



Hillcrest Primary School

Headteacher: Mr Matthew Try

Hillcrest Downham Market

Norfolk

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15th January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

SCHOOL CLOSURE 2021 UPDATE 3: HILLCREST STAFF MEMBER RECORDS A POSITIVE COVID CASE

School Closure

Hillcrest Primary School closed to all Key Workers and Vulnerable Children on Friday 15th January due to a positive Covid test amongst the staff.

The staff member worked with some of the Year 4, 5 & 6 pupils on Tuesday 12th January before then going for a Covid test on Thursday 14th January for which a positive result was received the following day.

Unfortunately, that result did not come through until around 20 minutes before the start of the day. In order to ensure that we identified exactly which children and staff members had come into contact with her on the Tuesday, it was necessary to completely close the school to give ourselves the time to make sure that tracing was carried out correctly and that no other pupils or staff members were put at added risk.

All 15 parents of children who were in Mrs Wardle's bubble should have now received emails confirming that they are to self-isolate and that they won't be expected back for the Emergency Childcare Provision until Monday 25th January.

Six members of staff have also been asked to self-isolate, drastically reducing the staff we have available for the Emergency Childcare Provision for Key Workers and Vulnerable Children going forwards into next week.

All other children who are already on the Key Worker and Vulnerable Children lists and who had already informed the school by the deadline of 10am on Friday morning that they would like their children in school next week, are still welcome. School will reopen on Monday for those children.

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HOWEVER, DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILDREN IN TO THE KEY WORKER PROVISION NEXT WEEK IF...

- ***Both parents are NOT Key Workers;***
- ***There is a responsible adult at home who can care for your child;***
- ***You work from home;***
- ***You missed the deadline of 10am on Friday to request a place.***

It is vitally important that children are not in school next week unless absolutely necessary and where there is no other choice.

Key Worker children should NOT be in school if there is a responsible adult in the home who can care for them. Parents who work from home should also keep their children at home with them, even if this may be difficult.

Parents will also be turned away if they attempt to drop their child off without having previously informed us by 10am the previous Friday that they wish to have a place. We make staffing arrangements based on the numbers that we receive on the Friday and with the maximum number of pupils reached on two days of this week already, we cannot accept pupils without any notice.

Improvements to Remote Learning

As reported last week, all parents should have now received emails giving them access to Reading Stars Reading Planet and the wealth of reading materials that can be found within this. This new resource will enable the teachers, and parent, to give age appropriate and ability appropriate reading materials and associated comprehension questions to gauge their understanding of the books.

Although not for every pupil, we have also been able to send home access details for the Core 5 Reading Programme that some pupils in Year 1, 2 & 3 have access to along with the Third Space Learning Maths tuition that some pupils in Year 5 and 6 have access to. These online resources were purchased through the use of the Covid Catchup Funding with children specifically targeted for these programmes and which have been up and running

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throughout the Autumn Term. The online nature of these resources has meant that the children selected can continue to access this provision from home.

Facebook Live Story-Telling

Join us at 10am every weekday morning throughout lockdown as Hillcrest staff read stories to the children. You can access these stories through Facebook by searching for 'Hillcrest Primary School Storytelling.'

This was an incredibly popular part of the day with children through the first lockdown and it has been relaunched this time round too.

Are Your Children Online?

It is really important that Hillcrest pupils continue to maintain some form of learning through the provision that the staff have put in place.

As with daily attendance rituals when the school is open normally, the class teachers have been asked to log the amount of interactions and pieces of work submitted by the children which helps us build up a picture of each child's continued educational journey through this difficult period.

Although school may be closed for most, the expectation is that the children continue to access the work from home, with the virtual timetables providing a formal structure around which you can divide up the day.

The improvements to the remote learning since the first lockdown and the government's raised expectations for what is delivered this time round, means that the remote learning is following a similar path to that which would have been followed if the children had been in school. It has been designed this way to minimise any further growth of the learning gap that built up during the first lockdown.

Please email your child's class teacher if you are having problems accessing Google Classrooms.

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Applying for Free School Meals

In the event that your employment status or financial circumstances have changed as a result of the new lockdown, you may find that you are eligible to receive Free School Meals.

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)

Therefore, we would encourage those parents who think that they may qualify for Free School Meals to register with Norfolk County Council via the following website...

www.norfolk.gov.uk/neo

Please note that children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will NOT automatically be entitled to receive the Free School Meal National Vouchers if, as expected, they return in due course, even though they receive Universal Infant Free School Meals.

Parents of children in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 who think that they would qualify for Free School Meals after looking at the qualifying list above, should still register through the www.norfolk.gov.uk/neo website as you may continue to be able to get that support as and when the Food Voucher system come back online. Similarly, parents of children in Key Stage 2 should also register if their employment circumstances have changed.

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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 throughout the lockdown.

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.

And Finally...

A tough start to the term has suddenly got even harder with the news we received today. Although we hope this remains an isolated case, we should prepare ourselves for further cases and with additional staff going into isolation, the job of providing remote learning for those at home along with education and care for the Key Workers and Vulnerable Children becomes more difficult.

There may be further short notice closures or limits on the amount of Key Worker pupils we can have in school over the coming days and weeks. As ever, thank you to all of the parents who have continued to offer your kind words and support.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Try