

HILLSIDE

A Specialist School

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Sunday 3rd January 2021

Dear Parents, Carers, Staff and Governors of Hillside,

Update re Return to School in January 2021

Thank you for all of your responses to my email that was sent yesterday. The overwhelming support from Parents, Carers and Staff is greatly appreciated and makes what is a very difficult, emotional and stressful time that bit easier. If you have not had the chance to reply to my email dated 02/01/2021, I will still need a response please. We may also try to contact those of you by phone, who have not yet responded.

You may have seen on the news that the Education Unions are pushing for all Primary Schools to be shut for the next two weeks and as such are calling for all members and non-members to exercise their right, under Section 44, to not work until the Government addresses the current concerns around the increased spread of Coronavirus. Many staff at Hillside have decided to support the Union's guidance and exercise their right.

So, following on from my email yesterday, it is with great regret that I am going to have to delay the start of the Spring Term at Hillside.

Due to the ever-increasing R rate in the local area, the new strain of Coronavirus which appears to be more prevalent in children, and understandable anxiety from staff around protecting themselves, their colleagues and all of our pupils, we are going to have to shut for the next two weeks to the majority of pupils.

The Senior Leadership Team will spend the day tomorrow, and the next few days, going through your responses in detail, assessing all risks associated with COVID and updating our school and individual Risk Assessments in order to update the measures we have in place to ensure school is as safe as possible when we are able to open for all pupils.

We will be contacting all parents and carers tomorrow, whose children fall under the Key Worker and Vulnerable Category, as defined by the Government and Department for Education, to discuss whether (and how and when) their children will be able to attend for the next two weeks.

For all other families, from Tuesday onwards, teachers will email the parents of pupils who will not be able to attend for the next two weeks, with Home Learning ideas linked to each pupil's individual EHCP, so their education can continue at home.

Please do not contact the school office by phone regarding the contents of this email; be assured we will be in contact with you, if not tomorrow then certainly by the end of the day on Tuesday. If we have families and staff trying to contact us individually, this will cause delays to the whole process.

Continued overleaf:

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



Suffolk
County Council

Continued:

Along with supporting Home Learning, the two weeks will be used to investigate the procedures around testing Secondary age pupils, which was announced by the Government the Friday before Christmas. We, as a school, need to understand the significance of these procedures and the logistics of whether it is feasible in our setting and for our pupils. We would of course contact you about this in advance of any testing, so please do not contact us about this, at this current time. We will update you again, once our investigations are complete.

I am sorry to have to change our plans, but I strongly feel it is in the best interests of all pupils and staff at Hillside, and will help us to minimise the impact in the long run. If we can spend time getting the right measures in place, in light of the new strain and the increase in infection rates, we hopefully can reduce the possibility of having to interrupt education moving forward.

Stay safe and best wishes.

Kind regards,

Lizzi Murphy
Headteacher