

Newsletter 4 Autumn Term 2021

1st November 2021

Dear Parents,

I hope you all had a good half term break.

Over the coming weeks, the children will be introduced to their new Learning Adventure, which will have a focus on ancient history. Children in Foundation will explore the Stone Age, whilst children in Year 1 will learn about the Bronze Age. In Year 2, children will explore the Iron Age. The key features and changes across each of these periods are reviewed and consolidated within each year group, including in key stage 2, with the aim of providing children with an embedded understanding of these three key periods by the end of their time at the school. In addition, Year 3 move on to explore the Romans, whilst Year 4 carry out a focused study on the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. As part of their studies, children will learn about key events and features of the time period they are exploring, developing their understanding of chronology and their use of analytical skills, such as making comparisons and developing historical arguments. They will also consider the evidence and sources that inform their historical understanding. The Learning Adventure will be delivered through a range of motivating learning opportunities, including opportunities to learn practically in the outdoor environment and through the use of the mantle of the expert approach, which will see the children and teachers go in role as different characters from history. We look forward to seeing the Learning Adventure develop over the coming weeks.

Minimising Risk to the School Community

As you may be aware, there has been a number of positive COVID-19 cases in our school community over the half term break and with the significantly high number of cases locally, we all need to continue to take care and remain vigilant. 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.

Recently, Public Health and Dorset Council have issued further guidance advising a precautionary approach for schools to further protect children and minimise further disruption to children's education as we head into the winter period. **It will be important that everyone with potential symptoms of coronavirus infection [COVID-19], however mild, do not attend school and arrange to have a PCR test.** The school will endeavour to do all it can but it must be recognised that the school cannot eliminate all risk.

We would like to thank parents who have continued to follow the guidelines, including arranging for their child/ren to have PCR tests when recommended. Children under the age of 18 years old and fully vaccinated adults do not need to self-isolate as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case, **however, if a member of your household tests positive for COVID-19, it is important that all members of the household have a PCR test.** The guidelines indicate that your child can continue to come to school whilst they await the outcome of their PCR test result, unless they have symptoms. In the event that your child is awaiting the outcome of a PCR test following a member of the household testing positive, you may wish to consider keeping your child at home until they receive a negative result, in order to reduce the risk of onward transmission. The school will provide home learning, whilst you await for a result or if you choose for your child to remain at home if a member of the household has tested positive. Household siblings of confirmed cases are advised to take daily LFD tests [for primary aged children, this is at the discretion of the parent / guardian], including while awaiting their PCR test results and for the duration of the isolation period of their family member who has tested positive. Daily LFD tests are also recommended in the event that your child is identified as a close contact at school, once again at the discretion of the parent / guardian.

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We are asking everyone to maintain 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 the school timings and considering the wearing of masks when it is busy (unless you have a pre-existing health condition). 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. 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 hope 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.

Staff News

This week, Mrs Lovett, a member of our office staff team has commenced maternity leave. We wish her all the best and look forward to hearing her exciting news soon.

Parent Teacher Consultations

A reminder that parent teacher consultations will be held on Tuesday 2nd November, Wednesday 3rd November and Thursday 4th November. This is an opportunity for you to discuss how your child has settled in to /back to school and to discuss their progress with their class teacher/s. Telephone appointment using the online electronic booking system are 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. Our teaching team look forward to talking to you soon.

Vision Screening for Children in Early Years Foundation Stage

Vision Screening for Foundation Stage children is due to take place on **Wednesday, 17th November 2021**, at Rushcombe First School. This year, a Parent Portal has been introduced by the NHS, so that parents can find out about the Vision Screening test, access the results of the test digitally and indicate if they wish to opt out of the screening, should they not want their child to have the test. Details and how to register were sent out via ParentMail on the 8th October. Parents who do not want their child to have vision screening, still need to register and opt out as soon as possible (minimum of 24 hours before the visit). Thank you.

Flu Immunisation

On **Tuesday 23rd November**, all children are able to have the nasal flu vaccination at school. Further information on this is to follow.

Reception/Early Years Foundation Stage Intake for 2022

Any parents wishing their child to come to Rushcombe First School in September 2022, for children born between 1st September 2017 and 31st August 2018, need to apply for a school place. Applications should be completed on-line at www.dorsetforyou.com/schooladmissions. The closing date for all applications is 15th January 2022. Please pass this message on to any families you may know. If you need any advice or further information, please contact the school office.

Year 4 Transfer to Middle Schools

Parents of Year 4 children will have received information from the local authority about their child's transfer to middle school [please refer to the parentmail sent out on 16th September 2021]. Applications should be completed on-line via the local authority website at www.dorsetforyou.com/schooladmissions. The closing date for all applications is 15th January 2022.

School Timings

All children should be in school by 8.45 am in the morning. It is important that children are in school on time to commence their learning promptly. 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.

Coronavirus [Covid-19] Guidance

Please remember that if your child/ren test positive for symptoms of coronavirus infection [COVID-19], they will need to stay at home for 10 days from after the symptoms started. **Public Health Dorset advises that the day symptoms commenced or the positive test date, if there are no symptoms, is day 0 and a further 10 days of self-isolation is required. Your child/ren must not come in to school if they are displaying any symptoms of Covid 19, however mild.** If your child presents with symptoms of Covid-19 they will need to have a PCR test and receive a negative result before they can come back to school. 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 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.**

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.

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 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.

Finally

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation in helping us to sustain the health, safety and wellbeing of our whole school community.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs C Mahon
Headteacher