

# Learning delivered with

Text Linked Curriculum



Hillcrest Primary School

# TLC

Hillcrest Primary School

**Headteacher:** Mr Matthew Try

Hillcrest Downham Market

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5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

## SCHOOL CLOSURE UPDATE 9: So Far, So Good

***These regular 'School Closure' updates will continue to be issued on a weekly or fortnightly basis until we are fully open to all children across all year groups.***

We have been delighted by the way the children have adapted to the socially-distanced classrooms and breaktimes since returning to school this week. The children that have attended have had an enjoyable time and genuinely appear pleased to be back despite the strange circumstances in which they are returning.

We would like to say a huge thank you to the parents who have adapted to the new systems that we have in place, including the one-way system around the outside of the school which makes the morning drop-off a little more of a hike than it used to be. We would also like to thank parents for their kind comments over the course of the past few days. It is always nice to know when the efforts that staff have gone to in order to make the return as safe and enjoyable for the children as possible have been appreciated.

During this first week with the Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils in school, the attendance figures have remained fairly steady throughout, with the percentage of those who actually attended out of those who were entitled to attend hovering between 29% and 31% on each day.

Therefore, the vast majority of parents have still opted to keep their children at home.

Although the partial reopening of school has gone much better than any of us could have anticipated, there are still two large unknowns that continue to hang over us going forwards. We are unsure as to what the impact of reopening the schools combined with the general relaxation of the lockdown will do to the progress of the virus. Whilst we can keep the children as safe as possible whilst they are with us, no one can anticipate whether there may be a second spike in the virus and, in the event that there is, schools may end up having to lock down again.

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The second huge uncertainty hanging over us is what the expectations will be for schools in the new academic year. A former government education minister told the Education Select Committee this week that schools should expect to be teaching children part-time up until November, which would see existing measures in place well into the Autumn Term.

## Emergency Childcare Provision

The Emergency Childcare Provision continues for those children from Key Worker families and who are recorded on the list that we compiled at the outset of this health crisis. Children taking part in this service need to be dropped off at the front entrance to the school at 8.55am and collected at 3.30pm.

They are entitled to purchase a school dinner in the same way that any other pupil in school is, provided parents send them in with the cash or, if they are a Reception or Year 1 child attending on a day when their 'bubble' is not operating, they are still entitled to a Universal Infant Free School Meal.

As we need to keep a tighter control on numbers attending the Emergency Childcare Provision now that we also have the three other year groups back, it is vitally important that parents email [office@hillcrest.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:office@hillcrest.norfolk.sch.uk) by 1pm EVERY Friday to inform us on what days during the following week, that our service will be required. If we do not receive these emails, you may find that we cannot accommodate your children when you drop them off if the numbers of children have exceeded the numbers of staff that we have available to ensure the children are kept in safer, smaller bubbles.

The Emergency Childcare Provision will cease on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July and will NOT carry on through the Summer holidays.

***Please note that the school will be completely CLOSED to all children and that there will be no Emergency Childcare Provision available on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June.***

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## School Dinners

All children returning in Reception and Year 1 are entitled to receive a Universal Infant Free School Meal. We would like to remind parents however that the school kitchen is not providing hot meals at present and the temporary Norse meal menu consists of sandwiches on each day.

Those pupils in Year 6 wishing to have a school packed lunch should bring the cash in each day, or at the start of the week if they know they will require it for all four days they are in school, as we are not presently using WisePay for school dinner purchases because of the current situation.

Parents of pupils from across the school who have claimed Free School Meals will continue to receive their vouchers throughout the rest of this term, or until schools return to normal. However, if you are in receipt of a Free School Meal voucher and choose to send your child back to school, they cannot then also claim a Free School Meal from the kitchen. Parents in that situation will need to provide their children with a packed lunch that they have made themselves.

## School Reports

We can confirm that we will not be providing an end of year academic report on your children as we normally would in July.

Schools are obliged to provide a report on their pupil's academic attainment and progress at the end of the year. However, with schools closing only a matter of days after the Mid-Year Reports were issued in early March, the information that was shared in this report gave parents the most accurate picture of their children's academic attainment at the point of lockdown.

Even for those children who returned to school on 1<sup>st</sup> June in Years R, 1 & 6, the depth in which we can teach the full range of curriculum subjects and the way in which we can teach them is extremely limited as is the amount of time that each child gets in school. Therefore, any additional reporting is not going to give an accurate or conclusive picture at this time, especially when a large proportion of the coming weeks will involve recapping elements of the curriculum that have already been taught so that the children can catch up to the point they were at before the schools closed.

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## Years 2, 3, 4 & 5

There is currently no return date planned for the pupils in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5.

We have already stated that Hillcrest would not be ready to open to more pupils on the date originally suggested by the government of 22<sup>nd</sup> June and that the earliest that we would consider reopening more widely to other year groups would be 29<sup>th</sup> June.

However, there is not yet a fixed date for this wider return and it may be that pupils in the other year groups do not return until September.

## Good News

We are delighted to confirm that Mrs Spademan is expecting a baby which is the reason why she hasn't returned to school to take a Year 1 bubble as we want to make sure we keep her safe at this tricky time.

I am sure that everyone would join the staff in wishing Mrs Spademan well over the next few months. The children are unlikely to see Mrs Spademan now until she returns from her Maternity Leave at some point in 2021.

## End of Term

Please note that the last day of term for the children in Asteroids and Meteors will be Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July whilst the last day of term for the pupils in Suns, Nebulas and Year 6 will be Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July.

## Building Works

In news almost completely unrelated to the coronavirus outbreak (it's not very often that we've been able to say that recently!) I wanted to update parents on the two key building projects that Hillcrest will be undertaking in the coming months.

Our new staff car park should have been completed by now with work expected to have started during the Easter holidays. However, the lockdown, due to the coronavirus, delayed

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the start of that work. We are now expecting the car park renovations to begin during the early part of July with work expected to continue into the Summer holidays.

The Summer holidays were also supposed to see the start of work on our new Specialist Resource Base which is to be situated at the back of the school, on the site of the old mobile classrooms. The planning of this project was also delayed by the recent health crisis and building work is now expected to start in January/February 2021 with a completion date of around June/July 2021. Hopefully that would see the SRB in operation and welcoming pupils from September 2021.

## And Finally...

All of the staff have been so impressed by the attitude of the children who have returned to school this week. They have coped well with the changes and understand the need to maintain the social distancing even though it isn't always easy.

It is important to remind parents though that there is no right or wrong way of dealing with this and it is perfectly understandable at this time if parents choose to continue to keep their children off school.

Despite there being a huge degree of uncertainty about what school will look like in September, our staff are beginning to plan for the new school year. We will write to all parents by the end of June, confirming which classes their children will be in next year. It would appear however, that the children will not get the same opportunities to meet with their new teachers that we would normally give them at this point in the year.

We continue to wish you well and hope that everyone is staying safe.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Try