

Learning delivered with

Text Linked Curriculum



Hillcrest Primary School

TLC

NEWSLETTER

Friday 26th March 2020

Dear Parents /Carers,

SCHOOL CLOSED

Hillcrest Primary School will be closed from Monday 29th March to Friday 9th April (inclusive) for the Easter holidays. School will reopen at the usual staggered times to which you are now familiar on Monday 12th April. Have an enjoyable Easter break.

Staggered Times Remain Same After Easter

As we have been talking about for a long time, we were hoping to be able to relax restrictions a little after Easter by introducing Year Group bubbles and therefore, reducing the length of the stagger at the start and end of each day.

However, the recent events which have forced the pupils in Earth Class to stay at home and revert back to Google Classroom on Monday and Tuesday of this week, have been a sobering reminder that the virus remains in circulation. Had we have been operating Year Group bubbles at this point, we would have had 90 children staying at home and not just the 30 from Earth.

With that in mind, we WILL NOT be moving to Year Group bubbles after Easter. Upon our return on 12th April, the same staggered start times that you have now got used to since September will remain in place.

Our ambition is still to get the children into school as year group. This will enable the staff to be far more creative and collaborative in their approach to teaching the children as well as offering the children a wider circle of friends with which to play at break and lunch.

We will review the situation over the course of the three weeks after we return with a view to possibly reverting to Year Group bubbles on 4th May if the conditions allow.

Goodbye, Good Luck and Welcome

There are a number of staff changes taking place over the Easter break with new members joining the team and other, long-established members departing.

We say goodbye to Mrs Harris who is currently teaching Nebulas in Year 1. Mrs Harris had taken voluntary redundancy last year and put it on hold for a year because of staffing issues at the start of this academic year. Although she was due to leave at the end of the Summer Term, we have agreed that she can bring her departure forward to the end of the Spring Term due to personal circumstances and a relocation to Cumbria.

Mrs Pepper will be stepping in and taking responsibility for Nebulas Class after Easter.

We also said a temporary goodbye and good luck last week to Mis Benefer, Europa's Class Teacher, who has started her Maternity Leave. We are all excited to hear about her new arrival in due course and wish her well for the future.

With the new Specialist Resource Base being constructed at Hillcrest, we will also be welcoming two new members of staff who have the exciting task of setting the new provision up from scratch. Mrs Taylor joins as the SRB's Higher Level Teaching Assistant whilst Mr King (no relation to Ms King!!!) joins us as the Key Stage 2 Lead Teacher for the SRB.

A Happy and Healthy Return

It has been great to see so many happy faces at school since we returned on 8th March.

The children have genuinely amazed staff with the way they have slotted back into their learning so well and with the level of enthusiasm they have shown.

We have seen very few tears, instead experiencing children excited about seeing their friends and teachers again.

It has been noticeable how much better prepared for returning the children were on this occasion compared to after the first lockdown. The enhanced Google Classroom provision with the Virtual Timetables and the commitment shown by parents to follow these as closely as possible, has ensured that the process of 'catch-up' is far smaller following the second school closure period compared to the first.

However, what has been noticeable because of this increased engagement second time around, is that the tiny minority of children who engaged very little or not at all, have fallen significantly behind their peers who did continue to engage. Therefore, although not a horrendous issue amongst significant amounts of children, we do have a growing gap between those who engaged little during lockdown and those who engaged fully. This gap presents new challenges for the staff who were already only part way through the process of 'recovery' after the first lockdown last year.

Parent Consultation Evenings

With the social distancing restrictions still in place for the time being, we will once again be holding the forthcoming Parent Consultation Evenings over the phone, as we did on the last occasion.

Each phone conversation will last a maximum of 10 minutes and slots can be booked via WisePay from this point.

As the continuous phone conversations were quite draining on the staff, we have spread the meetings over three rather than two days and limited the time on each evening from 4pm – 6pm.

The dates are as follows...

Reception Classes: Thursday 6th May, Monday 17th May & Wednesday 26th May

Year 1 Classes: Thursday 6th May, Monday 17th May & Wednesday 26th May

Year 2 Classes: Wednesday 5th May, Thursday 13th May & Tuesday 25th May

Year 3 Classes: Tuesday 27th April, Tuesday 18th May & Thursday 27th May

Year 4 Classes: Wednesday 28th April, Monday 10th May & Wednesday 19th May

Year 5 Classes: Thursday 29th April, Tuesday 11th May & Thursday 20th May

Year 6 Classes: Tuesday 4th May, Wednesday 12th May & Monday 24th May

Lateral Flow Test for Home

The government recently announced that any household consisting of a school-aged child, including those of primary school age, are able to request lateral flow test kits for their entire household, similar to those currently used by staff.

The web address below will take you to a government press release about the availability of tests. This press release explains that the tests will be free to those families requesting them and the recommendation is that the household are tested twice each week.

Please note that it is not an expectation and we are not insisting that every child at Hillcrest undergoes twice weekly checks but it may act as a way of putting people at ease about the return to school, knowing that the likelihood is that neither you or your child has got coronavirus and that you/they are not likely to infect other children and staff if they attend school.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/all-households-with-children-of-school-aged-to-get-rapid-covid-19-tests-per-person-per-week>

There is a government portal available online for those wishing to get hold of some lateral flow test kits for home. This portal can be found at the following address...

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

The more people who get tested in the Hillcrest community, the greater reassurances that everyone can stay as safe and healthy as possible.

Lateral Flow Tests SHOULD ONLY BE USED when you DO NOT display symptoms – IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ

The Lateral Flow Tests referred to above are the same that the staff are using twice weekly. Sadly, they are not proving to be as useful as they were originally designed to be in reducing the need to isolate.

The original intention of the Lateral Flow Tests were to prevent the need for everyone in a household to isolate in the event that another member had tested positive for Covid. The idea was that you could test yourself in the morning and go to work or school knowing that you were free of the virus.

However, the new Covid-variant that has been in circulation since December is not as easily identified by the Lateral Flow Tests, making them less reliable than they should be.

This is why they should only be used by people without symptoms as it provides 'some' safety net in identifying those asymptomatic people who may be carrying the virus.

In the event that you either have one or more of the known symptoms of Covid OR you do test positive via a Lateral Flow Device, you MUST follow this up with a proper PCR test which you can either obtain by post or access through a drive-through centre. These can be booked online via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

IF YOUR CHILD HAS SYMPTOMS THEY MUST BE KEPT OFF SCHOOL AND BE BOOKED IN FOR A PCR TEST EVEN IF THE LATERAL FLOW TEST SAYS THEY ARE NEGATIVE.

Reading

Throughout this most recent period of uncertainty, those children who have suffered least have been those who have maintained a healthy appetite for reading during lockdown.

We often talk about reading being the single most important thing that any child can do to improve their life chances, as a confident reader will succeed in almost any other subject.

We continue to urge parents to ensure that their children are taking a healthy interest in books at home and that they are encouraged to read alone, read out loud to others and have others read stories to them.

The new Reading Stars Reading Planet online account that we have bought into, as a school, should allow children the opportunity to access good quality texts at home, even if they may not have lots of physical books around them to choose from.

School Reports

All pupils will be receiving a School Report on Friday 16th April. This will be very different to a traditional report as it isn't a detailed reflection on where the children are currently working at, as each child's experiences and access to learning over the course of the lockdown have been very different. Instead it is designed to inform the children, and their parents, about the key Next Steps that the children need to take in order to get up and running in the Summer Term and make good progress.

There will be some data on the report which will include a reminder of where they were pre-lockdown in March 2020, where they had progressed to at the end of the 2020 Autumn Term after the first return from lockdown and where the various assessments they have taken since returning on the 8th March suggest they are working now.

Supervision of Children Leaving Site

We have received a recent report of a near miss on Civray Avenue as a result of a child running out between parked cars and into the road.

Parking will remain a contentious issue as there are no easy answers. A significant number of parents bring their children to school by car and finding safe parking spaces along Hillcrest and Civray Avenue is tricky. We continue to encourage those who live within walking distance not to use their cars so that any space available in the roads around the school are saved for those who genuinely live too far away to walk.

With parking a known issue and one that isn't going to go away any time soon, it is vitally important that parents ensure they have eyes on their children as they approach the roads on their way to or from school.

SATs Cancelled

It will come as no surprise that, as a result of the latest lockdown, all statutory testing is cancelled for this academic year. There will be no SATs tests in either KS1 or KS2. Nor will the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check take place.

Although the Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check is the other statutory test to be cancelled because of the pandemic, we will be asking the children to take part in a 'mock' test at some point in June to help give us some idea about the progress they are making in this area.

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.

Keeping the School Informed about Covid over Easter

Schools have a duty to support the Track and Trace programme over the first week of the Easter holidays in the event that a pupil or member of staff tests positive, and their symptoms started, at the beginning of the holidays.

Therefore, any parent who has a child that **tests positive** for Covid-19 at any point UP TO AND INCLUDING Friday 2nd April and whose symptoms started on either Friday 26th or Saturday 27th March (if they were last in school on Thursday 25th March) or whose symptoms started on Saturday 27th or Sunday 28th March (if they were last in school on Friday 26th March) need to inform the school by emailing a NEW email address specifically set up for this reason. The new address is Covid@hillcrest.norfolk.sch.uk

This email address will be monitored up to and including Friday 2nd April. There is no need to make contact after this date and this email address will not be checked after that point.

The most important point is to note that you only need to make contact via the new email address if your child developed symptoms on or before Sunday 28th March and they were in school on either the Thursday 25th or Friday 26th March. If their symptoms did not develop until after Sunday 28th March, we do not need to be informed.

NEXT NEWSLETTER IS OUT ON FRIDAY 30th APRIL 2021