

# Learning delivered with

Text Linked Curriculum



Hillcrest Primary School

# TLC

Hillcrest Primary School

**Headteacher:** Mr Matthew Try

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PE38 9ND

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29<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

## **SCHOOL CLOSURE 2021 UPDATE 6: PREPARING FOR AN 8<sup>th</sup> MARCH RETURN**

### **School Reopening**

The government's recent announcement over the reopening of schools means that we know that we are closed to all, apart from the Key Workers and Vulnerable Children, up to and including Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March, with a potential reopening to all pupils on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March.

It has been made clear that the 8<sup>th</sup> March date is not set in stone and depends on how the virus behaves over the next few weeks with a decision being made around 22<sup>nd</sup> February as to whether schools will reopen on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

Google Classrooms will remain open until the end of the day on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February after which point they close for the February half-term. The Google Classrooms will still be accessible to the children but there will be no interaction with staff over the half-term break. Staff will then become available and active again on Google Classrooms from Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February until the end of the school closure period which may or may not be 5<sup>th</sup> March.

The current plan is that upon any return on 8<sup>th</sup> March, we would continue with the same staggered starts for each class that you had become used to before this most recent lockdown started. However, we are not completely sure at the moment whether the government would return children to school in stages as they did back in June 2020 where only certain year groups returned, or whether they would want all of the children returning at the same time. Things will become clearer over the course of the next few weeks.

### **Emergency Childcare Provision CLOSED Over Half-Term**

The Department for Education has announced today that the Emergency Childcare Provision for Key Workers and Vulnerable Children WILL NOT continue through the February half-term break and that Hillcrest will be completely closed between Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February and Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February (inclusive).

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## Marking Expectations

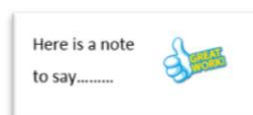
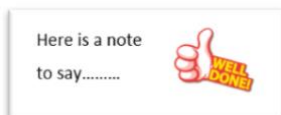
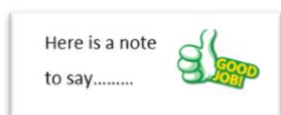
All children should expect to receive a similar quality of marking for the work they submit to that which they would receive if they were in school.

If you feel that your child's work has not been marked within 24 hours then please send a message to the Class Teacher in the first instance as it may be that it has been saved and uploaded to a different part of the system and has therefore been accidentally missed. I am sure that the Class Teacher would want the opportunity to put that right and not have a child in their class feel that their work is not valued.

All work will be acknowledged and marked if it is sent in either on the day that it was set or on the following day. Any work submitted more than a day after the work was initially set will not necessarily be marked as it is difficult for the teachers to navigate back through past days' work whilst also managing the work and the marking for any given day. Therefore, whilst we would never discourage a child from handing work in, even if it was several days late, rather than not do it at all, they are unlikely to get any feedback for that work.

## Praise Notes

We referred in the last update to the increased use of rewards such as Housepoints and Merits as an incentive to encourage the handing in of work and to celebrate good work. This is going to now be backed up with the use of 'Praise Notes' which will allow staff the opportunity to provide the child with a very visual recognition of their achievements.



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## No Screen Days – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February and Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March

We are conscious that the current system of working is heavily dependent on the use of screens and demands a lot on the children's eyes not to mention the demands of devices in the home which often have to be shared.

We are going to be trialling something on two days over the next few weeks which has been adopted by some other schools to break up the monotony of the Google Classroom.

On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February and Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March, there will be no activities posted on Google Classroom or constant interaction between the teacher and child on those days. Instead, prior to both days, each teacher will set a series of practical activities that can be undertaken without the need for technology. The Google Classroom will remain available for the children to access throughout both days and therefore, the children will still be able to upload evidence of the fun they have been having with these activities through the use of photos or comments which the teacher will work their way through at the end of the day, but they won't be activities that the children will need immediate feedback from their teacher for.

## A Very Different Sort of Lockdown

We are in the grips of a very different sort of lockdown to the one that we experienced between March and July last year.

Although the spread of the virus feels worse, especially locally, this time around compared to last year, it feels like more people are active and more businesses remain open. It feels like there has been less pressure from the government to close businesses amid attempts to keep the amount of money needed to provide financial support for businesses and employees affected to a minimum.

A scary time for everyone, the beginnings of the pandemic in March 2020 were a massive unknown for all and something that few people could have seen impacting on our lives in the ways that it has. However, we were blessed with some beautiful weather throughout most of the first lockdown. This gave staff working on the Emergency Childcare Provision lots of options for activities as we got the children outdoors as often as we could, whereas throughout this current lockdown, much of the activity has had to be indoors for obvious reasons.

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The beautiful weather during the first lockdown meant that there were ample opportunities for families to enjoy their gardens or the daily walk for exercise that were allowed at the time. This time around, the conditions are far more challenging with few opportunities to comfortably explore the outdoors and more families under the one roof together for longer.

Now that the virus has affected staff in school, everyone is more concerned for their own wellbeing and feel a greater sense of responsibility for keeping the children in school safe than they did during the first lockdown when the virus felt more distant from us.

The emphasis of the Emergency Childcare Provision during the first lockdown was on childcare rather than education. However, despite this the staff still planned active and engaging activities for the children who were in school at the time. Without the constraints of the curriculum they were able to go off at a tangent and provide learning opportunities that the primary national curriculum doesn't ordinarily allow time for. During this lockdown, the emphasis for those attending the Emergency Childcare Provision is very much on following the same curriculum that those at home are accessing via Google Classroom and that the expectation for the Remote Learning is that it should mirror what would have been taught in school. Providing similar quality for both those at home and those in school as part of the Key Worker and Vulnerable Children Provision has been a huge juggling act. All staff are fairly unanimous that the current working conditions are tougher than normal and that they all look forward to 8<sup>th</sup> March, if that is to be the day, when they can get their normal class back in front of them. Schools are certainly not 'closed' and the staff are certainly not enjoying a prolonged break. The reality is far more complicated than that.

The raised expectations placed on schools for the remote learning during the current lockdown has also undoubtedly placed increased pressures on families who are also struggling to find their way through Google Classrooms. Although we have had some fantastic comments and praise from many parents for the improved online provision during this lockdown, I am also sure that many families are also feeling the strain, especially with the duration of the school closure being extended. We apologise to those who are finding the online learning difficult at the moment. Hopefully through emails or conversations with class teachers or other members of staff, we have been able to iron out some of the issues for individual families. Please continue to share your stresses and issues with the staff as we will always do what we can to address them and make life online as smooth as we possibly can. I am not sure the system will ever be perfect and comparisons will always be made to how other schools have chosen to tackle their Remote Learning provision. However, we hope that you have seen improvements from the first time around and that indeed, throughout the course of the last few weeks, we have continued to make subtle improvements to the way the system works.

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## Learning is Everywhere – Physical Education

A news report on the BBC today suggests that two-fifths of people are reporting that they are doing less exercise during the current lockdown as they did during the first lockdown with far more gaming and TV watching taking place.

This will undoubtedly be due as much to the weather conditions this time around as it will be to do with a fear of the virus.

We wanted to provide some suggestions about resources that can be accessed which encourage the children to stay physically active throughout this period.

### Joe Wicks

One of the biggest celebrities from the first lockdown, Joe Wicks has returned with his 'PE with Joe' sessions on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning each week. These can be accessed through his 'The Body Coach TV' channel on You Tube.

### Youth Sport Trust

The Youth Sport Trust website has some excellent activities for keeping children active throughout the lockdown and for supporting their social, emotional and mental wellbeing. These can be accessed via...

<https://www.youthsporttrust.org/primary-pe-activities>

### NHS Change for Life

The NHS Change for Life website contains suggestions for indoor activities along with what they call their '10-Minute Shake-Up Activities.' You can view these at...

<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities>

### Happiful

The Happiful website contains a comprehensive list of resources that are available to support parents with ideas for helping to keep their children active during the lockdown. This list can be accessed through the following link...

<https://happiful.com/10-virtual-pe-lessons-your-kids-will-love/>



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## 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 to all pupils, including the Key Workers and Vulnerable Children.

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 Greatest Hits Radio (formerly 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.

## DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO THE EMERGENCY CHILDCARE 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.*

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### And Finally...Thank You

All of the staff at Hillcrest would like to thank the vast majority of parents for the lovely comments they have received throughout this latest lockdown. Many class teachers have shared the positive comments they have received from parents with one another and it really does give the staff a lift at a much needed time.

We hope you are all staying safe at home and keeping clear of the virus.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Try