

# Hillcrest School



## Essential Handbook

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Website: **www.hillcrest.northumberland.sch.uk**

Headteacher: **Mrs. Andrea Mead**  
Chair of Governors: **Mrs. Joyce Reid**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead: Andrea Mead**  
**DSL Deputies: Mark Phillips & Alison Miller**

## Welcome to Hillcrest School

*Dear Parents and Carers,*

*On behalf of the Governors, Staff and Pupils 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;*

- ⇒ Autistic Spectrum Condition*
- ⇒ Social, Emotional and Mental Health*
- ⇒ Cognition & Learning*
- ⇒ Speech, Language and Communication needs*

*At Hillcrest School we are committed to providing high quality education for all our pupils. We strive to create a community of learners 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”**

We believe in, and strive to create, a community of learners where everyone feels valued in a welcoming, supportive and safe environment, based on unconditional positive regard.

When students leave Hillcrest School, they should be more resilient, confident, responsible, independent, respectful and life-long learners.

## **Our Aims**

- To provide the highest standards of teaching and learning through setting challenging educational experiences that recognise everyone's potential from their own starting point and building on their success.
- To encourage a community of learners with positive attitudes to learning.
- To promote an atmosphere of mutual respect, where students have a voice in the school and their views are sought and listened to.
- To encourage high standards of behaviour where students are encouraged to manage their own behaviour, take responsibility for it and recognise that actions have consequences.
- To build strong partnerships with parents and carers.

## **Hillcrest Big 5 Key Drivers**

Social Development & Communication

Emotional Health & Well-being

Academic Achievement

Functionality

Aspirational Futures

# Hillcrest Expects...



**Good Listening**



**Kind Words**



**Care of Hillcrest**



**Look after each other**

**Running  
Slow**

**Good  
To  
Go**

**Slow  
Down**

**Stop!  
Out of  
Control**

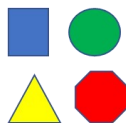
## Zones of Regulation

Zones of Regulation is a vehicle in which we support all learners 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 pupils rather than behaviours to ensure our learners feel they are communicating in a way that the adults can understand.

## When a student is deregulated

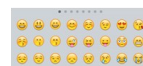


- What is in place?
- What opportunities are there to discuss triggers?



### Identify zones

Body and face clues  
- heart, muscles, breathing, temperature, rapid talking, volume of voice/tone, vocalisations etc



### Discuss Zones/Reflection

- Thoughts
- Feelings/Emotions
- Behaviours



### Toolbox/ Solution focussed strategies

- Sensory
- Calming
- Thinking

Ready to transition more regulated



# School Life

## School Day

School Office Open	8.30am
Learners Start	8.50am
Focus	9.00am
Session 1	9.30am
Session 2	10.20am
Break	11.10am
Session 3	11.25am
Lunch	12.15am
Session 4	1.00pm
Session 5	2.00pm
Learners Leave	2.50pm
EHCP Meetings	Wednesday 3.15pm – onwards

## 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 learners 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 at home or with parents/ carers as this can be unproductive.

## Teamwork

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

## Curriculum

### Core Offer

#### KS3

Focus & PHSE

CLL/English

PSRN/Maths

Computing

PE

Culture & Community

Creative Arts

Thrive & Forest School

Home Economics

#### KS4

Focus & PHSE

Func. English

Func. Maths

ITQ 1

PE

Culture & Community

Creative Arts

Thrive & Forest School

Home Economics

#### 6th Form

Focus & PHSE

Func. English

Func. Maths

ITQ 1/2

PE

Culture & Community

Creative Arts

Thrive

### Bespoke Offer

Geography & History

Science

Duke Of Edinburgh

Entry Science

ASDAN Short Courses

Duke Of Edinburgh

Individualised ASDAN PDP

Independence Skills

Work Experience

Let's help every child  
**thrive**



## Term Dates

Term	Start Date	End Date	Weeks
Autumn 1st	Tue 4th Sept 2018	Thurs 25th Oct 2018	8
Autumn 2nd	Mon 5th Nov 2018	Fri 21st Dec 2018	7
Spring 1st	Mon 7th Jan 2019	Fri 15th Feb 2019	6
Spring 2nd	Tues 26th Feb 2019	Fri 5th April 2019	6
Summer 1st	Tues 23rd April 2019	Fri 24th May 2019	5
Summer 2nd	Mon 3rd June 2019	Fri 19th July 2019	7
Teacher Training Days	3rd September 2018, 27th October 2018, 19th February 2019, 6th May		

## Attendance & Absence from School

All learners are expected to attend school everyday. In the case of your child being unwell the office needs to be notified from 8:15-8:45am, and the school must be informed each day during the duration of the absence.

If a pupils' attendance falls below 90% the local authority welfare officer will explore the reasons for this and explore solutions to improve attendance.

Pupils 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 completing the form on the local authority website and returning this to school. The request will be considered by the head teacher and/or governors.

## Emergency Closures

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

Any closure will be notified to Radio Newcastle and is often broadcast between 7.00 and 8.30am. We aim to get school closure information onto the Northumberland County Council website as soon as we can. 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.



## Lunchtime Arrangements

We have a single lunch sitting where all the learners eat together. We keep classes on the same tables so the class staff can enjoy lunch with them.

Learners can bring either a packed lunch or choose from the daily menu. We try to ensure all dietary requirements are met through the daily menu.

It is important at Hillcrest that lunch is not a rushed part of the day but an important part of social development. Learners are served food at the tables by staff who eat with them and then the learners help to clear up before have a break.

### School dinner costs:

2 courses: £ 2.30 daily

Learners can have dinners every day, specific days or on an ad-hoc basis.

Wednesday: Roast Dinner Day

Friday: Chip day

Payment should be in advance or following day

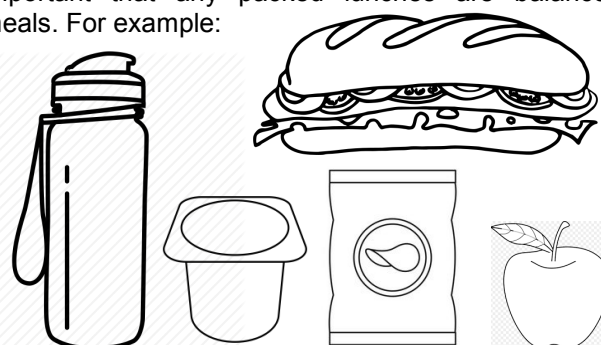
### Dinner Choices:



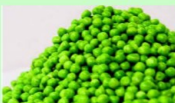








Each day the menu is displayed in the classroom so that pupils can choose which items/combinations they would like. This ensures they always get what they order. See the example below.



## Packed Lunch

We know that some learners 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:



Choice of Main Course	Potato /Pasta/Rice	Vegetables	Sweets
 mince	 roast potatoes	 peas	 Fresh fruit
 jacket potato chicken curry	 yorkshire pudding	 carrots	 yoghurt
 egg mayo baguette		 salad bowl	 jam sponge and custard

## 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 in items to 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 and mobile devices. (We do allow learners to come into school with mobile devices but these must be handed over for safe keeping for the duration of the school day)

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





## 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, pupils 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 pupils, 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.**



## Links

UK Safer Internet Centre  
Internet Matters  
NSPCC  
Think u know  
Webwise

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk>  
<https://www.internetmatters.org>  
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk>  
<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise>

**Our school e-safety coordinator is: Mrs. Su Waites**

## 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 learners through mental health challenges
- ◆ Autism specialist teacher-extensive experience with autistic learners in the classroom
- ◆ 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 support all staff in broadening their skill sets and resource banks.

## 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 pupils 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 pupils.



## 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 learners grow in confidence and feel valued as well as valuing others within their immediate communities and internationally.

### **Our school nurse: Sarah Ingram**

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

## British Values

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

These are firmly upheld by all members of Hillcrest School.



## Medical/ Medicines in School

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 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.

## First Aid Persons

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 an injury requires professional support we would contact yourself to take your child-unless in an emergency where staff would accommodate to the best of our ability.



## Out of Class Visits

At Hillcrest we are fortunate to have a school minibus and car. This allows us to enrich the curriculum by taking learners 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.

## Student Voice

Students are more than just learners at Hillcrest. We encourage all learners 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.



## Hillcrest Heroes

These are our fundraisers who strive to provide extra for the learners here at Hillcrest. They run a range of fundraising events throughout the year. The Hillcrest Heroes welcome any member of the community to join them to help raise money for some of the projects in the pipeline.

## 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 (e.g. 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.

## EHCP Meeting Reminder

EHCP meeting date \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_.

(please don't forget to bring your parent views form)

## Your Child's Progress

We have two parents evenings in the academic year-normally at the start and end of the year. You will also receive an academic progress report at the end of the school year.



### Uniform

All coloured Hillcrest tops are available from reception.

- \* Blue hoody/zipped hoody (6th form Green)
- \* Blue polo top (6th form Green)
- \* Black trousers
- \* Dark shoes

### PE Uniform

- \* Comfortable sports clothing
- \* Trainers

## 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 (Headteacher)

Mark Phillips (Deputy Headteacher) Alison Miller (Assistant Headteacher)

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

## Your views

We very much value our open door policy and friendly relationships with the families of our pupils, 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 of 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.



## 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.