



Ringwood School

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: e-shoeboxes

At this time of year, in conjunction with Ringwood Rotary, we normally start to ask families if they would prepare a 'shoebox' Christmas gift for a disadvantaged child living in Eastern Europe. Schools up and down the land get involved in this campaign and many thousands of shoeboxes are sent across Europe each year.

Concerns have been raised about the sustainability of the project both nationally (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-50600915>) and locally and I met with the Ringwood Rotary Club before the summer holidays to discuss this.

The concerns are:

- The human resource cost- each shoe box has to be checked by a volunteer
- The environmental cost – each lorry taking shoeboxes emits 5.3 tonnes of CO2.
- The actual cost- with rising petrol costs an extra £2 would have to be given to transport each box, on top of the cost of the gifts inside the box which will be more expensive this year than last.
- Added to this many of the gifts bought have been made in the Far East and therefore have already had an environmental impact arriving here.
- The economic cost- the project helps individual children but does help more widely than that.
- As there are not strong connections to the places that receive the gifts we never actually ask what children would like.

So this year we want to trial e-shoeboxes. This is not as tactile but has many benefits. Ringwood Rotary have teamed up with a Rotary Club in Kasese, Uganda and we are going to do the following:

- Each family can donate the amount they chose via Parent Pay to the e-shoebox campaign. Each family that does this can also leave a Christmas message for the children- this will be on Parent Pay after half term.
- All the money goes direct to the Ugandan Rotary Club, they spend every penny on the children.
- The Ugandan Rotary Club buy goods locally, this helps their local economy and means that the environmental cost is very significantly reduced. It also means that the children get more as things are cheaper in Uganda than here.
- The Club has already started to ask the children what they would like. Their reply reminded me of the importance of hearing their voices as they asked for things we would not have predicted such as school uniform, sanitary wear, shoes and exercise books for school.

We are hoping that you will want to support this, if you can. We are hoping that we will get some photographs of the Ugandan children opening their presents that we will use in the Christmas assembly with our students in December.

All students have had a short assembly about the campaign. Here is a link if you want to watch it:

[E-Shoebox assembly for wc 17th Oct.mp4](#)

I look forward to being in touch again after half term to officially launch the campaign.

Thank you in advance for your support,

Leanne Symonds