

HILLSIDE

A Specialist School

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Headteacher: Mrs Lizzi Murphy



Wednesday 13th May 2020

Dear Pupils, Parents, Carers, Staff, Governors and other Visitors,

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update for Hillside Special School

Firstly, may I start by thanking you all for everything that you are doing during this difficult time. I would like to extend my deepest thanks and immense gratitude to those of you who are working on the front line against COVID-19. We are all very grateful for your dedication and selflessness. To everyone else - keeping your children safe at home is helping us all to unite together and work towards fighting this virus.

Like many of you, I watched the Prime Minister's updates on Sunday and Monday and I am sure many of you, like myself, have been left with lots of questions. We have not, as yet, been provided with any clear guidance. We do not have all the answers to the questions that we all have. Over the coming weeks we will slowly begin to unravel the guidance and begin to understand what the Government's latest announcements mean for us at Hillside.

It is important to remember that for the moment, the best and safest place for our pupils is at home, where possible. We understand that this is a difficult time and many of our families are finding this change is having a significant impact on family life and 'normality' as we know it. However, we cannot allow the reopening of the school without extensive thought, planning and preparation.

Our pupils do not understand the concept of social distancing and many have significant health issues. We fear, if the virus managed to make its way into the school, it could have devastating effects. I have, as I am sure some of you have had too, seen first hand what the virus can do to a normally healthy person.

The documentation that has been released by the Government so far, features a very small section on guidance for Special Schools. It states that: **'Special schools, special post-16 institutions and hospital schools will work towards a phased return of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups'**. Over the coming days I will be meeting virtually with a range of other Suffolk Special School Headteachers and representatives from our Local Authority to unravel some of the guidance, in order to be able to provide you with some of the answers to the many questions we all have. **What we will not do, is suddenly open the school without careful thought and planning. Therefore, school will NOT re-open as usual on 1st June 2020.** Instead, any re-opening would be a carefully planned phased return.

I will contact you again, as soon as I have more information. In the meantime, please can I remind you that any information relevant to the slow reopening of Hillside, will come directly from me, through a letter to your emails and will be posted on our website. Please do not rely on any comments seen on social media, or things heard by word of mouth; please always check our website for clarification: www.hillsidespecial.org.uk

Yours faithfully

Lizzi Murphy
Headteacher

Hillside aims for all members of its community to make **choices**, have **opportunities** and then **flourish**



Suffolk
County Council