

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

Fax: 01366 384286

10th June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

SCHOOL CLOSURE UPDATE 10:

Hillcrest WILL NOT reopen to Years 2, 3, 4 & 5 before September

Following yesterday's announcement that the government are not going to pursue the wider opening of schools to other pupils, I can confirm that Hillcrest Primary School WILL NOT reopen to Year 2, 3, 4 or 5 pupils before the end of term.

We understand that this will be disappointing news for some who have been supporting their children at home since we closed on 20th March and who were keen to see their children get some time at school before September.

However, the realities and challenges of opening a school up on the 1st June to just three year groups which need to be divided in some many ways, made it obvious to all involved at the school that opening up any more widely would be impossible. The government's original expectation that primary schools would increase the number of year groups they would accept from 22nd June was never going to be achievable and I am pleased that they have dropped that requirement.

Whilst social distancing measures are required, whether that be at the present distance of 2 metres, or reduced in time as some think it will be, to 1 metre, we will never be able to accept a full complement of 500 children in the school at the same time. Therefore, the possibility still exists that school may still be delivering part-time teaching to all of its pupils from September unless there is a radical plan from the government or a vaccine that reduces the need to maintain social distancing.

New Classes for 2020/21

All parents will receive a letter by Friday 26th June stating in which class their children will be placed for the next academic year starting in September.

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End of Term Dates - CORRECTION

Dates for the end of the Summer Term were incorrectly printed in Closure Update 9 that went out last week.

The final day of term for those children in **Asteroids, Meteors and Year 6 will be Tuesday 21st July.**

The final day of term for those children in **Suns and Nebulas will be Thursday 16th July.**

Paper Based Resources

Now that it has been confirmed that the school will remain closed to pupils in Years 2, 3, 4 & 5 for the rest of the year, we are currently seeking additional paper-based materials for children in those year groups to access through until the end of term.

Clearly Google Classrooms will continue until 21st July. However, we have been aware throughout this closure period that many parents have welcomed a hard copy of a resource that reduces the demand on technology. **Please email the office by Wednesday 24th June to reserve a pack.**

We will distribute these in the same way, via the main school hall, on **Tuesday 30th June.** Parents of children in Years 2 or 3 should drop by between 10am and 10.45am to collect their packs whilst parents of those in Years 4 or 5 should drop by between 10.45 and 11.30am.

Learning is Everywhere

We all appreciate how challenging these past few months have been for parents. Many of our staff have been juggling keeping Google Classrooms running from home for Hillcrest pupils whilst also tackling their own children's home-schooling issues.

However, for as long as schools remain closed, it is vitally important that all of the children are engaging with some form of learning. There are daily activities for the children to complete online via Google Classrooms along with a wealth of freely available activities online through other sources. We have also provided paper-based resources for the children at various intervals throughout this lockdown.

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It is also incredibly healthy for the children to ensure they read regularly whether that be books they have at home, books hired from a library (when they reopen) or books obtained online. It is also important that the children are not only given opportunities to sit and read quietly but that they are also encouraged to read to others in the household, hear other members of the house read to them and also to be asked questions about their story.

For those children who are craving the visual stimulus of seeing a real-life teacher delivering a lesson, then the Oak National Academy is available to them. Accessed via <https://classroom.thenational.academy/> this is a new service supported by the Department for Education and which has been provided free of charge from the outset of this current health crisis. It has been created by some excellent teachers nationally and allows children to engage in something that feels more like normal teaching.

DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF...

- *...they display a temperature of 37.6 degrees or higher;*
- *...they have a persistent cough (regardless of whether you believe this to be caused by something else);*
- *---they complain of a sudden and extreme loss of taste or smell.*

In the event that they are displaying these symptoms, you MUST get your child tested as they will NOT be accepted back into school until we see evidence of a NEGATIVE Covid-19 test and their symptoms have subsided.

If your child develops any of these symptoms whilst at school, we will isolate them and then ask you to come and collect them.

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

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Emergency Childcare Provision for Key Workers

We would like to stress that the recent announcement about the closure of school to all other year groups for the rest of this term does not mean that children eligible for the Emergency Childcare Provision for Key Workers should be sent in to 'socialise.'

The purpose of the Emergency Childcare Provision remains the same today as it did on the very first day it was launched in March. It is only there for those homes where a parent or responsible adult is not available to care for the child during the day.

Whilst socialising is important for the children, this should not be the sole reason for taking up a place on the Emergency Childcare Provision. As demand for this service increases, we also increasingly struggle to staff it.

With the government priority being the care of Key Worker children over those in Years R, 1 & 6, if the numbers of pupils attending the Emergency Childcare Provision continues to rise, we are going to have to review whether we can continue to provide schooling for the children in the three year groups that we opened up for on 1st June.

We would like to thank those parents who have done their very best to keep their children at home during this difficult time and to those who have only used the service on some days each week rather than all week, as and when their shift pattern allows them to keep their children at home.

Where parents have been on the front line of the current emergency, providing health care for all, enabling supermarket shelves to remain fully stocked, keeping our streets clean and our communities safe, we have been delighted and privileged to have played our part in supporting you to continue in those roles.

Please note that the school will be completely CLOSED to all children and that there will be no Emergency Childcare Provision available on either Friday 19th June or Friday 17th July

The last day of the Emergency Childcare Provision will be on Tuesday 21st July after which point Hillcrest closes for the Summer

Those parents on the ECP Key Workers list should email office@hillcrest.norfolk.sch.uk by 1pm each Friday to inform us as to which days the following week you require the service.

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Communication

Communication between home and school is more complicated at this moment in time because of the need to keep the number of adults in school to a minimum along with reducing the number of face-to-face meetings.

Unlike during normal times, we ask that parents do not engage teachers in conversations at the door as they are welcoming children in. We have also stopped the weekly visits first thing in the morning into the classroom for obvious reasons. We are also no longer communicating through the Communication Books at this time either.

However, if you have a piece of information that you feel is important to share with your child's class teacher, please email them. All parents should have their class teacher's email address and, in the event that your child isn't in their class teacher's 'bubble' at this moment in time, you should still email their usual class teacher who will ensure that all relevant information is passed on to the 'bubble' teacher.

If you are uncertain what your child's class teacher's email address is, please call the school office on 01366 388191.

If your concern or query is too complicated to be discussed through an email exchange, please feel free to arrange a time with your child's class teacher for a telephone meeting. Times for such meetings can be arranged through the class teacher's email address.

Short Notice Closure of Classes

Parents should remain aware that, in the event we receive information about the absence of a member of staff through ill-health whether it is Covid-19 related or any other illness, it may become necessary to close a class at relatively short notice.

We are not using supply teachers to fill staff absences in order to protect the school from the unknown quantity that having additional adults on site poses. If it were to become necessary to close a class, parents would receive a text at the earliest possible opportunity that morning. However, if the mobile phone numbers that we have on our system are not up to date or parents do not check their phones early in the morning, it may not be until you have reached the school gates that you realise your child's class is not open.

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Year 6 Refunds

We are delighted to confirm that the Local Authority have stepped in and refunded Hillcrest all of the monies that were owed following the cancellation of the Hilltop residential trip.

All refunds, including the value of the deposits, have been processed by our school office and parents should see these payments appear in their bank accounts within the next 10 days.

Apologies for the delay but it ended up being an incredibly complicated process to get an agreement over the reimbursement of the funds.

And Finally...

We are sorry again to the parents of those children who will remain off school until September. It had to be a cautious and safety-first approach to the reopening of schools and, with the social distancing measures in force, to reopen to all pupils was a step too far at this moment in time.

The staff will be planning over the next few weeks for their new pupils' return after the Summer and this planning will include ensuring that curriculum content that had not been covered in the previous year, is the starting point for the Autumn Term.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Try