

Learning delivered with

Text Linked Curriculum



Hillcrest Primary School

TLC

NEWSLETTER

Friday 10th September 2021

Dear Parents /Carers,

Great To Have a Normal Return...

It has been fantastic seeing the playground busy again and the children mixing again with school returning to a life without restrictions.

On the 23rd March 2020 school life changed for what we thought may only be a short period of time. It soon became evident that this wouldn't be the case with not only the remainder of that school year, but the entire 2020/21 academic year, affected by restrictions.

We had got used to quiet playground with a limited number of children on them at any one time due to the need to keep 'bubbles' separate and children carefully lined up at the start of the day. I think that we all, staff and parents alike, forgot what 'normal' was and it wasn't until our first morning break and lunch this week that we appreciated just how busy the playground used to get.

We are delighted that the children once again get to play with their friends from other classes and other year groups.

...BUT!

This return to normal risks coming at a price.

Covid is obviously still in circulation and could be seen as being more widespread in the community than it has been on many occasions over the past 18 months. The big difference has obviously been the success of the vaccination programme which has seen far fewer seriously ill people compared to the first two waves of the virus.

Despite removing the one-way system and reopening the Sandringham Drive gate and despite having all families dropping off and picking up at the same time, we would still urge people, wherever possible, to distance themselves from others in the playground. Not everyone will view the current situation as an improvement and many will still share concerns about contracting the virus. Therefore, please be mindful of others on the playground at the start and end of the day.

We are leaving a time of many restrictions which we like to think have resulted in Hillcrest staying away from the worst outbreaks and that, apart from the national lockdowns, has kept the school open as often as possible. We have moved into a period where the national government restrictions are so few and far between that it can feel to some as if we don't have to worry about Covid. However, the reality is that in making the quick transition back into a normal school life, we run the risk of seeing more infections over the coming weeks.

Despite this, I would stress that Hillcrest are following all of the government guidelines. Although many of the restrictions that we had become used to have been removed, we are still focussing hard on ventilating rooms, teaching the children outside as much as possible (thanks to our new Outdoor Learning Curriculum), maintaining hand hygiene procedures and regularly cleaning shared resources.

For those parents concerned about how busy the morning drop-off is, we would like to remind you that there is a 10-minute window between 8.45 and 8.55am during which you can bring your children. Even before the pandemic, this was always the case as it gives people accessing a busy school site the opportunity to pick a slightly quieter moment if they wish. The majority of parents are on-site waiting at 8.45am for the doors to open. Therefore, if you wanted a quieter moment you would be better off arriving after 8.50am.

Below, you will find the procedures for dealing with Covid-related absence. These went home in a separate letter at the start of this week. However, there is one addition (in bold type) from the letter that went out previously.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS PLEASE DO NOT SEND THEM TO SCHOOL – IN THE EVENT THAT THEY ARE ALREADY AT SCHOOL WE WILL ASK YOU TO COME AND COLLECT THEM...

- ***...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.***

1) If your child does display ANY of the symptoms above, they should remain off school until they have received a NEGATIVE test result from a PCR test – the drive-through or walk-in centres will provide you with the fastest results and may enable you to get your child back to school within 24-36 hours. However, if you opt for a postal test then your child may be off school a little longer. *Please note that a negative result on a Lateral Flow Test IS NOT sufficient and the child must undertake a PCR test;*

2) If you have more than one child at Hillcrest, the siblings of the child displaying symptoms DO NOT have to remain off school and any siblings WILL NOT be sent home, unlike the procedures that were in place before the summer break;

3) If ANY member of your household tests POSITIVE on a Lateral Flow Test for Covid they should immediately register for a PCR test. Whilst they are waiting to get booked in for a PCR test and to get the result, any children in the household who attend Hillcrest should remain off school until finding out whether the other family member tests positive or negative on a PCR test. If they test POSITIVE then all members of the household should get a PCR test;

4) If ANY member of your household tests POSITIVE for Covid, any Hillcrest pupils within your home need to be sent for a PCR test and should only return to school upon receipt of a NEGATIVE result – they no longer have to isolate for 10 days just because a member of the household has tested positive but they MUST have a PCR test before returning;

5) Any child testing POSITIVE for Covid needs to isolate for 10 days from the days they started showing symptoms, or in the case of asymptomatic children, from the day the test was taken – the return date needs to be agreed with the school at the time you call to report your child's positive test result.

In the event that the school becomes aware of 5 or more positive cases in one area of the school, further action, including possible closures, may still be a possibility.

Fundraising Bonus

After announcing a final total of £4993.85 was raised through the Race for Life event that we held in July, several last minute payments came in to the school office. These have now been added up and amounted to an extra £504.50 making the final total to be divided between Cancer Research UK and Friends of Hillcrest £5498.35.

That's a staggering amount of money that will help provide some additional facilities at school through the Friends of Hillcrest along with also supporting the continued efforts into researching treatments for cancer.

Procedures for Contacting the School

With the new school year will come new concerns and queries for some. At this point in the year we usually remind parents that there are protocols in place for contacting school. However, this year there are more changes to that system of communication than there have been for many years.

We would always urge parents with queries to firstly allow the class teacher the opportunity to address the issue. Contact should be attempted via the class teacher's school email address in the first instance. However, if this doesn't fully address the issue or if the issue is too complex to discuss via email then we would recommend that either a telephone meeting or a face-to-face meeting (which can be arranged now if necessary) is organised for a time convenient to both parties.

In the event that the issue has not been resolved after giving the class teacher an opportunity to resolve it, parents are able to make contact with either of the Assistant Headteachers, Mrs White or Mr Martin (who is new to the Senior Leadership Team this term) or the Deputy Headteacher, Mr Reeve-Hayes.

At this point, the member of the SLT that you have contacted may redirect your query to one of the new Senior Teachers that are in place this year to replace the old Phase Leaders. We no longer have members of the Management Team in charge of specific year groups. Instead, the new Senior Teachers have responsibility for specific areas of work across the school. They are...

- Ms King – Staff Development
- Mrs Fysh – Parental and Community Engagement
- Mrs Muskett – Teaching & Learning
- Mrs Wakely – Inclusion
- Mrs Wardle – Covid Recovery

In the event that your concern falls within the remit of one of the Senior Teachers, they will be given the opportunity to investigate the matter and discuss the outcome with you.

If, after discussing the matter with the Senior Teacher, your issue is still not resolved to your satisfaction, then please go back to the Assistant Headteachers or the Deputy Headteacher.

If all other avenues have been explored and you are still not satisfied with the outcome, please feel free to make contact with Mr Try.

Before and After-School Childcare Update

Apologies for the lengthy delay in responding regards the results of the parental survey that went out on this matter and the plans going forwards.

Long before the Summer break, we asked parents to complete a survey asking whether they would be interested in using a new paid-for childcare service before and after school as a replacement for Gingerbreads which closed for business early in the first lockdown.

There were enough expressions of interest to give us confidence in exploring the matter further. However, the provision of before and after-school care that parents pay for is not as simple as acquiring staff to work on each session. There are numerous different requirements and expectations that are placed on such provision they require careful consideration and advanced planning for. Therefore, it is not something that we have ruled out but instead remains work in progress.

We hope to have more news about the provision as the term goes on but nothing is likely to open this side of Christmas.

Mental Health First Aiders

With the mental health of both children and adults becoming an increasing concern over the course of the lockdowns, Hillcrest has invested time and resources into staff who can be made available to support those children who are struggling.

The following members of staff are trained Mental Health First Aiders...

- Mr Reeve-Hayes
- Mrs White
- Mrs Wakely
- Mrs Mather
- Mrs Passmore
- Miss O'Dea
- Mrs Perillo
- Mrs Easter

We have also invested funds into establishing two Wellbeing Rooms within the school. We have a space within the main school building, next to the Library that has been funded through the school budget and we also have a brand new Wellbeing Area within the 'i' Building that has been funded through a generous donation from the Friends of Hillcrest.

Extra Day's Holiday

Although the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday falls during the 2022 May half-term week, the royal household were keen that schools didn't miss out and therefore an extra day has been added to the school closure dates for next year.

School will now also be closed on Wednesday 5th January which means that the children won't return from the Christmas and New Year break until Thursday 6th January 2022.

Morrisons

A huge thank you to Morrisons who supported our Covid Recovery Summer School during the school holidays.

We have now registered to become a Morrisons Growing School and parents shopping in Morrisons will get one Grow Token for every £10 they spend between 6th September and 24th October.

Parents wishing to take part need to download the MyMorrisons app, head to the 'It's Good to Grow' section and select the school that they wish to donate their Grow Tokens to.

Your support with this will help us to further embed our plans to develop an Outdoor Learning Curriculum and enhance the work of the Eco-Council.

Parking

A huge thank you to the parents for making alternative parking arrangements and for respecting the new parking restrictions that are in place down Hillcrest. However, it appears that some of that traffic may have transferred to Sandringham Drive now that we have reopened that gate. We have been asked to remind parents that Sandringham Drive also has the same parking restrictions as Hillcrest and Hogarth Road and that cars shouldn't be stopping in that street during drop-off and pick-up times.

A new issue that has been reported to the school by a parent dropping-off this week has been the speed with which cars travel down Hillcrest now that it is clearer of parked cars. We don't want to swap the issue of children crossing roads between parked cars with the issue of them being run over by speeding cars so please take care.

A leaflet has been attached at the end of this newsletter from Norfolk Constabulary which highlights a phone number that people can call if they have concerns over illegal or inconsiderate parking.

NEXT NEWSLETTER IS OUT ON FRIDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2021