

# 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

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

## **SCHOOL CLOSURE UPDATE 7: Looking Towards a Tentative Reopening**

As I write this update we are working towards a 1<sup>st</sup> June opening for those in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 whilst also not completely certain that it will go ahead.

The impact of the most recent relaxation of rules is yet to be determined. If the effect of the larger gatherings of people we have seen on the news over the past week results in a rise in the number of infections nationally, then the 1<sup>st</sup> June target date may have to be moved.

The priority this week also appears to be getting an effective Track and Trace system in place with the Prime Minister setting his government the ambition of having this in place by 1<sup>st</sup> June. The health experts have suggested that without this in place, any further relaxation of the lockdown will be difficult to justify.

Therefore, just 10 days away from the potential partial reopening of schools, it is hard not to feel like we are planning for an event that may still not happen.

### **“I Want My Children to Come Back and Play With Their Friends”**

I heard the parent of a Reception child in another part of the country giving this as their reason for sending their child back to their school when interviewed on the news this week.

I need to stress at this point that the children WILL NOT be playing and they are unlikely to be with all of their friends.

The photo on the next page shows Asteroids Class as it has now been set up for the children's return on 1<sup>st</sup> June. Suns and the old Gingerbreads base, have also been set up in exactly the same way.

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All toys have been put into storage and the way that we have had to set the tables out to ensure the social distancing that we are obliged to provide is in place, means that the Reception classrooms now resemble a SATs exam room.

All pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 will have to sit in the same chair and at the same table all day, apart from some opportunities for Physical Education and an opportunity to move around during morning break.

The only children they will see are the same small number (maximum of 11 but probably less) who they will spend all day with. Each 'bubble' will have morning break and lunch in isolation and not mix with any of the other 'bubbles.'

During morning break and lunch, the children will not be allowed to venture closer than 2 metres together and therefore will not be able to have the normal, comfortable social interactions that they are used to.

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Therefore, the schools experience will be nothing like that which the children are used to at Hillcrest and the choice therefore isn't as simple as returning your children to school so that they can engage in normal social interactions before the Summer as opportunities for those will be extremely limited.

## Social Distancing

Because of the need to ensure that the children, parents and staff are safe and do not spread Covid-19 amongst one another, there are lots of social distancing measures in place.

These include parents dropping their children off two metres from the classroom door. Parents **SHOULD NOT** attempt to step beyond the yellow and black hazard tape outside each classroom.



## Communication Between Home and School

The social distancing measures that have been touched upon above will dramatically change the way that parents interact with the school going forwards. Please note the points below...

- Communication Books **WILL NOT** be used to share queries or concerns for the remainder of the year and should **NOT** be sent into school – their smooth surface can hold the virus for several days and by coming in and out of school each day they can be a source of infection at both home as well as in school;
- Parents **SHOULD NOT** approach staff to talk to them in the mornings or during the afternoon collection;
- Staff will not hold any face-to-face meetings with parents in school;
- ALL communications between home and school to go via email wherever possible – staff check their emails before 8.30am;
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- Any matters that cannot be dealt with through an email exchange can be discussed by arranging a telephone meeting at a convenient point;
- The front office will be CLOSED to parents for the remainder of the year. All queries should come into the office by emailing [office@hillcrest.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:office@hillcrest.norfolk.sch.uk) or by telephone on 01366 388191.

## Will the Year 2, 3, 4 & 5 Pupils Come Back Soon?

Schools across the country already have huge concerns about the ability to cater for the three year groups that they are potentially opening up to on 1<sup>st</sup> June before even contemplating an even wider return to school.

The government plan as it stands is to get Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 up and running by 1<sup>st</sup> June, subject to meeting various conditions in relation to the progress of the virus, followed by a wider reopening to other year groups from 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

Clearly, if the 1<sup>st</sup> June date isn't met, it is highly unlikely that the other year groups will return on 22<sup>nd</sup> June and which would then suggest they are unlikely to return at all before the summer break.

Therefore, it is watch this space and keep an eye on next week's news regarding any decisions over the first phase of the reopening. Whatever decision is taken at that point will determine how likely or not the Year 2, 3, 4 & 5 pupils are to return.

Naturally, for a school the size of Hillcrest, with over 500 pupils, we would need to split each year group into three in order to provide the social distancing that is required. This would result in each child getting no more than 1 and a half days of education from that point if we were asked to take all year groups back.

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## Managing Ill Health

As and when children return, they will all have their temperature taken at school daily. However, we would like to ask that parents also check their child's temperature before they come to school.

Any child with a high temperature over 37.6 degrees centigrade or displaying a persistent cough, regardless of whether you feel that there is another underlying cause for their cough, should stay at home. Any child displaying these symptoms whilst at school will be sent home.

In the event you have kept your child at home, or we have sent them home, because they are displaying symptoms, they will only be allowed to return to school if you have taken them for a Covid-19 test and you can show documentation to the school that confirms that their Covid-19 test was negative.

In the event that their Covid-19 test is positive, they would then need to stay off school for 14 days from the last date they attended school.

If a child is sent home or kept off school because they are displaying symptoms, the parents of all of the children in the same 'bubble' will be informed. It is therefore their choice whether they send their own children into school whilst the school waits for confirmation of the other child's Covid-19 check. In the event that they register a positive test, all children within that 'bubble' will need to isolate for 14 days.

The same procedures will apply if a member of staff displays symptoms.

## What Safety Measures Have Been Put in Place for Those Returning?

- A one-way system will be in operation around the outside of the building which we would like parents to observe when they drop-off and pick-up their children – ALL access will be via the front gate into the car park. Both of the other pedestrian access points off Civray Avenue and Sandringham Drive will be closed for the remainder of the year;

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- Parents will enter via the small gate immediately to the right of the car park gate and walk 'anti-clockwise' around the building, entering through the new small black gate outside the 'i' Building;



- We ask that parents ensure they maintain a two metre distance from other parents and children whilst on site;
- Parents will not step beyond the yellow and black hazard tape marking a two-metre distance outside each classroom door;
- Each 'bubble' has been provided with their own set of cleaning materials so that teachers and teaching assistants can continually clean the major touch points throughout the course of the day;
- The school will receive a deep clean during the Whitsun half-term break and will continue to have daily cleans throughout the period. These cleans will be more extensive on a Tuesday evening and on a Friday at the cross-over periods between groups of children;
- Each child will have their own set of resources that only they will use throughout the course of each day, therefore eliminating the need for children to share

resources and potentially touch items that have been handled by others;

- The corridors in the 'i' Building, the new Reception cloakroom and the main front lobby of the school, have all been taped out with channels that the children should walk down. They have also been marked with social distancing spots similar to those you will find in the major supermarkets – the corridors in other older parts of the school building are too narrow to make this effective;
- The children will only be allowed to the toilet one child at a time;
- The children will be encouraged to maintain a regular handwashing routine throughout the day;
- One 'bubble' of children will never interact with another 'bubble';
- The KS1 and KS2 Trim Trails have been roped off and will not be available to the children;

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- The cloakrooms will NOT be in use throughout this period – the children are to walk straight into their class once the doors have opened and place their bag and coat beside their table.

## Getting Tested for Covid-19

If a child is off school or has been sent home because they are displaying Covid-19 symptoms, they will NOT be allowed to return to school unless we have confirmation they have been tested and that we have seen confirmation that the test result is negative.

Covid-19 tests can be booked through the NHS and are available to all who display symptoms at the following website...

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

## Google Classrooms

Google Classrooms will continue to operate as normal for pupils in Years 2, 3, 4 & 5 beyond 1<sup>st</sup> 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. There are however, a wealth of freely available online educational resources that are on offer to parents.

Staff will however, provide a limited number of paper-based activities, research projects or open challenges for those days each week when your children are not in school.

## Breakfast and After School Provision

As you will by now be aware, Gingerbreads will no longer be providing before or after school provision as they had been doing since September.

At present, we are in talks with another provider but are not in a position to be able to announce that any such provision will be in place from 1<sup>st</sup> June. Therefore, parents should assume that Hillcrest has no breakfast or after-school available for the time being.



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## Emergency Childcare Provision

We will continue to support the children of Key Workers across Years 2, 3, 4 & 5 throughout the remainder of the year between 8.55am and 3.30pm with the drop-off and collection point for these children continuing to be at the front entrance to the school.

Parents of children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 who are Key Workers can also access this service on those days when their 'bubbles' are not in school.

Those children attending the Emergency Childcare Provision DO NOT have to attend in school uniform.

We still have the list of 55 children that was drawn up at the beginning of the school closure period and who qualify for the Emergency Childcare Provision.

***Please note that the Emergency Childcare Provision will be CLOSED to all on Bank Holiday Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May and Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June.***

## And Finally...

I appreciate that much of what is included in this newsletter will have come across as standoffish and unfeeling. It is really not meant to sound like that and is not the Hillcrest way which is why this is so uncomfortable for all who work here.

It is a result of the strange time that we are living through and the negative effects that implementing social distancing place on our normal working routine.

Lots of what we have had to put in place is 'anti-school' and 'anti-education.' There will be little academic progress made during this period as there is so much of the curriculum that we will not have the time or resource to cover. There will also be little in the way of opportunities to socialise for the children which is another key reason why they normally come to school.

Can I say that everyone within school is 100% safe from the virus? Of course I cannot. However, we have implemented as many measures as it is feasibly possible to do so to ensure that those of you who have no other choice but to return your children to school, can hopefully do so in the knowledge that they will at least be as safe as possible. A Local Authority Risk Assessment has been followed whilst taking these steps.



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We have received some lovely messages of support from parents over recent days, many of whom feel they need to return their children to school as a sign of support for what we have put in place and their confidence in us. For that, we are all very grateful. However, if that is your only reason for returning your child, please do not feel that you will upset anyone at Hillcrest if you change your mind. That would be completely understandable after you have read how different school life will be through until the end of the school year.

I think that the argument for a staged opening of schools was lost when the government selected Reception and Year 1 to return to school. Socially distancing the youngest children who least understand why they are having to behave in that way at school, is the most daunting prospect for any member of staff.

Balancing the impact of staying at home for longer or coming into school at a time when the environment will be alien to the children, with the youngest most affected, is a difficult job and I do not envy the decisions that parents are having to make at the moment either.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Try