



NEWSLETTER

Friday 22nd October 2021

Dear Parents /Carers,

Return to Social Distancing Restrictions at Hillcrest

As was confirmed in the letter that went home on Wednesday to all parents, Hillcrest will entering a three-week period after half term designed to stem the continued rise of Covid infections through the school.

This will feel very much like the measures that had been implemented throughout much of last year including staggered starts, one-way systems, mask-wearing and year group 'bubbles.'

The table below shows you the times that each class will open at the start of the day and close at the end of the day between Monday 1st November and Friday 19th November. Of course, should there still be a significant number of positive cases within the school during that final week of the three, then a decision may be taken on Wednesday 17th November to extend the period of restrictions beyond the three weeks.

However, I would stress that the desire of all of us is to end these restrictions as quickly as possible which is why we need everyone's help in following the new school rules in relation to Covid. No one wants to be dropping their children off at different times and no member of staff wants to be operating under these conditions. I think we can all agree that we all want this over with as quickly as possible.

Year Group	Start Time	Finish Time
Reception	8.30am	3.05pm
Year 1	8.30am	3.05pm
Year 2	9.15am	3.50pm
Year 3	9.15am	3.50pm
Year 4	9.00am	3.35pm
Year 5	9.00am	3.35pm
Year 6	8.45am	3.20pm

Hillcrest is now an Outbreak School

Not a badge that anyone really wants to wear, the confirmation by the local authority that they consider us an Outbreak School does at least support us with the extreme steps that we are taking to try and get this under control.

Norfolk County Council are aware of all of the measures that we are putting in place, including the request to get children without symptoms PCR tested and the staggered starts, and would like us to do whatever it takes to control Covid within school short of actually closing the school. However, as we have explained in previous letters home, one of our main reasons for trying to control Covid spreading across the school even before the status of Outbreak School was confirmed, was to prevent it working its way through the staff which would inevitably lead to school closures, either partial or in full.

All of the measures that we are putting in place have been tried and tested over the first 18 months of the pandemic and we were hugely successful in keeping the number of positive cases during that entire time down to a handful, of which the majority were believed to have been contracted from outside of the school. We can certainly do this again!

Additional Measures

Originally we had 'urged' parents in the letter sent home on Wednesday to keep their children off school whilst waiting for PCR test results in the event that they are asked to get one because of coming into contact with a positive case in class.

We are now going further and from Monday 1st November will now NOT BE ACCEPTING children back into school until that PCR test has been returned as negative. Therefore, if your child is sent home to get a test, please keep them off school until that test result has been returned in order to add an additional layer of protection and prevent the continued unnecessary spread of Covid.

I think we would all agree that this makes complete common sense and is a step that should have been originally permitted within the government guidance.

Although we will not be policing this, we do also urge parents to return to wearing face masks whilst on the school site. In the event that the government do make this mandatory again, which appears to be a possibility, we will then monitor mask-wearing from the gates.

Reception Parents Drop-Off and Collection Arrangements

The taped-off area in the Reception playground will be put back into place. The aim will be that Reception parents will wait INSIDE the square that this area creates, close to the small grassed area at the end of Asteroids classroom, whilst other parents walking around the one-way system pass behind the Reception parents and do not have to pass through them.

School Photos

Despite the additional measures that will be in place over the next three weeks, School Photos will continue as planned on Tuesday 2nd and Wednesday 3rd November although they will be spread out over a longer period of time to ensure that we keep all year group bubbles apart.

However, we won't be offering any photos with siblings who are not based in the school as we normally would in order to reduce the amount of people who are in the building.

Sports for Champions

Another highly successful charitable fundraiser was held at Hillcrest this week with Team GB sprinter and Olympian, James Dasaolu visiting Hillcrest and putting the children through their paces.

The whole school was challenged by James to complete a number of different physical exercises. It was delightful to see that he had inspired the children so much that they were continuing to carry out the same exercises during their break and lunch.

Once again, the children and Hillcrest families did the school proud, raising over £4490, of which 40% goes to those prospective sports stars who have only just started out on their journey and who need the financial support to be able to commit to becoming the very best.

The remaining funds go to Friends of Hillcrest so that they can continue to support the school with the various projects that they have planned for the children.

Parent Consultation Evenings

After the postponement of this week's Parent Consultation Evening, we can confirm that the dates for the two events are now Thursday 4th November and Tuesday 9th November between 4.00 and 7.00pm on both days.

Meetings on both dates will be held via Zoom (not Microsoft Teams as previously suggested) with class teachers messaging parents with Zoom meeting links prior to the date of each event.

Those meeting times that should have taken place on the postponed 19th October event will now be moved across to the 9th November.

Before and After-School Childcare Update

A positive conversation was held with a potential provider of before and after-school childcare. However, what was evident from that conversation was that there would be no provision established before next September and therefore we won't be offering any such care during this academic year.

We continue to progress with discussions about the next academic year however.

Reverse Advent Calendar

In a year where thinking about others needs and support has been crucial, we turn again to our hugely successful Reverse Advent Calendar which is entering its third year.

We will send out a list of food and non-food items after the half-term break that we would like people to donate on their way in to school each day over a 4-week period from Wednesday 17th November. These items are then collected by the Downham Foodbank and will be used to support local families in need of the additional support over Christmas.

Covid PCR Tests

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.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE ARE LOTS OF PARENTS REPORTING HIGH TEMPERATURES AT THE MOMENT.

WHILST IT MAY BE OBVIOUS TO SOME THAT THERE IS ANOTHER ILLNESS DOING THE ROUNDS THAT MIMICS SOME OF THE SYMPTOMS, THE RULES ARE CLEAR. NO CHANCES CAN BE TAKEN AND IF YOUR CHILD DEVELOPS ANY OF THE TYPICAL COVID SYMPTOMS ABOVE THEN THEY MUST GET A PCR TEST BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL.

Dates for the Diary

Naturally, all of the events in this diary are subject to change, especially in light of the ongoing Covid situation

Monday 1 st November	Beginning of Covid restrictions
Tuesday 2 nd November	School Photos
Wednesday 3 rd November	School Photos
Thursday 4 th November, 4.00 – 7.00pm	Parent Consultation Evening (REMOTE)
Tuesday 9 th November, 2.30pm	Parental Engagement Event (REMOTE): Google Classroom
Tuesday 9 th November, 4.00 – 7.00pm	Parental Consultation Evening (REMOTE)
Wednesday 17 th November	Flu Vaccinations
Wednesday 17 th November	Launch of Reverse Advent Calendar
Thursday 18 th November, 2.30pm	Parental Engagement Event: Phonics & Reading (REMOTE)
Monday 22 nd November	Return to normal school timings (hopefully!)
w/b Monday 22 nd November	Book Fair
Wednesday 1 st December	Reception Classes visit Church Farm
Tuesday 2 nd December, 2.30pm	Parental Engagement Event: Maths
Monday 6 th December, 2.15pm	Year 2 Christmas Production
Tuesday 7 th December, 9.45am	Year 1 Christmas Production
Wednesday 8 th December, 9.45am	Reception Christmas Production
Wednesday 8 th December, 2.15pm	Year 2 Christmas Production
Thursday 9 th December	Pantomime Visit: Years 2 & 5
Thursday 9 th December, 9.45am	Year 1 Christmas Production
Thursday 9 th December, 2.15pm	Reception Christmas Production
Friday 10 th December	Pantomime Visit: Years 1 & 6
Monday 13 th December	Pantomime Visit: Years 3 & 4
Wednesday 15 th December, 10.00am	Christmas Church Service: Years 3 & 5
Wednesday 15 th December, 2.00pm	Christmas Church Service: Years 4 & 6
Thursday 16 th December	Christmas Dinner
Friday 17 th December	Last Day of Term

Early warning...SCHOOL CLOSURE

We would like to remind you that Hillcrest Primary School will be closed for the Christmas and New Year holidays between **Monday 20th December 2021 and Wednesday 5th January 2022 (inclusive)**. School reopens at the usual time on Thursday 6th January 2021. Therefore, the children's last day this term will be Friday 17th December.

NEXT NEWSLETTER IS OUT ON FRIDAY 26th NOVEMBER 2021