

# Learning delivered with

Text Linked Curriculum



Hillcrest Primary School

# TLC

Hillcrest Primary School

**Headteacher:** Mr Matthew Try

Hillcrest Downham Market

Norfolk

PE38 9ND

**Telephone:** 01366 388191

**E-mail:** [office@hillcrest.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:office@hillcrest.norfolk.sch.uk)

**Fax:** 01366 384286

27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

## SCHOOL CLOSURE UPDATE

I wanted to update families on the current situation regarding home schooling and the Emergency Childcare Provision.

Firstly, I would like to take the opportunity to wish all of our families well and hope that you are managing to stay away from the worst of the effects of this virus.

I am not sure that there has ever been a time in our lives when things have been so uncertain. Not only the unknowns surrounding the virus but also the unknowns around when our day-to-day lives will resemble some form of normality.

I would hope that there may be an opportunity in June or July where we might be able to finish the year off with the children in their current classes. However, that is more hope rather than expectation and clearly any decision about when schools return to normal will be taken by the government at some point in the future. It is entirely possible that the next time we see the children in school will be at the start of the next academic year with the children getting to know their new teachers.

To those Year 6 pupils for whom this was their final year at Hillcrest, I want to reassure them that even if school doesn't resume before the Summer, we will ensure that they are invited back one evening during the Autumn Term for their traditional end-of-school Leavers Assembly. Downham Market Academy have also been in touch with Hillcrest to say that they hope to be able to offer some form of Transition Programme to the pupils who are due to start at DMA in September, which they hope will be in person before the Summer and feel like a traditional Transition Programme. However, they are also considering the potential for a 'virtual' transition programme in the event that movements are still restricted towards the back end of the Summer Term. As soon as we receive any more information about the plans for transition, we will share them with the relevant parents.

The first week of the school closure has drawn to a close. Hopefully the children have been working their way through the paper-based resources that we provided them with, for the first five days, without it being too much of a hassle for the parents.

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From Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March, the children will be able to interact with their class teachers via Google Classrooms. If you haven't already logged your child onto the system, please find the time to do this over the weekend. The instructions were handed out last week and the password, that will be individual to your child, can be found in their Communication Book.

Work will be posted on Google Classrooms for your children to complete through to, and including, Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April sees the start of the traditional Easter break and therefore staff will not be posting any new work or interacting with the children between Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April and Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April. However, the Google Classroom will resume on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April.

For those children without access to the Internet or a computer, there should have been enough activities in the paper-based resources to see them through to the end of term. After Easter, there are plans to distribute another set of paper-based resources to those children without Internet access. We will let you know more about this nearer the time.

We hope that the Emergency Childcare Provision @ Hillcrest has been well received by those children accessing it. The service was never intended to be one that was used purely because a family was entitled to it, but only as an absolute last result to ensure that Key Workers can continue to get to work. The government's intention behind the mass school closures was to minimise the number of interactions between children and with adults outside their own family. Our decision to insist that BOTH parents had to be Key Workers was not uniformly well received. It was a difficult balancing act between keeping pupil numbers to an absolute minimum for health reasons whilst also ensuring that the government's aim of keeping Key Workers in the jobs where they are most needed was achieved. However, the reality has been that 55 children were still eligible for Emergency Childcare on that basis and, of those 55, only a small minority of parents have chosen to take up those places. I believe that this is a sign of the seriousness with which people are now taking the current situation and the impact of the government's escalating position on movement. With an ever-increasing number of Hillcrest staff coming down with Covid-19 symptoms, it is becoming increasingly difficult for us to staff the Emergency Childcare Provision and it is not completely guaranteed that this service will be able to continue for the duration of the closure period.

Please keep in touch with your e-mails, texts and school website over the next few weeks so that you can stay abreast of the latest information that we have. There has never been a better time to download the School News app so that Hillcrest news can be fed straight to your Smart Phone. Search for 'School News' in you app store (it's the orange one from e4education) to download.

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A huge thank you to the many parents who have shared kind words and messages either with myself or my colleagues. This is clearly not an easy situation for anyone involved and we will continue to do our best to support the Hillcrest community.

Please stay safe and we look forward to seeing you all on the other side of this, stronger for it!

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Try