

Learning delivered with

Text Linked Curriculum



Hillcrest Primary School

TLC

## NEWSLETTER

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents /Carers,

# WELCOME BACK...at long last!

The 2019/20 academic year may have been cut short by the coronavirus, but Hillcrest still crammed lots into that short year.

We mustn't forget that last year was Hillcrest's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. A birthday which we, of course, won't forget and will last long in the memory. We only have to think back to January of this year and we were all celebrating that birthday with our 80s themed disco. We couldn't have imagined that just a few weeks later the world would have gone into lockdown.

We also marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary by burying a time capsule during the lockdown period with last year's Year 6 pupils doing the honours.

During last year's Autumn Term, we sent a group of Year 6 pupils jet-setting off to Sweden to spend a week in a Swedish school.

Hillcrest also marked STEM Week by building an environmentally-friendly igloo out of old milk cartons.

And we mustn't forget that you all, once again, donated thousands of food items for the local Foodbank throughout December. Something that we would like to ensure we do again this year.

Therefore, although it was a short year, the pupils still packed lots in at Hillcrest between September and March and although many of the more unusual activities that we like to engage the children, and parents, in throughout the Autumn Term may not be happening this year, we still have some exciting things planned for the children in the coming months.

We hope that all of our Hillcrest families have managed to stay safe and well throughout the lockdown and we have been delighted to see the school full again this week with the vast majority of the children returning.

## Electronic Newsletters

Please note that following the success of the emailed School Closure Updates that went home throughout the lockdown, the future school monthly newsletters will all be sent home by email as well as being posted on the school website. There will be no more hard copies of the newsletters being sent home.

## School Dinners Are Back!

Week One	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Option 1	Margherita Pizza with Potato Wedges and Rainbow Salad (v)	Oriental Beef Meatballs with Noodles, Green Beans and Sweetcorn	Roast Chicken with Stuffing, Roast Potatoes, Carrots, Garden Peas and Gravy	Jacket Potato with Beef Bolognese, Grated Cheese and Broccoli	Fish Fingers with Chips and Garden Peas or Baked Beans
Option 2	Jacket Potato with Veggie Mince Bolognese and Vegetable Medley (v)	Jacket Potato with Grated Cheese, Beans and Rainbow Salad (v)	Lentil Roast with Roast Potatoes, Carrots, Garden Peas and Gravy (v)	Sweet Potato and Lentil Curry with Steamed Rice and Broccoli (v)	Vegetable Goujons with Chips and Garden Peas or Baked Beans (v)
Dessert of the Day	Ice Cream Tub	Beetroot Brownie	Apple Flapjack	Berry Muffin	Bitesize Cocoa Oatcake with Orange Wedges
Packed Lunch Option	Cheese or Ham Sandwich, Carrot Batons, Popcorn, Orange Wedges and Ice Cream Tub	Cheese or Egg Mayo Sandwich, Cucumber Sticks, Sultana Bag, Melon Wedge and Beetroot Brownie	Cheese or Tuna Mayo Roll, Carrot Batons, Popcorn, Orange Wedges and Apple Flapjack	Cheese or Ham Sandwich, Cucumber Sticks, Sultana Bag, Apple Wedges and Berry Muffin	Cheese and Tomato Pasta Pot, Carrot Batons, Popcorn, Orange Wedges and Bitesize Cocoa Oatcake
Week One: 7 Sept / 21 Sept / 5 Oct / 19 Oct / 9 Nov / 23 Nov / 7 Dec / 4 Jan / 18 Jan / 1 Feb / 22 Feb / 8 Mar / 22 Mar					

  

Week Two	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Option 1	Breaded Chicken in a Wrap with Garlic Mayo, Potato Wedges, Lettuce and Cucumber	Margherita Pizza with Couscous and Coleslaw (v)	Sausages with Yorkshire Pudding, Roast Potatoes, Carrots, Garden Peas and Gravy	Jacket Potato with Chicken Curry and Rainbow Salad	Fish Fingers with Chips and Garden Peas or Baked Beans
Option 2	Jacket Potato with Grated Cheese, Beans and Rainbow Salad (v)	Jacket Potato with Veggie Mince Chilli and Vegetable Medley (v)	Veggie Sausage with Yorkshire Pudding, Roast Potatoes, Carrots, Garden Peas and Gravy (v)	Cheesy Pasta with Broccoli and Sweetcorn (v)	Vegetable Goujons with Chips and Garden Peas or Baked Beans (v)
Dessert of the Day	Bitesize Oaty Bar with Orange Wedges	Dinky Doughnuts	Ice Cream Tub	Orange Cupcake	Mini Shortbread and Melon Wedge
Packed Lunch Option	Cheese or Ham Sandwich, Carrot Batons, Popcorn, Orange Wedges and Bitesize Oaty Bar	Cheese or Egg Mayo Sandwich, Cucumber Sticks, Sultana Bag, Melon Wedge and Dinky Doughnuts	Cheese or Tuna Mayo Roll, Carrot Batons, Popcorn, Apple Wedges and Ice Cream Tub	Cheese or Ham Sandwich, Cucumber Sticks, Sultana Bag, Orange Wedges and Orange Cupcake	Cheese and Tomato Pasta Pot, Carrot Batons, Popcorn, Melon Wedge and Mini Shortbread
Week Two: 14 Sept / 28 Sept / 12 Oct / 2 Nov / 16 Nov / 30 Nov / 14 Dec / 11 Jan / 25 Jan / 8 Feb / 1 Mar / 15 Mar					

There has been a fantastic uptake of hot school dinners upon our return after lockdown, with meal numbers ordered almost up to their pre-lockdown levels.

All meals are prepared in a Covid-secure environment and served from behind a newly-installed Perspex screen.

***ALL MEALS NEED TO BE ORDERED VIA WISEPAY – because of the complications around lunch and the particularly early start to lunch for some classes, we will be unable to add any ‘forgotten’ meals on the day.***

***Meals MUST be ordered by midnight on the Sunday leading up to each week. If you forget to place an order in time, children must sent to school with a packed lunch.***

There have been some comments from parents concerned about the limited amount of time that the children are given to eat their packed lunches.

Every class from Year 2 upwards gets a 20-minute slot in which to eat their dinner. Reception and Year 1 pupils get 30 minutes.

In reality, this is not much less than they used to get during normal times when we could get a whole year group in the hall at the same time. The amount of time for eating hasn't changed dramatically. It just hasn't been a focus of attention in the same way that it is now.

In order to ensure the children have enough time eat their lunch within the 20 minutes, we are asking each class to either eat whilst chatting quietly or, if needed, in silence.

Lunches took far longer for each group to eat pre-lockdown because of the amount of noise created by frequent conversations. The lunch halls are now far quieter and, as a result, the 20 minute slot has provided adequate time for the children to eat their food.

Each group gets a full 20 minutes in the hall and they are not rushed through any quicker than this. We are also using both the Main Hall and the Blue Hall to reduce the time that it takes to get the whole school through lunch. Without the use of the Blue Hall, we would potentially be serving dinner from the moment the children start school in the morning.

Some children will always start by eating what they consider to be the 'nicer' items in their lunchbox but which we would consider to be the snacks rather than the substantial food item. We would like to reassure parents too that the children are encouraged to begin with their sandwich, wrap or other main food item and to tackle the snacks within their lunch box afterwards. Can you please also reinforce this message at home so that the children are clear that the expectation is that they eat their sandwich etc first.

Teaching staff have been asked to give the children an opportunity to eat any of the food items, provided they are healthy options, that they may have saved from lunch, during their afternoon break.

## **PE Kit**

Your child's class teacher should be keeping you updated with information about when PE lessons take place. As we have mentioned before, on days when your child's class has PE they are expected to attend school already dressed in their PE kit as we are unable to arrange for children to get changed part way through the day due to current restrictions and guidance.

Although teachers will try to arrange PE for the same day each week, the situation does mean that the day on which PE takes place can change on a weekly basis depending upon the weather. In the event that rain is forecast we are unlikely to attempt to get the children outside as, if they get wet, they would have to remain in wet clothing for the remainder of the day. Therefore, PE lessons may be subject to much cancellation or change.

This is also the coolest September return that we have experienced in many years. September can often be a hangover from August where we experience heat and sunshine. As it has been so cool, this is also a good opportunity to remind parents that, on those PE days, it would be good for the children to come dressed in tracksuit bottoms.

## **Morning Routine**

It has been a pleasure to be able to chat to so many parents on the gate as they come in during the morning stagger to drop their children off.

We are incredibly grateful for your patience, especially to those of you who with more than one child who are most affected by the staggered times.

We have had a couple of parents during the first week of this 'new normal' asking when it will go back to a pre-lockdown normal. The short answer is probably, not any time soon.

We will have to maintain the staggered start and finish times for as long as the government deem it necessary that we operate with social distancing measures in place. That is likely to be until a vaccine is in place and the jury is out on when that might be.

Therefore, the staggered entry into school is likely to continue throughout the Autumn Term and possibly beyond.

Whilst the weather remains dry and not too cold it is far more bearable but once the harsher winter weather comes we appreciate that it will be less appealing. However, whatever the weather; sunshine, wind, rain or snow; the existing morning routine is here to remain.

## **Cancelled Events**

A number of the usual events that take place throughout the Autumn Term have been cancelled due to the ongoing need for social distancing measures.

The limited interaction between parents and teachers means that the weekly opportunity to drop into the classroom and view the children's work will not begin again until the situation changes.

The termly '...with Parents' sessions, which give you an opportunity to experience life in the classroom, will not take place.

Christmas events will be severely affected with no Christmas Nativity, Sing-a-longs or Christmas Church Service. As a school we like to think that we do Christmas really well and between the staff and the children celebrate it in style. Therefore, we can confirm that Christmas definitely isn't cancelled and we will continue to find ways to enjoy it with the children. We are currently looking at ways that every class can take part in a Christmas Carol Service via Zoom with each class invited to sing to the rest of the school in their classroom. We will also commit to our annual Reverse Advent Calendar which, with the current situation in our thoughts, is even more important this year than ever before.

There will be no after-school clubs until January at the earliest and no school trips, apart from local walks, until the Summer Term 2021 at the earliest.

## Parent Consultation Evenings

Parent Consultation Evenings will be VERY different this year with no face-to-face meetings taking place on the school site.

You will still be given the opportunity to discuss how your child has settled into school with their class teacher as normal around the October half-term period. However, this year, the 10-minute slots will be over the phone.

We will send a separate letter out about this in the next couple of weeks with details of how you can book those slots. However, we can tell you that those phone meetings will be held at the following times...

Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> October	Reception Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 3 Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 4 Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 5 Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 6 Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm
Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> October	Year 1 & 2 Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November	Year 5 Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> November	Reception Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 3 Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 4 Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 6 Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 1 & 2 Parents	4.00 – 7.00pm

## School Reports

With no end of year School Reports being issued in July for obvious reasons, this means that the last time parents received a formal report about their children was in March, just prior to lockdown.

Therefore, this year, rather than wait until the Mid-Year Reports in February 2021, we will be issuing an additional report in December. This will serve two main functions; firstly it will seek to give parents a sense of how well their children have settled back into their learning after lockdown and secondly, they will give parents a sense of their academic level at the time.

However, any comparisons with previous school reports should be undertaken with extreme caution as we are still getting to grips with the exact nature of the academic gap we are dealing with following the lockdown. We anticipate that many of the children are several months behind where they should be and, in many cases, that academic hole won't have been plugged fully by the time the reports are issued with it still appearing that many of the children have not reached where they should be for their age group.

## Keeping Hillcrest Covid-free

We are obviously putting lots of measures in place to help keep the children and staff safe from Covid-19. These measures include the staggered start and finish times, staggered breaks and lunches, increased handwashing and other hygiene routines, keeping each class separate from one another, sanitising PE equipment after use, ensuring the children have their own resources and do not share pens, pencils, rulers etc.

Naturally, we need the help of the parents too with ensuring that the school remains Covid-free.

We have the one-way system in place and appreciate the support from the vast majority of parents who adhere strictly to it. We appreciate that for those using the gate onto Civray Avenue and who have children in the old school building, it means completing a circuit of the school in order to go back out of the Civray gate, but this is necessary to avoid parents crossing paths at that bottleneck between the Year 3 classrooms and the pond area.

We would also like to reinforce the message that children shouldn't be sent to school with a high temperature and we would again ask parents to check their child's temperature before they come to school.

In the event that you keep your child off school because they are displaying one of the main symptoms (fever, continuous cough, loss of sense of taste or smell) or we send your child home because they are displaying one of these symptoms, you MUST get your child tested for Covid-19. Once you receive their test result, you should then call or email the school to let us know the outcome. If it is negative then they are welcome back to school the following day. However, if it is positive, we will then discuss the date upon which they will return after isolation.

We would also like to ask parents to inform us if their child is having to self-isolate for 14 days because they have come into contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19 so that we can calculate a date for their return.

There has been lots in the news recently about the distances that people are having to travel in order to receive a Covid-19 test. It is our understanding that if, in the first instance, you try to book a test online and you are given a location that you feel it is unfeasible to be expected to drive to, that you can try again a couple of hours later and potentially be offered a location that is far more local. However, there will naturally come a point when that cannot drag on and a choice will have to be made as the tests are most effective if taken within the first 3 days of symptoms showing. Alternatively, a test pack can be posted to your home address and returned by post if you are not successful booking a drive-through test. There is just a slightly longer delay from the point the child is sent home to the point they would return to school when choosing this option.

## Equipment for School

Can parents please ensure that their children are sent to school with the correct equipment. We have had several packed lunch boxes and coats dropped off at the front reception because these items have been forgotten at a time when the office is officially closed and staff movement around the school being kept to a minimum.

## Attendance at school and legal intervention

***Please note that since issuing the Attendance at School and Legal Intervention letter to parents earlier in the week, there has now been a new letter issued and some amended guidance which can be found below***

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At Hillcrest Primary School our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers regarding the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

In the DfE policy document entitled, 'School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' it states, '***Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.***

If the school does not receive a request for leave, the head teacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the head teacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have:

- at least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the last 6 school weeks

The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice. Any pupil at Hillcrest Primary School who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a fixed penalty notice is issued the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the penalty notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the receipt of the notice. The fixed penalty notice is per parent per child. You

should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. M. Try

Headteacher

**NEXT NEWSLETTER IS OUT ON FRIDAY 25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**