

Learning delivered with

Text Linked Curriculum



Hillcrest Primary School

TLC

Hillcrest Primary School

Headteacher: Mr Matthew Try

Hillcrest Downham Market

Norfolk

PE38 9ND

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19th June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

SCHOOL CLOSURE UPDATE 11: The Slow Return to Normal

Although far from normal, it is pleasing to see the numbers of children attending school in Years R, 1 & 6 gradually creeping up. From a starting point of 29% of those eligible attending on 1st June, the figure now stands at 42%. That means that there is over half of the children that could be attending, still at home and there remains no pressure for parents to send their children into school although those places are available for them should they want their children to return.

A school should be somewhere full of happy faces, eager to learn and eager to meet friends. Whilst there is plenty of learning going on for those who have returned, and for many at home via Google Classrooms, there is only limited opportunities to play or socialise with a small number of classmates. Each 'bubble' of children will remain in their 'bubbles' and separate from all others through until the end of the school year.

We continue to plan for September and look forward to seeing all of the children back at school if it is viable. There is a lot of argument in the press about the return to school in September with some media outlets and politicians insisting that it is the teaching unions that are blocking a return to normality citing safety fears.

I would like to put the record straight on that point. After months of abnormal work patterns, online learning and eerily quiet school buildings, our staff want nothing more than to return to a normal school working life, supporting all of the children in their care. We are aware of the challenges that lie ahead in supporting the children, particularly the most vulnerable, in catching up with their learning after the time lost and it goes without saying that the longer that the period is they are away from school, the greater the challenge ahead of us.

However, this is no longer solely about safety. Indeed, those who have sent their children to school recently will know that we have put a large number of safety measures in place to protect the children, staff and their families, from contracting the virus. These measures have included reducing the amount of direct contact between the parents and the staff,

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which although a huge barrier to communication, is just one necessary step at this difficult time and a restriction that we hope we can lift in the new school year.

The main reason why schools MAY NOT be able to open normally in September will be down to the physical size of the school building and the social distancing measures that may still be in place.

Those media outlets and politicians that are criticising schools for not reopening fully due to health concerns and what they see as an unnecessarily heightened fear of contracting the virus, are simply not considering the one factor that will make a normal return to school impossible, which is 'space.'

Whilst social distancing remains, even if it is reduced to 1 metre, schools cannot seat 30 children in a classroom. Therefore, there will still be the need to split each class into two and schools simply do not have the space to accommodate these extra classes, even in a school our size. It is simply impractical.

Schools understand the need to get things back to normal for employment purposes, the economy, children's physical and mental health and the wealth of other issues that keeping children off school raises. However, there is no government plan that will enable all of the children to have a full-time education in September if any aspect of social distancing continues to be necessary. The only way out of the situation would be to build thousands of new classrooms across the country in a short period of time and to employ thousands of new teachers to staff these extra classes but again, this would be both a costly and an impractical solution.

Emergency Childcare Provision for Key Workers

Can parents on the Key Worker list for the Emergency Childcare Provision please continue to contact the school via office@hillcrest.norfolk.sch.uk by 1pm every Friday to inform us of which days you would require the service for the following week.

Please note that the school will be completely CLOSED to all children and that there will be no Emergency Childcare Provision available 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

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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/>

There is also a new telephone service. You can dial 119 to book a test.

End of Term Dates

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.**

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New Classes for 2020/21 and Transition Days

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.

Although the Year 2, 3, 4 and 5 children are not returning before September, we will be providing all of the children with an opportunity to meet their new teachers in their new classrooms for a couple of hours before the end of term.

Those pupils moving into Year 2 next year will get some time with their new teachers on Thursday 9th July. The pupils moving into Years 1, 3, 4 & 5 will spend time in school on Friday 10th July whilst the new Year 6 pupils for next year will visit on Monday 13th July.

More information about these visits, which will also be in socially-distanced 'bubbles' will be sent home soon.

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.

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.

Those parents wishing to receive a paper-based resource should email office@hillcrest.norfolk.sch.uk by 1pm on Wednesday 24th June stating whether you will be collecting from school, would like it posted (if living further away) or would like it emailed.

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Hello to Rainbow Bear

All at the school want to say a huge Hillcrest thank you to Mrs Taylor who has a child in Suns Class. This week, Mrs Taylor presented the school with a new Hillcrest bear (pictured right) which is made from recycled school uniform.

We are delighted to have such a beautifully made soft toy in school and we are currently identifying where we will house it so that it can take pride of place in school for all to see.

After lots of amazing suggestions from the children for the name of the new bear, a perfectly apt name which sums up the time we have been living through was chosen. The new Hillcrest bear will be called Rainbow.

We look forward to sharing Rainbow with the children over the coming months and years ahead.



Sports Day

We want to provide the children who are in school with as many of the typical experiences that you might expect during the Summer Term whilst also being conscious of the restrictions that social distancing place upon us.

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We are going to attempt to hold a socially-distanced Sports Day for those in Years R, 1 & 6. In readiness for this we have asked our grounds maintenance contractors to mark out an eight-lane, socially-distanced running track (pictured below).



The children in Asteroids and Meteors will have their Sports Day on Tuesday 14th July (their last day of term) whilst those in Year 6, Suns and Nebulas will have their Sports Day on Thursday 16th July.

However, unlike normal Sports Days, we will not be able to have parents watching due to the current restrictions.

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Year 6 Leaver's Assembly

Two key things are not in our favour when organising this year's Year 6 Leavers Assembly. Firstly, we are not holding assemblies due to them being a large gathering in a confined space. Secondly, we are not holding any events which involve the parents due to needing to keep the amount of people on site to a minimum.

However, we are trying not to let little things like that stop us from ending the Year 6s time at Hillcrest with some important memories to take away.

Therefore, we will be holding a socially-distanced Leavers Assembly which will be broadcast live online via the Facebook page that Hillcrest set up at the start of the lockdown to enable staff to read books to the children.

Therefore, the children will still assemble but distant from one another with the parents watching from home. This event will take place at 10.00am on Monday 20th July.

2020/21 Term Dates

The term dates for the new academic year below are all subject to change in the event that the ongoing coronavirus pandemic does not allow for the full return of pupils from 7th September

Autumn Term 2020

PD Days: Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th September – SCHOOL CLOSED TO PUPILS

Pupils return on Monday 7th September

PD Day: Thursday 22nd October - SCHOOL CLOSED TO PUPILS

Half – Term Holiday: Thursday 22nd – Friday 30th October (inclusive)

Last Day of Term: Friday 18th December

Christmas and New Year Holiday: Monday 21st December 2020 – Friday 1st January 2021 (inclusive)

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Spring Term 2021

Children return to school on Monday 4th January 2021

Half-Term Holiday: Monday 15th February to Friday 19th February (inclusive)

Last Day of Term: Friday 26th March

Easter Holiday: Monday 29th March to Friday 9th April (inclusive)

Summer Term 2021

Pupils return on Monday 12th April

May Day Bank Holiday: Monday 3rd May – SCHOOL CLOSED

Half-Term Holiday: Monday 31st May – Friday 4th June (inclusive)

Last Day of Term: Wednesday 21st July

Summer Holiday begins on Wednesday 22nd July

Staggered Start for Reception

In the event that everything returns to normal in September and that we are able to accept all of the pupils every day without social distancing, the plan this year is to introduce the new Reception pupils in gently with a staggered start to the Autumn Term.

This measure is not unusual in schools and many schools do not accept Reception pupils full-time for the first few weeks.

The first three weeks of schooling for the new Reception pupils will be part-time in order to develop their stamina and ensure that the start to their schooling includes short bursts of learning which are positive as opposed to throwing them in to a full timetable from the start.

Therefore, the time that the new Reception children will spend in school will build up gradually over the three weeks as follows...

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Week Beginning 7th September – Children in school up until the end of morning break between 8.55am and 11.30am.

Week Beginning 14th September – Children in school up until the beginning of lunch break (the children WILL NOT eat at school during this week) between 8.55am and 12.25pm

Week Beginning 21st September – Children will experience the school dinner routine in school and go home AFTER eating with us. They will be in school between 8.55am and 1.15pm.

Week Beginning 28th September – Children attend full-time and experience a normal school day between 8.55am and 3.30pm.

Of course, if the ongoing health crisis does not allow for staff to teach full classes of children from September, then this plan will change and the children's start to school may consist of even less time.

Floor Art

Since returning from lockdown on 1st June, the children in Years R, 1 & 6, along with the Emergency Childcare children, have been working on some pieces of art that, instead of taking pride of place on a wall, are actually going to be displayed on the floor.

In order to fill the huge gap that exists along the entrance hall floor, which has been created by the new one-way system, the children have created pieces of art to represent one of four different categories; the town, the forest, the beach and the ocean. These pieces of artwork were then laid in the rectangular void surrounded by yellow and black hazard tape as a collaborative piece of art and memory of this strange time.



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And Finally...

We are waiting to hear what the government's announcements about Summer Camps will reveal. At this moment in time, Hillcrest will be closed after the last day on Tuesday 21st July to all pupils, even those who have been attending as part of the Emergency Childcare Provision. However, we don't know what form the government's proposals on the summer activities for those children falling furthest behind will take. As soon as we know anything we will let parents know.

A huge thank you again to those parents who have supported the school throughout this difficult time and at a point when we are having to take hard decisions which have affected different families in different ways. Please rest assured that we are planning for a full return in September so that we are ready to hit the ground running. However, as I stated at the start of this newsletter, without a significant shift in the social distancing rules, a full-time return to school for all may not be possible.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Try