



Hillcrest School
East View Avenue, East Farm
Cramlington, NE23 1DY
Tel 01670 713632

Email: Admin@hillcrest.northumberland.sch.uk

Mrs A Mead, Head Teacher

Dear Parents/Carers

Update Coronavirus 17.3.20

Hillcrest are navigating in uncertain times and are following Public Health England (PHE) advice closely and receive daily updates from the Department for Education.

To minimize risk in school we have:

- Increased cleaning in school with particular focus on handles, light switches, tables etc where many people may touch these surfaces.
- Pupils washing their hands at regular intervals
- Cancelled assemblies
- Pupils will be eating lunch in their classrooms
- Cancelling all school trips
- Restricting visitors into school

As you will already know, Government advice changed again yesterday and this update can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

You will note that this guidance includes people under 70 with a learning disability:

We are advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

This group includes those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
- chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive
- pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure

- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or
- medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant

If your child is within one of these vulnerable groups, please take particular care and follow Government advice.

Current situation

Hillcrest is remaining open. We will evaluate our ability to stay open each morning based on staffing numbers, pupil numbers, safety and viability.

We will continue to promote good hygiene and handwashing; however, we cannot keep children in the same class apart so 'social distancing' is not possible in school.

If a child is unwell at school, we will isolate that child within school to keep other children as safe as possible. No child or member of staff with a cough and/or temperature should attend school. Please follow government advice if your child or anyone in your household has a dry continuous cough and/or temperature.

What happens if/when the school has to close?

We will close Hillcrest if we are officially advised to do so or if we don't have enough staff to safely run the school.

In either case we will alert you to closure via our website and our parent text service.

We will do all we can to keep in touch and support you but please understand that this a quickly changing situation and we will need to evaluate staffing levels everyday.

What we need you to do:

If you've recently changed your contact details or phone number, please inform the office and provide updated information as soon as possible. You can do this by e mail if you prefer:

admin@hillcrest.northumberland.sch.uk

If your child is unwell report this in the normal way by ringing school. Updated guidance on self isolation state:

If your child has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID19), however mild, they should stay at home and not leave your house for 14 days from when the symptoms started.

The most common symptoms of coronavirus are recent onset of:

- New continuous cough and/or

- High temperature (above 37.8°C)

Keep in touch with us and please let us know if your child or anyone in your household becomes ill with suspected Coronavirus – **remember the guidelines now are to self-isolate the whole household for 14 days.**

Talk to your child about what is happening with them and practice washing their hands regularly. As this is a scary time for everyone, we need to support the children to understand what they can do to minimize uncertainty and anxiety as much as possible. We are sending a Social Story home that may help with this.

Consult official websites and avoid accepting information from less reliable sources. For example, the BBC provides regular updates and has checked the information before sharing it.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

It is vital that we keep each other safe, look after the vulnerable and avoid unnecessary risk. Take care and thank you for your continued support.

Please check the school website for updates.

Your sincerely

Andrea Mead