

Learning delivered with

Text Linked Curriculum



Hillcrest Primary School

TLC

Hillcrest Primary School

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15th May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

SCHOOL CLOSURE UPDATE 6: A Huge News Week for Schools

You will have failed to have noticed the high profile that schools have had in this week's news following the announcement that they are to reopen to pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1st June.

Whether that date actually comes to fruition will depend largely on the conversations that are currently taking place between the main teaching and headteacher unions with the government and whether the government are able to effectively control the spread of the virus.

However, at present we are proceeding with plans to return on 1st June and will be ready to open on that date with a variety of safety precautions in place.

Details are still being worked upon. However, both parents and children need to be aware that school will be a very different place from 1st June.

You may have heard the term 'bubbles' being used a lot in the press recently. This refers to the fact that children are going to have to be taught in smaller groups. Once the children have arrived in school and been placed into their smaller class or 'bubble,' they will then not mix with any other child from any other 'bubble' throughout the rest of that day.

Therefore, we are anticipating that children will not be taught in groups sizes of any more than 10 pupils and they are the only 10 pupils the children will see each day. A class size of 10 will allow us to maintain the 2 metre social distancing measure that is required of us in order to keep the children and staff as safe as possible.

There are some key points listed below that parents will need to be aware of that will make school particularly different for your children...

- With the need to split classes into smaller 'bubbles' your child may not be taught by their normal class teacher;

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- The children will have to remain seated for the duration of the lessons with no group activities that involve the children working closely with others – this will be particularly noticeable in Reception where the usual method of play-based learning will be replaced with a more traditional ‘chalk and talk’ style of teaching. This would see the youngest children being asked to remain seated at permanent stations;
- The children will have their outside breaks in the morning and at lunch in isolation from every other ‘bubble’ and even within their ‘bubble’ will be encouraged to play two metres apart from the other members of their small group;
- Although school will reopen on 1st June, it will not reopen full-time to the children. Reception and Year 1 children will each get two days per week with half attending on a Monday and Tuesday whilst the other half will attend on a Wednesday and Thursday. The Year 6 pupils will attend school 4 days per week between Monday and Thursday. School will be closed to ALL pupils, apart from those attending the Emergency Childcare Provision, every Friday between 1st June and 19th June;
- Different ‘bubbles’ will start and finish school at different times of day - therefore there may be a degree of inconvenience for parents with children in different year groups who have to come back and forth to school. However, this cannot be avoided;
- Parents will be asked not to come onto site earlier than the time that their child’s particular ‘bubble’ is due to start school in order to avoid mixing with other groups starting at different times. Therefore arranging your morning drop-off so that you arrive promptly, and pick up promptly, is essential. Parents are then asked to disperse immediately and to not hang round for friends who may be dropping their children off at different points;
- There will be no face-to-face contact between parents and teachers. Parents should not approach teachers at the door and there will also be no face-to face meetings arranged at any other time in order to minimise the number of adults within the school building – all communications with staff going forwards should be via email or phone, at a mutually convenient time;
- There will be a one-way system around the school grounds and not all gates will be open as normal. This may result in longer journeys to school for some parents – more about this will be communicated closer to the reopening.

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Attendance Issues

We want to clear up the issues around the expectations for attendance for those in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 upon our return.

It has been well publicised that the government WILL NOT be seeking to fine parents who choose not to send their children to school from 1st June.

This is an approach that we would wholeheartedly agree with and we do not want any parent to feel under pressure to return their children where they have concerns. This is an unprecedented situation where everyone must do what they feel is necessary to keep their families safe and no one should criticise anyone for whatever decision they reach.

If I was to say that every member of staff was completely comfortable with returning, I would be lying. Everyone has concerns to varying degrees which is why we are doing everything we can to plan for the safest possible return for all.

Full details of all the safety measures that we will be putting in place will be shared towards the end of next week.

Some Additional Practicalities around Managing Ill Health

- Staff absence will NOT be covered by supply teachers as we do not want to encourage people we do not know into the building. Therefore, in the event that staff are absent through ill-health and we do not have the additional staff to cover the absence internally, some classes may be cancelled at relatively short notice;
- Neither children or staff should be present in school with a high temperature or a persistent cough;
- Staff displaying Covid-19 symptoms will be tested and remain absent from work until those test results come through (which only appear to be taking a maximum of 48 hours at the present time). In the event that those test results are negative, they will return to work immediately. However, if they have a confirmed case of the virus, they will be asked to remain off work for a minimum of 14 days;
- Children displaying symptoms should have a test arranged for them by their parents with the school informed as soon as that test result comes through – in the event that they test positive for Covid-19 they will be asked to remain off school for 14 days along with all of the children from their 'bubble' who will also have to self-isolate for 14 days;

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- Children's temperatures will be tested at school daily. If there are any concerns that a child has a higher than normal temperature or fever, parents will be asked to collect their child as a precaution. Similarly, any children displaying a persistent cough will be sent home, even if, as their parent, you feel that you know the cough isn't coronavirus related;
- At any point in time, if the staffing levels at Hillcrest drop significantly because the numbers of staff displaying symptoms rises, the whole school may have to close at relatively short notice.

Google Form

All parents of children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, will have received an email yesterday asking them to respond by Wednesday 20th May, informing us whether you plan on sending your child back to school if we reopen on 1st June.

I appreciate that I cannot give parents all of the answers and reassurances that they may wish to have before making that decision. However, rest assured that all aspects of the daily school life are being taking into account when planning our safety measures as we want the site to be as safe as it can be for both the children and the staff.

Although there is a 'maybe' option on the Google Form, we would urge parents to opt for either the 'yes' or the 'no' option based upon how you feel at the moment about the situation.

It is vital that we have a better understanding about the numbers we can expect to receive from 1st June as this will inform our planning and determine safe levels of staffing.

If the government pursue the reopening of schools to all year groups from 22nd June as is currently planned, a new Google Form will go out to those in the other year groups before that date.

Google Classrooms

Google Classrooms will continue to operate as normal for pupils in Years 2, 3, 4 & 5 beyond 1st June. However, as soon as the school opens to pupils in Years R, 1 & 6, their Google Classrooms will stop, even if a parent is choosing not to send their child back to school. The reality is that staff cannot both be in school teaching whilst also operating their Google

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Classroom. There are however, a wealth of freely available online educational resources that are on offer to parents.

And Finally...

Thank you for bearing with us at this difficult time and a special thank you to the many parents who have sent positive messages of support over the past few weeks. The staff really do appreciate those and it keeps them going at a time when everything feels like a challenge.

There will be further communications towards the end of next week once we know more about pupil numbers.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Try