

Learning delivered with

Text Linked Curriculum



Hillcrest Primary School

TLC

Hillcrest Primary School

Headteacher: Mr Matthew Try

Hillcrest Downham Market

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3rd January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

SPRING TERM COVID UPDATE 2

SCHOOL CLOSED

Hillcrest Primary School will be closed on Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th January due to staffing shortages

School Closure

It is with the deepest regret that we have to announce the closure of Hillcrest Primary School on Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th January at such short notice.

Events overtook us today and following a meeting the largest teaching union, the NEU and additional advice provide by Unison to its members, we will not have enough staff available to reopen the school safely.

Although keen to get the children back to school, I am completely supportive of the action that some staff have taken with a heavy heart. As everyone is aware, levels of the virus locally are high and the new Covid variant far more transmissible than the previous version. The NEU and Unison position is based upon the desire to get the government to publish the latest SAGE information relating to the new Covid variant. In the event that this published information suggests that the new Covid variant is not more transmissible amongst children, contrary to what the current perception is, then this will help move us a long way towards reopening.

Therefore, although we are initially closed for two days at the start of term, the outcome of this action, which I should stress is NOT strike action, but a right that our colleagues have to

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ensure that their health and safety considerations are duly taken into account, may stretch beyond Tuesday.

The ball is in the government's court as they need to persuade the profession that the school environment is safe.

We are just one of a number of schools that will remain closed during the early part of this week.

I am sure that this news will come as welcome relief to those parents who have been concerned about the reopening of schools. To others I appreciate that it will be a huge inconvenience for which I can only apologise, especially for the short notice of the decision. However, it has been a hectic and fast-moving weekend with events unfolding throughout the day.

Emergency Childcare Provision for Key Workers and Vulnerable Children

Apologies if you have received this information second-hand as we have been contacting the families of the Key Workers prior to sending this update out to all families.

We will be using the Key Worker and Vulnerable Children list that we compiled during the Summer Term for the first lockdown. If your child's name was on this list, then you should have already received an email confirming arrangements for attending the Emergency Childcare Provision which starts from Monday morning.

As with the first lockdown it is vital that numbers attending this provision are as low as possible for the reasons of wanting to curtail the spread of the virus. Therefore, even though you may have received an email this evening confirming that your child has a place, you should not take that place up if there is a responsible adult at home who can care for your children.

Also, if you have not received an email this evening, please DO NOT send your children to school on Monday or Tuesday of this week.

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Remote Learning

From Monday morning the children will be able to access a virtual learning timetable via their Google Classroom or the school website. Their teachers will be available to interact with them throughout the period of closure and between the hours of 8.55am and 3.30pm.

What's New Today?

After listening to the Prime Minister on the Andrew Marr Show today unable to answer any question related to the schools reopening with any clarity or confidence, I have been left reading between the lines and feeling today more so than yesterday, that a government decision regarding the closure of primary schools is likely in the coming days or weeks.

As ever throughout this pandemic, the government have moved too slowly and a decision regarding the closure of schools, in light of the new strain of the virus, should have come much earlier to prevent the precise situation we all find ourselves in at the moment. Short notice decisions such as this are not ideal, causes understandable frustration and is not a position that I like to put the school or the parents in.

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

This will also apply to those parents dropping their children off for the Emergency Childcare Provision over the next couple of days.

Partial or Whole School Covid Closures

There may be a resolution to the current situation that sees some classes opening before others. This however will need to be reviewed over the next day or so and will be dependent on whether the government choose delay the publishing of the SAGE data.

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DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO THE KEY WORKER PROVISION 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.

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.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Try