

# 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](mailto:office@hillcrest.norfolk.sch.uk)

**Fax:** 01366 384286

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

## SPRING TERM COVID UPDATE

### Return to School

Following the recent government announcement about schools reopening in the Spring Term, we can confirm that Hillcrest Primary School will reopen at the usual staggered times to which everyone is now familiar on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January as previously planned.

### Attendance Expectations

Since schools reopened in September 2020, the expectations over attendance have been as they always were before the pandemic. Despite the recent rise in cases and the new Covid variant, the government's expectation (at the time of writing) still remains that children attend school unless they are ill themselves or they are self-isolating because a member of the household has either developed symptoms and are awaiting a test result or because a member of their household has tested positive.

The normal process of fining parents whose children's attendance drops below the expected level will continue to operate.

### ALL ADULTS TO WEAR FACE MASKS ON THE SCHOOL SITE WHILST DROPPING CHILDREN OFF AND COLLECTING THEM FROM 4<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY

We have revised and further strengthened our measures to protect the children and staff over the holidays, ready for our return on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.

These measures are a result of an increasing rate of infection locally and a result of the new Covid variant that is more transmissible than the previous strain.

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Up until now we have resisted asking parents to wear face masks whilst on the school site. However, from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January ALL parents should not enter the school gates without wearing a face covering. Their face covering should remain in place until they leave the site.

We appreciate that everyone views their own personal risk of catching and handling the Covid virus differently and may typically choose not to wear a face covering. However, this measure is about the protection of everyone and ensuring all in the Hillcrest community feel safe and protected.

Therefore, all parents should wear a face covering on the school site during the morning drop-off and afternoon collection until further notice.

Any adult who doesn't wish to wear a face covering should find another adult to bring their children to school or consider whether they should send their child to another school where Covid concerns may be taken less seriously.

This rule also applies to any High School-aged children who may be asked to drop-off or collect younger siblings.

Those dropping off or picking up should also continue to adhere to the one-way system around school. A huge thank you to the vast majority of parents who have abided strictly by this over the past few months.

## Additional Measures Taken by Staff

The staff will also be taking additional measures to protect themselves and the children upon our return in January.

Up until now we have not insisted that staff wear face masks. However, from next Monday all staff will wear face masks when moving around the corridors or when sharing rooms with colleagues during their breaks.

Staff will maintain their distance from the children in class wherever possible. This can be more difficult to achieve for those staff who work with children lower down the school or for teaching assistants who deliver small group or 1:1 interventions. Where there are

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concerns about being able to maintain distance, staff will wear full face clear visors so that the children can see their teacher's faces whilst still being protected.

We will also naturally continue with the children's handwashing regime that was already well-established and ensure that all touch points around the school are regularly cleaned throughout the day.

## Partial or Whole School Covid Closures

We have been successful in keeping the disruption to school to a minimum since returning in September with just the one day lost to those in Neptune Class just before we broke up for Christmas.

However, with cases rising and an apparently more easily transmissible variant of the virus in circulation, we cannot rule out the closure of individual classes, year groups or indeed, the whole school at relatively short notice.

It will only take a small amount of staff absentees to have a significant impact on the school with limited options for covering staff available to us.

Closing classes will always be a last resort but equally not something we can rule out.

In the event that classes are closed, we will inform parents by text in the first instance, backed up by an email and a notice in the 'News' section of our website. Partial or whole school closures will also be listed on...

[http://disruptions.norfolk.gov.uk/ncclosures\\_schools.html](http://disruptions.norfolk.gov.uk/ncclosures_schools.html)

## Self-Isolation over the Holiday Period

Please remember that any children currently self-isolating because they have tested positive for Covid-19 or they live in a household where another member of that household has tested positive, should complete their 10-day period of isolation before returning to school, Please inform the school office by the morning of Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January if your child will not be attending because of self-isolation.

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## How Long Do We Have to Isolate For?

- 1) If YOU are the person that has tested positive, you have to self-isolate for 10 days from the point your symptoms began or longer if you still have a high temperature. You can return to work/school after 10 days even if you still have a cough or lack of sense of smell/taste as these symptoms can last for many weeks after contracting Covid.
- 2) If you LIVE IN THE SAME HOUSE as someone who has tested positive, ALL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD have to self-isolate for 10 days\* from the date the test was taken (if the person tested was asymptomatic and therefore not showing any symptoms) OR from the date the symptoms started if this date was earlier.
- 3) If other members of the household go on to develop symptoms they need to seek a test and follow Step 1 above. Other members of the house (who haven't already tested positive) also need to follow Step 2 above with the 10 days\* isolation starting from the date the other person's symptoms started.
- 4) If any member of the household has symptoms and are awaiting a test result, ALL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD self-isolate until that test result comes back negative.

**\* please note that the previous expectation that people would self-isolate for 14 days has since been reduced to 10 days**

## 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.***

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## How Do I Get A Test?

You can register for a Covid-19 test at the website below...

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

Or alternatively, you can call 119.

## School Work During Periods of Self-Isolation

In the event that your son/daughter has to self-isolate because someone in your household has Covid-19, you can find work available for them to do at home by logging on to the school website or your child's Google Classroom. However, if their class remains operational and they are the only child, or one of few, isolating, the teacher will not be in regular communication with them throughout the day as they have their own class to teach at school.

In the event that your child's class is closed because a member of the class has tested positive, then the teacher will maintain regular contact and support online throughout the day.

## Winter Weather School Closures

It is that time of year when we start to pay closer attention to the weather forecasts and concern ourselves with snow. We have had very few snow closures in the past 5 years. However, it can never be ruled out.

If the site is considered too dangerous or too few staff can safely make the journey into school, then the school will close.

In these circumstances, information will be posted as early as possible in the morning on BBC Radio Norfolk 95.1 FM / 95.6FM / 104.4 FM, and KLFM 96.7 radio stations and on the school closures website:

[http://disruptions.norfolk.gov.uk/ncclosures\\_schools.html](http://disruptions.norfolk.gov.uk/ncclosures_schools.html)

Unlike in previous years, in the event of any school closure caused by the weather, the children will now have work shared with them to complete through Google Classrooms.



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***The one caveat to everything that has been mentioned in this update is the fact that at the time of putting this information together, schools are once again in the news headlines following the government's u-turn on opening schools in London.***

***It has now led to further calls for all schools in England to be closed during the early part of the Spring Term. However, at the time of writing we are not anticipating a change in the government stance on schools outside London and are fully prepared to reopen on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.***

***The uncertainty stems from our growing experience of how the government have dealt with issues related to schools throughout the pandemic. Plans are often chaotic, lack clarity or common sense, are last-minute and therefore difficult to plan for and to communicate with our families, and frequently result in u-turns. We are trying to do our best to muddle through this period and give you the clearest, most honest, information that we can.***

***All we can suggest is that parents keep a close eye on the news over the weekend and, of course, if we hear any new information, we will share it as quickly as we can with you all.***

***PLEASE NOTE THAT SCHOOL IS NOT THE PLACE TO COMPLAIN TO ABOUT BEING OPEN – WE HAVE TO ABIDE BY THE RULES AND EXPECTATIONS SET BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION. EVEN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY CANNOT TAKE DECISIONS TO CLOSE SCHOOLS IN ISOLATION BECAUSE OF COVID.***

***Once again, the measures that we have put in place are to safeguard you and your children whilst you are on our site. Please help us to help you.***

Yours sincerely,

Mr Try