



Hillcrest School Cramlington



Parents/Carers Handbook 2020-21

<p>Address: East View Farm East Farm Cramlington Northumberland NE23 1DY</p> <p>DFE No: 929-7006</p> <p>Telephone: (01670) 713632</p> <p>Head Teacher: Mrs Andrea Mead Chair of Governors: Miss Joyce Reid</p>	<p>School Day: 8.50 am – 2.50 pm (Mon – Fri)</p> <p>Hillcrest School website: http://www.hillcrest.northumberland.sch.uk</p> <p>Email: admin@hillcrest.northumberland.sch.uk</p> <p>Designated Safeguarding Lead: Andrea Mead</p> <p>DSL Deputies: Alison Miller & Simone Finley</p>
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Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to Hillcrest School

On behalf of the Governors, Staff and Students may I warmly welcome you to Hillcrest School. The information in this handbook has been written to give you all that you will need to know about Hillcrest School.

Hillcrest School is a specialist school for children aged 11 to 18 years with a range of complex needs, including:

- Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- Cognition and Learning
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs

At Hillcrest School we are committed to providing high quality education for all our students. We strive to create a community of students where everyone feels valued in a welcoming, supportive and safe environment, based on unconditional positive regard. We are a highly motivated staff team dedicated to help your child learn and achieve.

We believe firmly in working closely in partnership with you, other professionals and the wider community to ensure the best outcomes for your child.

Andrea Mead

Head Teacher



Mission Statement

'Aiming High – Dream, Believe, Achieve'

Our Learners are a unique group and the individuality of each student is celebrated and valued. We will ensure that our learners will:

- Develop strategies to form positive relationships, emotionally regulate and make informed decisions;
- Know that they are valued members of a community and be able to value others;
- Have a positive attitude to learning and embrace new experiences;
- Develop independence in learning and be fully prepared for their journey into adulthood;
- Develop the ability to reflect, repair and restore relationships;
- Be supported through partnership working and multi-disciplinary teams, including parents/carers;
- Have a voice;
- Pursue dreams and aspirations through expressing choices

Our staff are passionate about the young people and strive to ensure they achieve their potential. We will ensure that our staff will:

- Work collaboratively as a team;
- Be supported with their own health and well-being to ensure they achieve a work life balance;
- Get the opportunity to debrief and reflect with colleagues in a structured way to be solution focussed;
- Be professionally curious about our young people so we can remove barriers to learning;
- Have a voice in school, and feel supported in all aspects of their role;
- Receive quality bespoke and timely CPD to support their work;
- Be vigilant and proactive in safeguarding all learners;
- Be advocates for our young people and families

Our parents/carers are important partners in the education we provide. We understand and recognise that we can support their needs and benefit from their ideas and contributions.

We will ensure that our parents/carers:

- Feel welcomed and involved in a school they can trust;
- Feel heard, informed and reassured in all things relating to their children;
- Have targeted support delivered by relevant professionals;
- Have support through social and learning networks for them and their families within the school;
- Be sign-posted to advice, opportunities and wider support to support their knowledge and confidence;
- Are able, where possible, to access multi-agency services through the school



Our school is a family orientated community in which learners are comfortable, safe and valued. We will aspire to:





- Have an environment to support the student's academic and holistic development;
- Engage with and extend community links;
- Be a space where pupils feel safe as an individual and feel valued;
- Promote the rights of our learners and highlight their strengths and contributions

Governors who are strongly driven to support school improvement through challenge and being actively involved in the school community. We will ensure that our governors will:

- Have a genuine interest in the outcomes of all our learners;
- Work with staff teams to get the best possible outcomes;
- Uphold and protect the ethos and aims of the school;
- Not be afraid to challenge to fulfil statutory duties to the highest standards



Hillcrest Expects...

	Good Listening
	Kind Words
	Care of Hillcrest
	Look after each other

Admission Arrangements

Hillcrest School follows the Northumberland Local Authority Admission's policy for all students. Please see the section in Information for Parents which provides further information on the admissions arrangements.

Visits to school by parents/carers are organised throughout the year and places can be arranged on these by contacting the school office.

Attendance & Absence from School

All students are expected to attend school every day. In the case of your child being unwell the office needs to be notified before the commencement of the school day (if out of school hours please use the answer machine to leave a message). The school must be informed each day during the duration of the absence.

If a student's attendance falls below 90% the Local Authority Welfare Officer will explore the reasons for this and solutions to improve attendance.

Students who have medical appointments are requested to attend school before/after if possible to ensure minimal disruption to your child's education.

Leave of Absence during term time can be requested by requesting a form from the school office and returning this to school. The request will be considered by the Head Teacher and/or Governor's.



Charging Policy

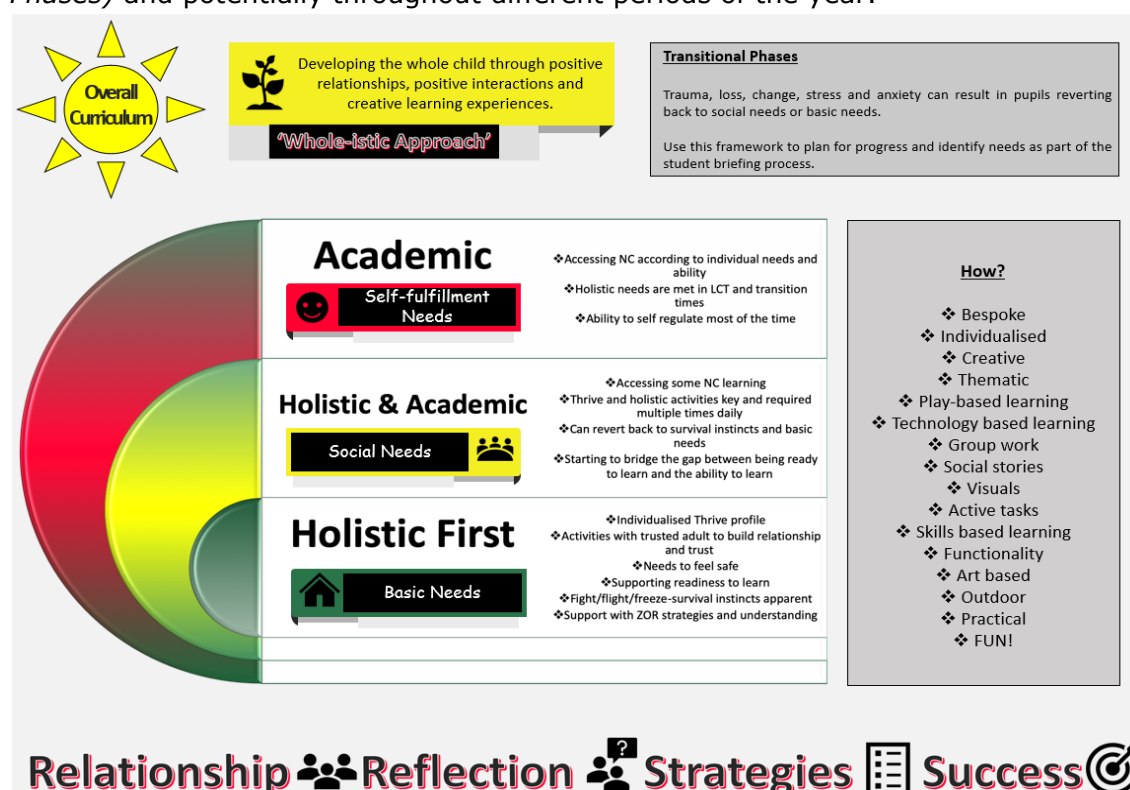
The school does not charge for activities other than those for which the Local Authority invoices the school, or for which direct charges are made (eg residential trips to field study centres). However, parents are often asked if they can make a contribution to both regular and occasional activities such as the weekly swimming sessions or visits to places of educational interest. Indeed, without such contributions many such activities might not be possible. Please note however, that no student will be prevented from taking part in any event if the parent is unable to provide a financial contribution.

Cookery / Crafts

All students participate in cookery/craft lessons as part of their curriculum. To assist school in running these sessions we ask for a termly contribution of £5.00 per child or an annual payment of £15.00. This means that parents/carers don't need to buy ingredients for cookery lessons or materials for craft lessons as the school provide these which is a more cost effective way for both parents/carers and school funds. No child will be refused to participate if contributions are not received from parents/carers. We welcome any donation towards running these sessions.

Curriculum

Hillcrest recognise our learners as individuals who will be working on 1 of the core threads; Holistic First, Holistic & Academic or Academic. What has to be recognised is that some students will move/transition between these due to a range of different factors (*Transitional Phases*) and potentially throughout different periods of the year.





EHCP Reviews

These happen on an annual basis. All professionals who work with your child will be invited.

Please don't forget to bring your parent views form with you to the meetings. These are normally scheduled on Wednesday's after school and you will be notified of your time and date.

Emergency Closures

Very occasionally it may become necessary to close the School at very short notice eg for severe weather, heating failure etc.

Any closure will be notified to Radio Newcastle and is often broadcast between 7.00 am and 8.30 am. We aim to get school closure information onto the Northumberland County Council website as soon as possible. We have an electronic emergency contact system in School to send text messages to parents, if you do not have a mobile number a voice message will be left on your home phone.

It is very important that the School has details of emergency contact names and telephone numbers to ensure that there is someone available to accept your child, in the event that the School has to close early. Please ensure that we have 2 contact numbers for your child.

Equality & Diversity

Hillcrest strongly promotes equality and diversity amongst staff and students. As such we have strong links with community groups who come into school to run workshops for students and training for staff. We also use our daily 'Focus' sessions to ensure all our students grow in confidence and feel valued as well as valuing others within their immediate communities and internationally.

E-Safety

With most children/teenagers accessing the internet on a daily basis it is important that we can keep them safe in the same way as we do in the physical world.

Internet safety is a whole school responsibility – staff, students and parents

Young people may expose themselves to danger, both knowingly and unknowingly, when using the Internet and other technologies. Additionally, young people could become involved in activities which are inappropriate or possibly illegal. We therefore recognise our responsibility to educate our students, teaching them the appropriate behaviours and critical thinking to enable them to remain both safe and legal when using the Internet and related technologies.



In school we have safeguarding procedures and protocol that is expected of all staff and students. Furthermore, we have a specific filtering tool that maintains our highest trust in what can be accessed through the school.

We urge parents to be vigilant and monitor their children's use of the internet.

First Aiders

Several staff in Hillcrest hold specialist first aid qualifications. This allows us to treat minor injuries. Any first aid advice/treatment will be recorded on our internal system and parent/carers will be contacted. If any injury requires professional support, we would contact you to take your child – unless in an emergency where staff would accommodate to the best of our ability.

Forest School

Forest School is a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education. Hillcrest School are lucky to have a meadow with a specialist Forest School Teacher for students to enjoy this activity. Please ensure that your child brings to school appropriate clothing/footwear on days that they are timetabled for Forest School.

Forms

Forms are available from the school office for medications, parental consent, Leave of Absence during term time, home school agreement, data collection

Free School Meals

Parents can apply for free school meals through the Local Authority at any time during the year. For further information, please contact the school office.

GDPR

As with all establishments, data protection is really important. We have an assigned, trained officer and regular updates from Northumberland County Council to ensure we are compliant. Specific information can be found on the school website or by requesting a parent leaflet.

Hillfest

This is our annual fayre held at the end of the summer term. Students and staff decide what activities will be held with each class participating in a stall/event with the aim of raising money for school funds and projects. It is a celebration of our school year.



Homework

As a school we have asked the views from parents, over the years, about the value of homework. The views have often been varied but alongside research it has shown to have little impact on improving outcomes.

At Hillcrest, class teams will encourage students to research, use our e-learning platforms and complete set tasks and in some cases reading, when appropriate.

We would never penalise or put undue pressure on home with parents/carers as this can be unproductive.

Intervention Team

One of the things that makes the Hillcrest family special is our very own multi-professional team. The team consists of:

- Speech and Language Therapist – supporting speech, language and communication
- Occupational Therapist – supporting independent regulation and self-help skills
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant – supporting students through mental health challenges
- Autism Specialist Support Assistant – developing strategies and successful implementation of these in the classroom

The team not only works with individuals and small groups but regularly supports all staff in broadening their skill sets and resource banks.

Jewellery

Wearing jewellery should be kept to a minimum (stud earrings and watch). Items should be removed for physical activities for health and safety reasons.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

Under the 2016 policy from the Department for Education, schools have a duty of care in ensuring the safety of all children. Any concerns would be discussed with parents/carers directly unless it was felt a child was at any risk of harm.

Our designated safeguarding leads are:

Andrea Mead (Head Teacher)

Alison Miller (Acting Deputy Head Teacher) and Simone Finley (Acting Assistant Head Teacher).

Parents/carers can contact the school if they have any concern regarding any child.














Lunch

We have a single lunch sitting where all students eat together in what is termed family serving. Classes sit together on the same table so the class staff can enjoy lunch with the students. It is important at Hillcrest that lunch is not a rushed part of the day but an important part of social development. Students are served food at the tables by staff in what is termed family serving. Staff and students help to clear up before having indoor/outdoor break time.

Students can bring either a packed lunch or choose from the daily menu. We try to ensure that all dietary requirements are met through the daily menu and our kitchen staff follow Northumberland County Council guidance.

School Dinner Choices

Each day the menu is displayed in the classroom so that students can choose which items/combinations they would like. This ensures that they always get what they order. See the example below:

Choice of Main Course	Potato / Pasta / Rice	Vegetables	Sweets
Chicken 	Roast Potatoes 	Peas 	Fresh Fruit 
Jacket Potato with Cheese and Beans 	Yorkshire Pudding 	Carrots 	Yoghurt 
Ham Baguette 		Salad Bowl 	Jam Sponge and Custard 

School Dinner Costs

2 courses: £2.50 daily

Students can have dinners every day, specific days or on an ad-hoc basis. Payments should be made in advance.

Popular School Dinner Days

Wednesday: Roast Dinner Day

Friday: Chip Day



Packed Lunch

We know that some students prefer a packed lunch and they can still eat this in the main dining hall. It is important that any packed lunches are balanced meals. For example:

- Sandwich
- Fruit
- Yoghurt
- Carrot sticks
- Water



Medication

Any student required to take medication during school must complete a form stating the dosage and times when it should be administered. Any medication coming into school must be in the original packaging and will be stored securely in the school office. Staff must be notified of any change in medication, dosage and/or timings. Hillcrest school does keep paracetamol for minor ailments but this would only be administered with parental permission.

Mobile Phones

We do allow students to come into school with mobile devices but these must be handed over for safe keeping for the duration of the school day. Where students don't hand mobile phones in at the start of the day we would expect parents/carers to come and collect phones if not handed in.

NHS – School Nurse

Our school nurse is able to see students and families regarding child health matters. This is by appointment only.

Parents Evening

We hold 2 parent's evenings in the academic year, normally October and March. You will also receive an academic progress report at the end of the school year.

Prohibited Items

Hillcrest needs to be a safe place to learn for all our students. It is really important that your child does not bring items into school that puts themselves or others at risk. These include: alcohol, smoking devices, lighters/matches, sharp implements, energy drinks, fizzy drinks, drugs or drug paraphernalia, mobile devices and chewing gum.

If students are found in possession of prohibited items then the school will confiscate these, unlawful items will be reported and handed in to the police. Other items will be held until parents/carers are able to collect these from school.





Security

Hillcrest School takes the welfare of the students and staff seriously, and has procedures in place to restrict access to the building/site. The main gate has a fob/intercom system in and main doors have fob systems to prevent further access within the school.

All visitors have to sign in using our Visipoint system which provides a visitor badge that must be worn at all times.

Classrooms have thumb locks for pupil safety and we also have CCTV cameras which record high quality images 24 hours a day.

Sex Education

Sex education is taught throughout the school in accordance with the National Curriculum. The curriculum is specific depending on the key stage and maturity of the students and addresses appropriate relationships, common misconceptions and accurate information, safe sex and the law around sex.

Staff receive training, advice and resources through the NHS and agreed schemes and tailor this to the needs of our students.

Smoking Policy

A 'No Smoking' policy has been adopted within school grounds and must be adhered to by all staff, visitors, contractors, parents/carers visiting site.

Student Voice





Students are more than just students at Hillcrest. We encourage all students to help shape the school and how it works to ensure everyone gets the best from their time here. The school council so far have developed the school site extensively and interviewed a raft of new staff. Voting and nominations start at the beginning of each academic year.

Teamwork

Class Teams – Each class has their own class team. These teams work with the same students for the vast majority of learning sessions. These teams will also be in regular telephone contact with you and you are more than welcome to keep in touch with them.



Term Dates

Term		Start Date	End Date	Weeks
Autumn		Wed 2 Sept 2020	Fri 23 Oct 2020	8
		Tues 3 Nov 2020	Fri 18 Dec 2020	7
Spring		Tues 5 Jan 2021	Fri 12 Feb 2021	6
		Mon 22 Feb 2021	Fri 26 Mar 2021	5
Summer		Mon 12 Apr 2021	Fri 28 May 2021	7
		Mon 7 June 2021	Fri 16 July 2021	6
Teacher Training Days		1 Sept 2020; 2 Nov 2020; 4 Jan 2021; 3 May 2021		

Transport

A number of our students travel to and from school on transport organised by the Local Authority. Staff are on duty at the beginning and end of the day to ensure that all students safely arrive and leave school from their transport. Any changes to transport must be notified to the school office who will update the on duty transport team. Notification should also be made to the Local Authority Transport Department.

Trips

At Hillcrest we are fortunate to have a school minibus and car. This allows us to enrich the curriculum by taking students out of the classroom and into the community. Any visits will require parental permission so it is important letters are signed and returned to school to prevent any hold ups in the administration.



Uniform

All coloured Hillcrest tops are available from the school office or direct from Tots to Teams.
Uniform for Hillcrest is:

- Blue Hoody/Zipped Hoody (main school)
- Blue Polo Top
- Black Trousers
- Dark Shoes



PE Uniform

- Comfortable sports clothing
- Trainers

6th Form Students wear green hoody/zipped hoody/polo tops



Values (British)

- Tolerance
- Mutual Respect
- Individual Liberty
- Rule of Law
- Democracy



These are firmly upheld by all members of Hillcrest School.



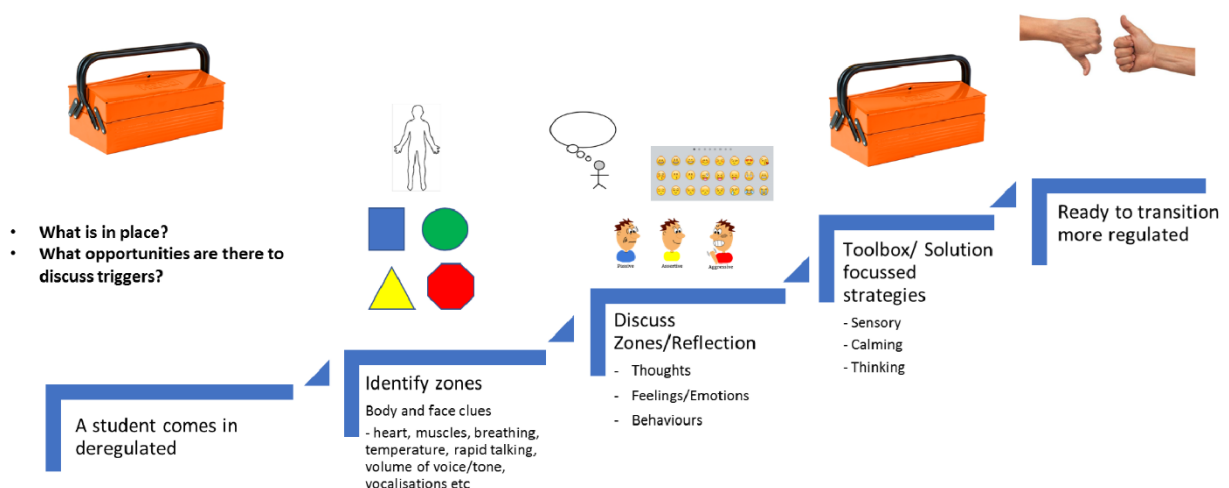
Your Views

We very much value our open door policy and friendly relationships with the families of our students, we encourage parents to talk with us informally to raise matters of concern with either the relevant member of staff or the Head Teacher. This enables us to be aware if any problems and work together to find a solution. Complaints are usually resolved at this stage, however there is a written Complaints Policy available; details of which are available from the school office.



Zones of Regulation

When a student is deregulated



Zones of Regulation is a vehicle in which we support all students in recognising their behaviours and help them develop strategies to support them back to a comfortable, regulated state. This allows us to discuss 'zones' with students rather than behaviours to ensure our students feel they are communicating in a way that the adults can understand.



The below shows the different zones that are used in school (Red / Yellow / Green / Blue) and the different methods that can be used to assist children move from one zone to another. All staff are familiar with the zones and this has can be demonstrated to parents/carers who may also find this useful to use outside of school (see Families Gathering for more information on sessions available).



Angry, Panicked, Very intense feelings	Frustrated, Confused, Stressed	Excited, Anxious, Silly, Nervous	Happy, Alert, Engaged	Calm, Content, Focused	Sad, Tired, Bored	Upset, Distressed
Belly Breathing Meditation Colouring Sit on a bean bag (or in a comfy spot) Stretching (yoga)	Belly Breathing Meditation Stress ball/tactile play Have a snack Colouring	Drink (water) Belly breathing Wall pushups Go for a short run or jog Stretching (yoga) Jumping/bouncing	Conversation Praise Engage with child	Conversation Praise	Jumping/Bouncing Push ups Climbing Drink (water) Have a snack Reading Singing/Music	Sit on a bean bag (or in a comfy spot) Take a walk Go for a short run or jog