



Winchelsea News

All Individuals Matter

July Newsletter

I write this as school reaches the end of a very strange academic year. The last few months have been turbulent and extremely challenging for everyone in our school community and everyone has been affected by the impact of Covid 19 on a whole range of levels both personally and professionally. I am sure that the pressures we have faced in school have been replicated in your homes and whilst we have been trying hard to respond effectively to the constant and rapid changes in directives and expectations placed on us by government we have also been trying to look after our own loved ones.

Our work featured in the local newspaper and on social media and this newsletter includes some of that information. As always I would like to make sure that I have said a great big thank you to all linked with our school who have supported us in so many ways –I consider Winchelsea to be one big team consisting of staff, children, governors, parents and the wider community and we all work together to make Winchelsea the great school that it is despite the physical separation we are currently experiencing.

Learning at home and at school in the first lockdown phase

Throughout the whole period since lockdown was announced on March 24th we have remained open to key workers' children and vulnerable pupils but our numbers varied on a daily basis due to the nature of the shift patterns of these parents. That made it quite difficult to organise but teachers and all other support staff worked on a rota basis whilst allowing for them to have some limited times at home to isolate and check for any signs and symptoms. Winchelsea kept this flexible approach regarding numbers and we worked continuously through lockdown including the usual Easter school holidays and we were open on Good Friday and Easter Monday too.

The staff have been brilliant, working in small teams in school to keep the children healthy and happy and to reduce their anxiety at this difficult time. In school key worker children have been doing a mix of numeracy and literacy based work but also project work which includes art work, DT, research in subjects like history and geography that allowed for the wide range of ages and abilities and we also took advantage of all that is online. The children have enjoyed art classes and story sessions from David Walliams and one favourite has been a dance class with Oti from Strictly. We've all improved our dance moves and learnt some great dance routines to varied music ranging from the Monkees to Justin Beiber!

As well as supporting the children in school all teachers have been uploading work for our children at home on a weekly basis and this continues currently. Numeracy and literacy is available through our Mathletics and Spellodrome packages which enables the teacher to see what the children are completing and alter activities and tasks accordingly. Every Monday every teacher uploads the topic activities in other subjects to their Twitter feeds. We are receiving great photos every day on our Twitter feed from children at home sharing the work they are doing.

Mr Riley, our caretaker, supported by Mrs Harris are both doing a great job too. They are coming in at the end of every day and thoroughly cleaning all the parts of school in use. We have had to limit some of the spaces used to keep school as safe as possible.

We have also made the most of the time to buy new resources and develop new working areas for when the children return.

We have of course, been mindful of social distancing guidelines whilst doing all this!



Community meals

I am also very proud of the work many of my staff have undertaken beyond the school gates. One of our teachers, Mrs Frost, and her husband were due to open a new restaurant in Sleaford just as lockdown was initiated and they were, of course, terribly disappointed. However, they very quickly hatched a plan to use their time and resources to cook and deliver food to elderly and vulnerable people across the area. Meals ranged from traditional dishes such as 'Bangers and Mash' to more unusual dishes such as Butternut Squash Curry but all were delicious and nutritious. They produced an amazing 50 FREE MEALS A DAY and 10 of these were to Ruskington households. They managed to do this for three weeks, including weekends, and other staff members quickly signed up to be delivery drivers for them! Another example of Winchelsea's great team spirit and commitment to helping our community.



Wider opening for some year groups

As lockdown began to ease the government asked schools to open more widely to children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. This was announced to the public but no information was provided to Headteachers and governing bodies initially which made it extremely difficult to prepare for. Winchelsea contacted all parents of children in those year groups by phone and discussed how we were hoping to organise provision and parents understandably had lots of questions and felt very unsure about the safety of their children. A very detailed risk assessment and parents plan was put in place which has underpinned how we have managed to open and parents of children in other year groups may want to read this on our school website as I would expect that there may well be many elements of this current organisation that will need to remain in place in September. It has been lovely to see many children back in school, reuniting with their friends and getting back into some school routines, albeit a little out of the ordinary. The children in school have been doing the same activities as those planned for the children at home to ensure that all pupils are still accessing the same learning with the exception of key workers where there continues to be a wide mix of ages and abilities to cater for. All staff have been in school throughout this time on a full time basis, each allocated to work with a specific bubble and every space of school has been utilised for social distancing purposes and this has meant it has been impossible to open more widely to any other year groups. I have spoken to many children and parents who I know are missing us terribly and please understand that we feel exactly the same way. If we could accommodate more children we would certainly have done so but please be reassured that in September we know children may feel nervous and anxious and we will be there to help and support them.

Plans for September

So now we are trying to prepare for the next phase in the return of children to school. At the time of writing this newsletter we have only just received information from the government or the local authority about how this should be organised and the documentation is extensive and will require the governing body to review and plan how we will implement this. However, I felt it important to give you as much information as I possibly can at this stage. At Winchelsea we are planning to be open to all year groups full time from the beginning of the new academic year. With the reduction of restrictions around two metre distancing it is intended that classes will be able to operate as normal as possible but re-organisation of classroom furniture will be necessary and children will not be able to sit in groups but in rows facing forward. Children will need to wear school uniform but face masks will not be necessary. It is unlikely that many of our normal extra-curricular activities will be able to take place due to the mixing of children. It is still requested that parents and other adults do not access the school site and therefore there will be staggered drop off and collections of children which I will let you know as soon as a rota is organised. Currently I cannot give you much more detail than this which is frustrating for everyone but guidance from government is sporadic and can change rapidly and takes time to respond to in order to ensure that school complies.

To this end, I know that not all parents follow me on Twitter but I would strongly advise you to access this platform as it is one of the quickest and easiest ways for me to disseminate information to the school community. Our website also has all correspondence available.

One of the methods we have been using is email but we are aware that not all the email addresses that we have for parents are up-to-date.

Please help us to be able to contact you by checking that the email addresses that school has recorded for you are correct and if they need amending contact the school office directly to ask them to update your contact details. There may need to be more information provided to you over the summer holidays so please keep an eye on your inboxes and check that any communication has not disappeared into junk!

Class organisation and staffing for 2020/21

Winchelsea's leadership and management team, working beside the governing body, are always keen to ensure that staff deployment and development enables the children in the school to benefit from the best educational opportunities. Each year we look at the staffing structure and very thorough discussions take place that consider all aspects of staff deployment. Next year Mrs Dunham will be returning from maternity leave following the birth of her first baby and she requested a part time return which has enabled us to keep Miss Marshall on our staff for another year. Over a considerable number of years we have had only minor changes to staffing and have maintained stability in our provision which ensures continuity and consistency in our work. It has been very sad that in the current circumstances the children have not been able to undertake the normal transition work to spend some time with their new teachers for September. However, with only the minor changes to Year 1 parents and children can feel reassured that there will be no major shocks when the children return!

Class name/Year group	Teacher	TA support
Diamond: Nursery/Reception	Miss Alison Stewart Mrs Becky Doran	Mrs Daisy Wright Mrs Fern Flegg (on maternity leave) Mrs Julie Hilton Mrs Mandi Lewis/Mrs Kerry Harrison 1:1 pupil with an EHCP
Opal: Year 1	Mrs Justine Dunham (Mon-Weds) Miss Alice Marshall (Weds- Fri)	Mrs Agatha Riley
Sapphire: Year 2	Mrs Fiona Cox	Mrs Karen Durnin
Amethyst: Year 3	Mr Daniel Grivil	Mrs Maggie Harris
Emerald: Year 4	Mrs Nicola Frost	Mrs Gina Parsons Mrs Jo Rogerson supports 1:1 pupils with an EHCP
Peridot: Year 5	Mr James Keetch	Mrs Donna Morley
Quartz: Year 6	Miss Suzie Reid	Mrs Amanda Pickworth Mrs Ruth Howorth supports 1:1 pupils with an EHCP

Summer holidays

We have only recently been told that school will not be expected to be open to support key workers over the summer break and therefore our school term ends on July 21st as normal. However, if you need to contact school for any reason you can still send emails to our enquiries contact address or to relevant members of staff if absolutely necessary and someone will get back to you. Please don't expect to receive an immediate response as email boxes are not monitored continuously in school holidays! Over the summer the school site will be busy as we are having new doors and windows installed ready for the new academic year. Please do not post any mail to us over this period as it will not be delivered by Royal Mail until September.

Pupil attendance in September

When school opened up more widely to additional year groups it was a voluntary process and parents could make the decision about whether they felt happy in sending their children back to school. However, in September the government currently are making it clear that **parents will be expected to send their children back to school**. We all recognise that the children have missed out on a great deal of their usual formal education and whilst lots of work has been done by many parents at home it is not the same as being in school following the national curriculum. It is important that we all try to support children to get back on track as quickly as possible and there will be a lot of catching up on what has been missed. Therefore it is important that parents understand that the school is being asked to ensure full attendance and currently it is not being suggested that this is a choice. Winchelsea has never chosen to impose fines on parents but we ask for your support in ensuring that children attend. Governors may have no choice but to change our policy in future. Included with your child's report are attendance printouts for the last academic year. Understandably many children have no attendance from March onwards but this has been recorded as an X as instructed by the Local Authority. In usual circumstances children's attendance should not fall below 90% as this then identifies your child as a 'persistent absentee' and may trigger involvement of external agencies. This is the percentage of attendance that is expected to be the minimum requirement from September also.

School meals provision

Farm Kitchen will continue to provide meals for children in school. The vouchers that were put in place for Free School Meal provision over the lockdown period that were extended into the summer holidays will cease and parents will need to return to ordering meals. The Farm Kitchen ordering website will be closed and taken offline for updating from Wednesday 15th July until Friday 24th July. Menus will be live and ready for ordering from the beginning of August. **The order deadline for the first week of term is Tuesday 25th August**. Please note that Year 2 pupils moving into Year 3 in September will no longer be entitled to a UIFSM (a universal infant free school meal) so their accounts will be adjusted accordingly. If you wish your child to continue to have a hot dinner, you will need to book and pay online with your current login details unless you are already entitled to a FSM (free school meal) where a hot meal will continue daily, if you previously had a hot meal. If you believe you are eligible for a FSM, you can apply to see if you are entitled to free school meals. This information will be emailed to all current Y2 parents before the end of the summer term.

If you have any meal ordering or login queries during the school holiday period, you can contact The Farm Kitchen directly by telephoning 01529 460821 or emailing enquiries@thefarmkitchen.com

PGL

Mrs Cox has been in constant communication with PGL in regards to the planned trip that is due to take place to the Isle of Wight in September 2020. We are pleased that we have managed to agree a postponement until July 5th and hopefully by then there will have been lots of developments that can make sure this goes ahead safely. An additional letter for relevant parents is provided with your child's report.

Future term dates for 2020/21

Term 1:	Thursday 3rd September 2020– Thursday 22nd October 2020
Term 2:	Monday 2nd November 2020– Thursday 17th December 2020
Term 3:	Monday 4th January 2021– Friday 12th February 2021
Term 4:	Monday 22nd February 2021 – Wednesday 31st March 2021
Term 5:	Monday 19th April 2021– Friday 28th May 2021
Term 6:	Monday 7th June 2021 – Wednesday 21st July 2021

School website and Twitter

Our school website is designed not only to promote the school in the wider community and give information to parents who are selecting a school for their children, but also to provide information for you. Lots of you have signed up to Twitter and enjoy seeing the photographs and news about what is going on in school. This is updated almost daily by staff. Get yourself on there and have a look!!! You can find us at: **www.winchelsea.lincs.sch.uk** and on Twitter at **Helen Duckett @Winchelsea1**. Once you follow me you will access the Twitter details for all other staff too.

Despite this awful situation nationally we are keeping spirits up and still smiling! Who knows what the future may hold and there is an awful lot of uncertainty for everyone but one thing I am sure of is that Winchelsea school will rise to whatever challenges we need to face and will always endeavour to do our best for everyone we work with.

Once again, I hope the information in this newsletter has been helpful. Have a wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing you all in September.