

Learning delivered with

Text Linked Curriculum



Hillcrest Primary School

TLC

NEWSLETTER

Wednesday 21st October 2020

Dear Parents /Carers,

SCHOOL CLOSED

Hillcrest Primary School will be closed for the October Half-Term break between Thursday 22nd and Friday 30th October. We will reopen with the staggered starts to which you have become familiar on Monday 2nd November. Have a good break.

Improvements to the One-Way System for After Half-Term

Our Site Manager, Mr Dunne, has already started work on improvements to the outside of the school building in order to allow for a more clear passage for parents as they pass through the one-way system each morning and afternoon.

Provided the weather over the next couple of weeks improves and allows this work to be completed, after half-term the new system should be in place.

Two new paths are being installed on the new area of grass immediately outside the end of the new Asteroids classroom and near the large gate that leads from the Reception playground onto the car park.

After half-term parents will be asked to wait on the Reception playground in the morning, and during the pick-up, away from the flow of traffic coming around that corner.

At the time the class is due to open, the class teacher, either Mrs Tempestini or Mrs Fysh, will appear from the door at the end of the Reception cloakroom (which looks out onto the patch of grass at the end of the building). Parents will then come forwards off the Reception playground and walk across the grass via the new path which cuts across its centre. They will then turn right and heads towards the cloakroom door where they will be greeted by the teacher. The parent will then leave via the second new path which runs parallel with the black fence and leave, in the normal way, via the gate leading out onto the car park.

This will mean that from after half-term, no parents of children in either Asteroids or Suns will be waiting on the path immediately outside their children's classrooms and therefore the one-way route should remain clear for all parents.

We are also concerned that once the continuous wet weather sets in (if it hasn't already!), that those parents of children in Comets, Planets, Pluto, Mercury and Tethys who have to wait on the area of grass outside each classroom, may find it increasingly unpleasant as the ground becomes more and more saturated.

We are therefore looking to lay down some plastic sheeting which will be covered in bark chippings to keep that waiting area as dry underfoot as possible.

Birthday and Christmas Gifts

All staff have now been informed that they should NOT be sending home any sweets or gifts that parents send in to celebrate their child's birthday. Although disappointing for those who want to share their birthday with others, it is another of those measures that we have to adopt in these unusual times due to the potential spread of the virus.

The same protocols will apply at Christmas with no sharing of gifts or cards between children at school.

Social Distancing around Hillcrest

This is a reminder to all that, at a point in time where Covid-19 cases are increasing across the UK, parents are encouraged to maintain their distance from other families whilst on the school site. This is the reason we have a very heavily staggered start and end to each day, it is why we have a one-way system in place and it is why we are putting numerous measures in place for the children every day to keep them as safe from the virus as we can.

There are concerns that these measures are being jeopardised by parents who are not maintaining their social distance from others on their way round the school.

We understand there have been some problems with a bottleneck near the Reception classrooms which we are addressing with the measures outlined at the top of the Newsletter.

However, once that has been addressed, there should be a clear run-through for parents around the outside of the building and no reason for parents to come within 1 – 2 metres of another.

We would also like to take this opportunity to remind parents that they should remain two metres away from the classroom door when dropping their children off and not approaching the teachers at that point.

Poppy Appeal

After half-term we will be selling poppies on behalf of the Royal British Legion as we normally would.

We would recommend a donation of 50p for a poppy although the children can be sent in with more money to put in the collection box if they wish. A member of staff will visit each class every day from Monday 2nd November until Wednesday 11th November. Therefore, please send your child into school with their 50p after half-term if you would wish them to have a poppy to mark Armistice Day.

Remote Learning

Throughout the first lockdown, Hillcrest was proactive in providing a combination of paper-packs for the children to complete and online learning via Google Classroom. We were pleased to hear at the time from those who knew of families with children in other schools where the remote learning offer wasn't as far advanced.

However, as promised, we have reflected upon the remote learning provision that we offered at the time in line with the amended Department for Education guidance that came out after the first lockdown, and have now created a Remote Learning Policy. This have also included improvements in the provision that we would offer online in the event that the school has to close again at any point. This might encompass winter weather closures as well as closures because of coronavirus.

From the beginning of last week, parents will have been able to access a weekly plan for Remote Learning for their child with every year group team posting a different plan on the school website and on the Google Classroom for their class.

Any child who is absent from school because they are self-isolating, either because they themselves are awaiting a test result or because another member of the household is awaiting a test result, can now switch on their Google Classroom or visit the school website and access work appropriate for their age group.

We would like to thank all of the teachers for their efforts in making this happen as this has been planned for and provided in addition to planning their usual lessons for those children who are in school.

We would also like to add that these plans were already at an advanced stage and were always going to be in place for the start of October before the government decided to enshrine the provision of remote learning in law earlier this month. This is a step that was wholly unnecessary for the government to take as schools, just like Hillcrest, across the country were already supportive of these measures and working towards this aim. However, once again, the government has sought to alienate the profession at a difficult time by hitting it with a big stick rather than recognising the work that was already going on.

Hello Yellow Fundraiser

We are delighted to say that we raised a staggering £504 at our recent fundraiser for the Young Minds charity, supporting children with mental health issues.

It was delightful to see all of the children kitted out in their yellow attire. We didn't know there were so many different shades of the colour.

If anyone wants further information on the charity, please go to www.youngminds.org.uk

Congratulations

I am sure that everyone would like to joining us in congratulating Mrs Spademan on the birth of her baby boy, Emerson, who weighed in a 7lb 11oz.

Everyone at Hillcrest wishes the Spademan family well.

Parent Consultation Evenings by Phone

Many parents will have already received their phone call after the first round of Parent Consultation Evenings have been completed. Although much harder having three hours of back-to-back phone conversations than we first thought, it was, as always, a delight for the staff to be able to share the children's successes with their parents. There would have also been conversations about areas where the children need to improve, as you would expect, and things that can take place at home to support the school's efforts with their child going forwards.

If you haven't already booked your telephone appointment with your child's class teacher, most teachers still have spaces on the following days with all bookings made via WisePay.

All appointments will fall between 4.00pm and 7.00pm on the following dates...

Monday 2 nd November	Year 5 Parents
Tuesday 3 rd November	Reception Parents
Wednesday 4 th November	Year 3 Parents
Thursday 5 th November	Year 4 Parents
Tuesday 10 th November	Year 6 Parents
Wednesday 11 th November	Year 1 & 2 Parents

School Dinners

There has been a fantastic uptake of school dinners since returning after lockdown but it can always be better.

The kitchen staff from Norse continue to deliver a high quality range of hot food options daily. However, from after half-term there will be some minor amendments to the advertised menu.

On a Tuesday of the Week One menu the advertised Oriental Beef Meatballs meal will be replaced with **sausage, mash & beans**.

On the Thursday of Week One, the jacket potato with the bolognese meal will be replaced by **pasta**.

On the Tuesday of the Week Two menu, the pizza will be served with **tomato pasta and cucumber** instead of the couscous and coleslaw. The vegetarian option will also see the jacket potato served with **tuna mayo and salad** rather than the veggie mince chilli and vegetables.

On the Thursday of Week Two, the jacket potato with the chicken curry meal will be replaced by **rice and broccoli**.

We would also encourage those parents of children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 who are ALL entitled to a Universal Infant FREE School Meal, to take up the option of booking one through WisePay even though no payment is necessary.

All meals should be booked via WisePay by the Sunday leading up to the week they are required for.

School Term Dates 2021/22

We have already had some very advanced requests to publish the term dates for the 2021/22 academic year.

Although we won't list all of the dates in this edition of the Newsletter in case they get confused for this year's dates, we can confirm that our term dates and holiday dates for 2021/22 will be IDENTICAL to the model calendar that you will find on Norfolk County Council's website.

We will publish them in full later in the year.

School Photos

It is that time of year when we invite Pret-A-Portait in to take the individual pupil's school photos.

They will be in school on Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th November.

However, unlike during normal times, because of the social distancing measures required, they WILL NOT be taking any family photos after school as they would have done previously.

Also, because we are not breaking 'bubbles' or having children making unnecessary journeys around the school we WILL NOT be arranging for photos to be taken of siblings together. The ONLY exception to that is where the siblings are all in the same class together and therefore it would not mean breaking a 'bubble' to enable the photo to happen.

Take Care on the Road Outside School

We have received a number of reports from concerned parents recently over the number of younger pupils riding their bikes and scooters seemingly unaccompanied on the footpaths outside the school, particularly on the corner of Hillcrest and Civray Avenue, by the park.

A concerned parent intervened this week when a child, believed to be aged around 5 or 6, was about to ride into the path of an oncoming car driving down Hillcrest. Fortunately, a serious accident was averted thanks to the actions of that parent. However, when the child was asked where their responsible adult/parent was, they said that they didn't know.

Hillcrest and Civray Avenue are obviously extremely busy between 8.15am - 9.30am and again between 2.30pm – 4.05pm even though the volume of traffic has been dispersed over that longer period each day. With the quantity of cars parked down those roads, it is vitally important that children are not left to play unaccompanied at these times.

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 a NEGATIVE Covid-19 test has been received 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.

Applying for Free School Meals – don't miss out should food vouchers become available again in the event of any future lockdown

Although parents of children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a Free School Meal for their child as part of the government's Universal Infant Free School Meal provision, during lockdown these families were not automatically entitled to a free school meal.

However, those families who qualified for Free School Meals because they met one or more of the criteria laid out below, did receive a government food voucher worth £15 per child per week which could be spent at the any of the major supermarkets.

If you feel you meet any of the criteria below, we would encourage you to register for Free School Meals with Norfolk County Council so that you don't miss out in the event that these food vouchers are issued again should the country ever go into another national lockdown.

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you claim any of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

If you think you may qualify for Free School Meals, please register with Norfolk County Council via the following website...

www.norfolk.gov.uk/neo

2020/21 Term Dates (current year)

Autumn Term 2020

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)

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

Countryfile Ramble for Children in Need (and Friends of Hillcrest)

We may not be going on any school trips in the immediate future because of the current health situation, but we are continuing to take the children out on local walks.

Therefore, we are in a perfect position to once again support BBC Countryfile's Ramble for Children in Need. We last supported this cause in 2018 and raised lots of money for the Children in Need charity fundraiser along the way. This year, we are taking the opportunity to share the funds raised evenly between Children in Need and the Friends of Hillcrest.

As you may be aware, with the many social distancing requirements to fulfil and the need to reduce the amount of adults in the school building, many of the events that the Friends of Hillcrest would usually hold to raise money, have had to be postponed. This has massively reduced their ability to fundraise this year which, in turn, reduces their ability to support the school with resources that the school would otherwise not be able to afford.

Therefore, we are hoping that the children and parents will rally behind the cause and raise lots of money again this year.

The rambles will take place during the week beginning 9th November with every class going in a different direction at different times, therefore helping to maintain the social distance between classes.

On the bottom of this Newsletter you will find a copy of a sponsorship form for the event and we thought that children might like the half-term holiday to start seeking sponsors.

Anything that Mum, Dad, Nan, Grandad, Brother, Sister, Uncle, Auntie or a close friend or neighbour can donate to support your child's efforts in completing the ramble in November will all be much appreciated and go to some worthy causes.

There will be a prize for the biggest fundraiser's in each year group.

And Finally...

We appreciate that much of what has been said in the Newsletter has been about what we cannot do rather than what we can do. It feels very anti-Hillcrest and the polar opposite of how we normally like to behave. We will of course get through this even though it is difficult to see when that end point will be and when that time comes we will become a far more familiar Hillcrest. We will have those events again that bring the parents into the school, we will be able to meet parents face to face to hold discussions and the children can share properly with friends and play with those in other classes or year groups.

But for now, we are stuck with the reality of a difficult situation and we would especially like to thank those parents who have supported the staggered start and finish times throughout. We would like to also thank the parents who have been able to maintain a social distance from others around the school site and who have persisted with the one-way system, especially those with children in the older part of the school and who access the site via Civray Avenue as you are the parents who get most steps in during the day.

Your support has been important to us through these difficult times and it will continue to be so.

THANK YOU!

NEXT NEWSLETTER IS OUT ON FRIDAY 27th NOVEMBER 2020