



Rushwick C.E Primary School
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Friday 24th September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Headteacher Update

Dear Parents / Carers,

It is with great relief and joy that we have now welcomed everyone back to school for what we hope is going to be the first normal school year we have had for a while. The children have started the school full of positivity and enthusiasm and it is lovely to see and hear the children enjoying their learning and playing with their friends. The school community is thriving despite all the challenges we have all faced together. Rushwick School continues to grow in pupil numbers and it has been wonderful to have our new Reception class starting fulltime this week and we warmly welcome our new families to the school community.

We are still adjusting to slightly different procedures than before the holidays and I thank you all so much for working with us whilst we begin to embed these. It has not been easy as we are still balancing the impact of many Covid19 restrictions on the back of 18 months of challenging work planning around the constant changes and uncertainty. I am so proud of the children and staff at Rushwick School and deeply appreciate the kindness and empathy that the wider community has provided in order to keep everyone going. Please forgive us if some of the new things we are trying go slightly wrong.

Your support and understanding makes **all** the difference.

The School Day

The playground gates are opened in the morning at 8.35am and locked at 8.55am, and at the end of the day opened at 3.05pm and locked at 3.25pm.

Year Group	Start Time	Collection Time
Reception	8.50 (with a 5 minute waiting window to allow us to get all the children settled)	From 3.05pm
Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6	8.45am	3.10pm
<i>Little Stars Breakfast Club</i>	<i>Open from 7.30am</i>	<i>Start of School Day</i>
<i>Little Stars Afterschool Club</i>	<i>From the end of the school day</i>	<i>Closes at 6pm</i>

Thank you to everyone for ensuring that children arrive on time for the start of the school day. If children are late, not only does this cause disruption to the start of their day in school but they also miss out on key learning and instructions given at the start of the day which affects how well they can get on with their work.

There are a lot of children and staff going down with colds at the moment and the school website has an excellent question and answers guide if you are concerned that any of the symptoms may be Covid19 related. If your child is too unwell to attend school please contact the **school office**, not Class Dojo or Teams, so their reason for absence can be recorded. This ensures we know they are safe and prevents any unwelcome phone calls to chase up unaccounted for children. Children's attendance can be supported by booking appointments either out of school hours or as near to the end of the school day as possible. It is also important you understand that school will not authorise any holidays during term time.

The children have settled back into the routines of school life exceptionally well and from the very first day we have seen lots of purposeful learning taking place. It has also been noted how smart the pupils look and I would like to thank you for supporting us in our effort to ensure that every child arrives at school with the correct uniform, appropriate footwear and PE kit.

New Staff

We warmly welcome Mrs Radburn (Year 5 teacher) to our teaching team. To our teaching support staff we welcome Miss Martin and Mrs Blakeley. Miss Foy has become Mrs McGrath and Miss Tolladay is now Mrs Harding (not to be confused with her teaching assistant, Mrs Harding).

Rushwick School Governors' Application to Join Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DoWMAT):

At the start of this term parents / carers were informed of the important decision by the governing body to pursue an application for the school to join the Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DoWMAT). The letter explaining the reasoning for this is still available to read on the school website. This decision by the whole governing body was carefully made with the long term interests of the children at Rushwick School at the heart. The driver for making the decision was the clear and unambiguous message delivered earlier this spring by Worcestershire County Council and the Diocese of Worcester that small schools like Rushwick were unlikely to remain financially viable without being part of a formal partnership outside of a local authority that was actively reducing its capacity to directly oversee schools.

In follow up to the recent parents / carers letter and information meeting held by our Chair of Governors, Clair Daffern, I have uploaded on to the website the PowerPoint presentation that was shared with all local authority maintained small schools. It was used at a 'virtual conference', hosted by the Diocese of Worcester Education Department, alongside Worcestershire Children First and was opened by a Councillor from Worcestershire. From reading this PowerPoint parents / carers will see why the governing body are being proactive with this agenda now.

Over the last few years, I have seen at first hand the year on year decrease in capacity within the local authority to serve all the needs of primary schools, as more and more services have been outsourced or reduced. Rushwick School is in a healthy position at the present time, with increasing pupil numbers, a positive budget, talented staff and a knowledgeable and supportive governing body. We have also received excellent support from our local authority, which included funding to undertake extensive building work and grounds improvements in 2016 to 17, investment that has enabled us to grow to become a one form entry school.

The local authority and Diocese of Worcester continue to be great supporters of the school leadership and have recognised the brave and difficult task to expand the school in response to the local demand for more school places. Now, as we come out of the worst of the pandemic, we are looking towards making sure we not only have a successful outcome in our future Ofsted Inspection, but also make sure that the school can continue to improve and have a sustainable future. In order to keep improving we will need to have more formal links with other like-minded schools, while at the same time protecting our identity. For Rushwick, being an inclusive Church School in a semi-rural setting in West Worcestershire, the governing body have decided that this is best served with the Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust. If the DoWMAT formally approves the governors' application to join, the due diligence process is likely to take up to 12 months and will not impact on the day to day running of the school. Further information of about them can be found here: [DoWMAT](#).

Your support in the work that we are doing to secure children's academic achievement and personal development is invaluable. If you have any questions or queries about school, please either telephone the school direct on 01905 422502, email office@rushwick.worcs.sch.uk . There will also be an opportunity to meet with me and / or governors at the forthcoming parents' consultations. Alternatively, I am usually available on the playground at the beginning and end of the school day, so please do approach me if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions. If I cannot respond to them straight away, I will be happy to organise a follow up conversation.

We wish all of our children a very happy year at Rushwick School this year. Please remember that if you need any further information or support for your child in any area of school life, please do reach out to us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geoff Jeffrey', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

Geoff Jeffrey