



Winchelsea News

All Individuals Matter

January Newsletter

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas with friends and family and that 2021 has started well. Staff and children have returned to school looking forward to continuing the great work as always at Winchelsea.

Thank you

Thank you for your continued support with the arrangements that school has had put in place to try to manage the risks associated with Covid-19. The staggered drop-off and pick up timings are now routine and the organisation of the day in school and the hygiene routines have become embedded. The children have been great and are following the directives very well and so far we are pleased that school is managing so well. Thank you also for the many messages, emails and conversations at the school gate that have shown your appreciation for all that we are doing at Winchelsea. It is these kind words that make it all worthwhile!

Please could I ask that parents continue to try to arrive promptly at the designated times and also leave promptly to avoid congestion and to minimise the numbers waiting in close proximity. Miss Stewart and I open gates promptly with the hope that dispersal from the school grounds can be as quick as possible. Please be understanding that the gate will then close and if you are late you may have to wait and access the next opening time. As the weather deteriorates I am sure we will all want to be at the gates for as little time as possible! These timings are in place to minimise contact and keep everyone as safe as possible. The wearing of masks is also appreciated at this time to help reduce the possibility of virus transmission.

When we first re-opened school in September I sent out a risk assessment to all parents and promised that this would be reviewed each half term. A second review has now taken place but due to our area being placed in Tier 4 we have not made any significant changes. Should you wish to read it you can find it on our school website.

Information about what would happen should we get a positive case in our school

So far, Winchelsea has remained Covid- free, despite some children in our setting coming into contact with positive cases or living in a household where members have needed to isolate. However, despite all of our best efforts, we have to be prepared for the eventuality that we may be faced with the need to close a class bubble if a pupil or staff member becomes ill. I thought it might be helpful to know what will happen and the plans we have in place to inform parents as quickly as possible. A test result for a pupil can be received by parents via email or text at any time of day or night. As soon as school becomes aware of this result, Miss Stewart, Mrs Rowlands and myself will make phone calls directly to parents of children in the class bubble of the affected child. This will need to be a brief phone call which will let you know that your child will either need collecting from school if this happens during the school day or inform you that your child should not attend school the next school day if this happens in the evening. As soon as is possible after that phone call you will receive a letter which outlines what will happen next and give you details of the length of period of necessary isolation as a result, the exact date when your child can return and how you can access home learning for your child whilst they are absent from school. Your child's class teacher will be in touch within 48 hours of bubble closure with further information. This will be dependent on the staff member's own health. If you have children in more than one class there is no need for all children to remain at home, only the one in the closed class bubble. This only changes if anyone in your household becomes symptomatic and seeks a test, in which case all family members should remain home in isolation until a test result is received. I appreciate that this will cause heightened anxiety and worry for parents and children. Likewise this will be a stressful and worrying time for the staff at Winchelsea. Please be reassured that we will be doing everything we can to support you and your child but there is a great deal of work that will need to go on within school at very short notice including reporting to relevant agencies and following the guidance and protocols that they will dictate. I hope parents will be mindful of this pressure and only contact school if vitally necessary as phone lines will need to be kept as free as possible to deal with managing the immediate issues.

How school will provide remote learning

So far we have been relatively unaffected by Covid-19 in terms of children's learning. Some parents have been affected by periods of time where their children may have had to isolate due to other members of the household being affected or whilst they await test results. In these circumstances school have provided work packs for the children so that they can continue their learning at home. We have had one member of staff, Miss Reid, who was contacted by Track and Trace to isolate which meant she was not able to teach Quartz class in school for a week. However, just like any other staff absence this was covered by other members of staff and she continued to provide the planning and resources so that there was no disruption to their learning. Fortunately, Miss Reid was symptom-free and received a negative test result. Whilst she was working from home she was able to experiment with remote teaching and was able to use technology to speak directly to her class online. If Winchelsea should need to close a bubble in the future, resulting in a whole class being at home, then parents need to be prepared to access a mixture of some online lessons, lesson plans which can be accessed through emails, work packs which might be distributed from school and I would highly recommend that parents follow their class teacher on Twitter. This is the only official form of social media that the school use and is the best way to access immediate, up-to-date information directly from school. I fully appreciate the challenges that access to technology brings and school is trying hard to use a range of methods so that all children can continue to access learning so that they can make the best academic progress possible. Please make sure that school has your up-to-date contact details including phone numbers and email contact addresses.

Wintry weather

So far, we have been lucky with the weather conditions. However, occasionally heavy overnight snow or other conditions may prevent staff or children from reaching school. In these circumstances a closure message will be broadcast on Lincs FM 102.2 and displayed on their website, provided that telephone communication is possible. Sometimes there is so much demand that lines are blocked and the website crashes! In addition a notice will be placed on the school gates advising parents that the school is closed. Closure is also sometimes necessary if boilers malfunction or burst pipes occur and then the school is required to close on health and safety grounds. Please be aware that school closure is only taken in exceptional circumstances and wherever possible we will maintain normal working arrangements for staff, children and parents.



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Suitable clothing

As the weather at this time of year can be unpredictable, children need to come to school suitably dressed. There are lots of children who do not have warm coats which are needed for playtimes and lunchtime breaks when children can become cold. Gloves, scarves and hats can also be worn. However, sweatshirts and hoodies that are not part of school uniform should not be worn as a substitute for a coat. Footwear also needs to be suitable for the weather conditions and whilst boots or wellies may be appropriate for walking to school they should not be worn in school all day so children will need to bring a change of footwear for the classroom. Similarly, trainers are not acceptable. A suitable PE kit for both indoor and outdoor sessions should be in school at all times. Please make sure that all items of clothing are clearly named as we seem to have an ever-growing pile of lost property!

Congratulations

I am pleased to congratulate Mrs Howorth who is expecting her second child. She was keen for parents to know that her weight gain was not due to over-indulging at Christmas! Staffing arrangements for covering her maternity leave will be organised in due course.



After school provision

We appreciate how difficult it can be for working parents to co-ordinate their working hours with school hours especially in the current circumstances when we are unable to offer after school clubs as we would normally do. We work with a number of excellent child minders who collect pupils from school that can be contacted individually. We also link with First Steps who will collect from our playground and walk children to facilities at their clubhouse in Ruskington where parents can then collect them from up to 6pm in the evening. As this is a facility provided by First Steps they are the point of contact for parents to make arrangements.

Dates to the end of this term

- January 7th: Year 6 e-safety workshop
- January 15th: Reports issued to parents
- February 3rd: Inside Out Day (further details to follow)
- February 15th – 19th: Half term
- March 19th: Red Nose Day
- March 22nd: Class photographs
- March 31st: Term ends (Please note this is a Wednesday)

Summer Term: Monday 19th April 2021– Friday 28th May 2021
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. All newsletters sent out from school are published on our website as well as many other subsidiary letters. You will also find photographs and information about what has been happening in your child's class, details of school documentation and policies and other news from clubs or events. You can find us at: www.winchelsea.lincs.sch.uk I am also regularly tweeting! I can be followed at [@Winchelsea1](https://twitter.com/Winchelsea1).

Despite this difficult 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.

Miss Helen Duckett
Head Teacher