it is only for the purpose of facilitating contact between parent and teacher. Parents however may wish to let their child know when they are including praise for their child within an email to the teacher - this will help to foster your child's motivation for reading. You may also wish to share any praise that the teacher provides in their response.

School Uniform

Our school uniform provides the children with a sense of belonging, community and pride in their school. It is practical and the children do look smart in their uniform. Our school colours are red, white and grey.

A reminder, that if you are purchasing new items 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 uniform:

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

If you wish to purchase or order items of uniform please contact the school office by phone or email Monday – Friday, 8.30 am to 4.00 pm. 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.

Universal Infant Free School Meals [Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2]

As you are aware, all children in Foundation and Key Stage 1 [Year 1 and Year 2] are entitled to a free school meal. Parents who wish to order a free packed lunch for their child, should use Chartwells online ordering system [<https://dorset.mealselector.co.uk>]. Please note the on-line ordering system requires parents to order their child's meals up until the cut off time of midnight on Sunday – 7 days before the full week in which the meals are to be served. It is recommended that parents complete their child's order for the whole term.

Free School Meals

For those families that are entitled to a free school meal due to income, it is important that your child is registered for the free school meal. If you would like to find out if you are eligible, please visit the online eligibility checker at <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/free-school-meals>. This online form only takes a few moments to complete and will give you an immediate response. We would encourage you to do this, as the school also receives much needed additional funding for each child that is registered. Once an award is made, please inform the school office. Meals are ordered on-line via the Chartwells website, as above. If you have any queries, please contact the school office.

School Office and Messages for Staff

The school office is 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.

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.

Road Safety and Car Parking

Please can I remind those parents who drive their children to and from school, to consider the safety of other children and parents, and not to park on the school keep clear markings or the double yellow lines for any amount of time, as it is prohibited. Please use the parking bays. The school would also encourage you to consider our neighbours convenience and safety when you park. Your support with this matter is appreciated.

Coronavirus [Covid-19] Guidance

Please remember that if your child/ren have symptoms of coronavirus infection [COVID-19], **however mild**, they will need to stay at home for 10 days from when the symptoms started. **Your child/ren must not come in to school if they are displaying any symptoms of Covid 19.** 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 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/> or by calling 119. Your household should isolate until you receive the test results giving the all clear.

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.

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 insufficient safe staffing levels, the school may have to close or partially close for a period of time. The school will continue to work closely with Dorset Council and Public Health Dorset to inform its decision making. 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 remote learning for each child/year group via Microsoft Teams.

The Department for Education has identified a system of controls:

- Maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes including regular cleaning of areas and equipment with a particular focus on frequently touched surfaces
- Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated
- Following public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

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

Department of Education: Primary School Children and Rapid Asymptomatic Testing

On advice from Public Health England [PHE], children in primary schools have not been included in the rapid asymptomatic testing programme. Recently, the Department of Education have updated their information to indicate that parents may wish to consider whether to test asymptomatic children under the age of 11. The DfE information states that 'Advice from Public Health England is that there is currently limited public health benefit from testing primary school age children with lateral flow devices (LFDs). Primary school age children may find the LFD testing process invasive and unpleasant and are unable to self-swab.'

If a child or a member of your household develops potential symptoms of Coronavirus you should continue to follow the [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#) and [book a PCR test](#) for the child. **Rapid LFD tests should not be offered to individuals who develop coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, regardless of their age.**

Confirmatory Polymerase Chain Reaction [PCR] Testing for Positive Lateral Flow Device [LFD] Tests

Please note that a confirmatory PCR test is required for anyone receiving a positive LFD test. The PCR test should be booked immediately either [online](#) or by calling 119 and should be undertaken within 2 days. Anyone who had a positive LFD test result should self-isolate immediately in line with [NHS Test and Trace guidance](#) and while awaiting the PCR test result. If the PCR test is negative, it overrides the LFD test and the person can then end their self-isolation.

Contact Tracing

As you may be aware, schools will no longer be responsible for contact tracing. NHS Test and Trace has taken on this responsibility and will work with parents and carers to identify close contacts of a positive case. NHS Test and Trace use the same criteria as schools have previously to identify close contacts and determine any self-isolation periods for adults and children. It remains important to report any positive test results to school to record absence accordingly.

Self-isolation

From Monday 16th August, children under the age of 18 years old and fully vaccinated adults will no longer need to self-isolate as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. **Instead of self-isolating, these close contacts will be identified using the same criteria as schools have used previously and will be advised to take a PCR test.** Adults who are not fully vaccinated and are close contacts of a positive case must self-isolate.

Autumn Term Dates for your Diaries:

Monday 27 th September	School Photographs
Friday 22 nd October	School closed for staff training day
Monday 25 th October – Friday 29 th October	HALF TERM
Tuesday 23 rd November	Flu Immunisation [Further information to follow]
Friday 17 th December	Last day of the autumn term

Finally

I would like to thank you for your cooperation and understanding as we implement the different arrangements. 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 health, safety and wellbeing of our whole school community.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs C Mahon
Headteacher