



Hillcrest School Cramlington



Parents/Carers Handbook

<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 Deputy: Alison Miller Joanne Coyne</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 students 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.



Key Drivers	Key Drivers Impact (Curriculum)
 <p>Emotional Health and Wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of personal strategies to support emotional well-being, to aid regulation • Confidence to try things • To know where to go for help and support • Happy within themselves • Kindness to others • Self-aware • Self-worth • Being proud of your achievements
 <p>Social Development and Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies to form positive relationships • To function in society as independently as possible • Active members of the Hillcrest community • Ability to communicate effectively in a range of ways • Ability to develop meaningful and healthy relationships • Pupils have a voice and know they have a valuable contribution to make in school and in society • Tolerance and respect for all • Appreciation and understanding of our diverse society, in school and beyond
 <p>Academic Achievement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a go mentality • Creative individuals • Reflective • Knowledge of the world • Broad depth of learning • Develop a love of lifelong learning • Resilience to not give up
 <p>Functionality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independence • Regulated individuals who can self soothe • Transferable strategies for success • Life skills application to the best of their ability • Clear knowledge of life skills • Functional job skills • Ability to stay safe online
 <p>Aspirational Futures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make informed choices • Clear pathways to adulthood • Progression within all stages • Successful transitions between key stages, to support preparation for adulthood • Be excited about life beyond Hillcrest
 <p>Resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having strategies for when things don't go to plan • Accepting change happens and having a toolkit to support this • A toolkit to work within the window of tolerance • Tolerance of others • Resilient learners • Strategies for success



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. http://www.hillcrest.northumberland.sch.uk/website/admissions_policy/438785

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 start 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%, they are classed as PA (persistently absent). School will liaise with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to explore 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 Governors.

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. 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.

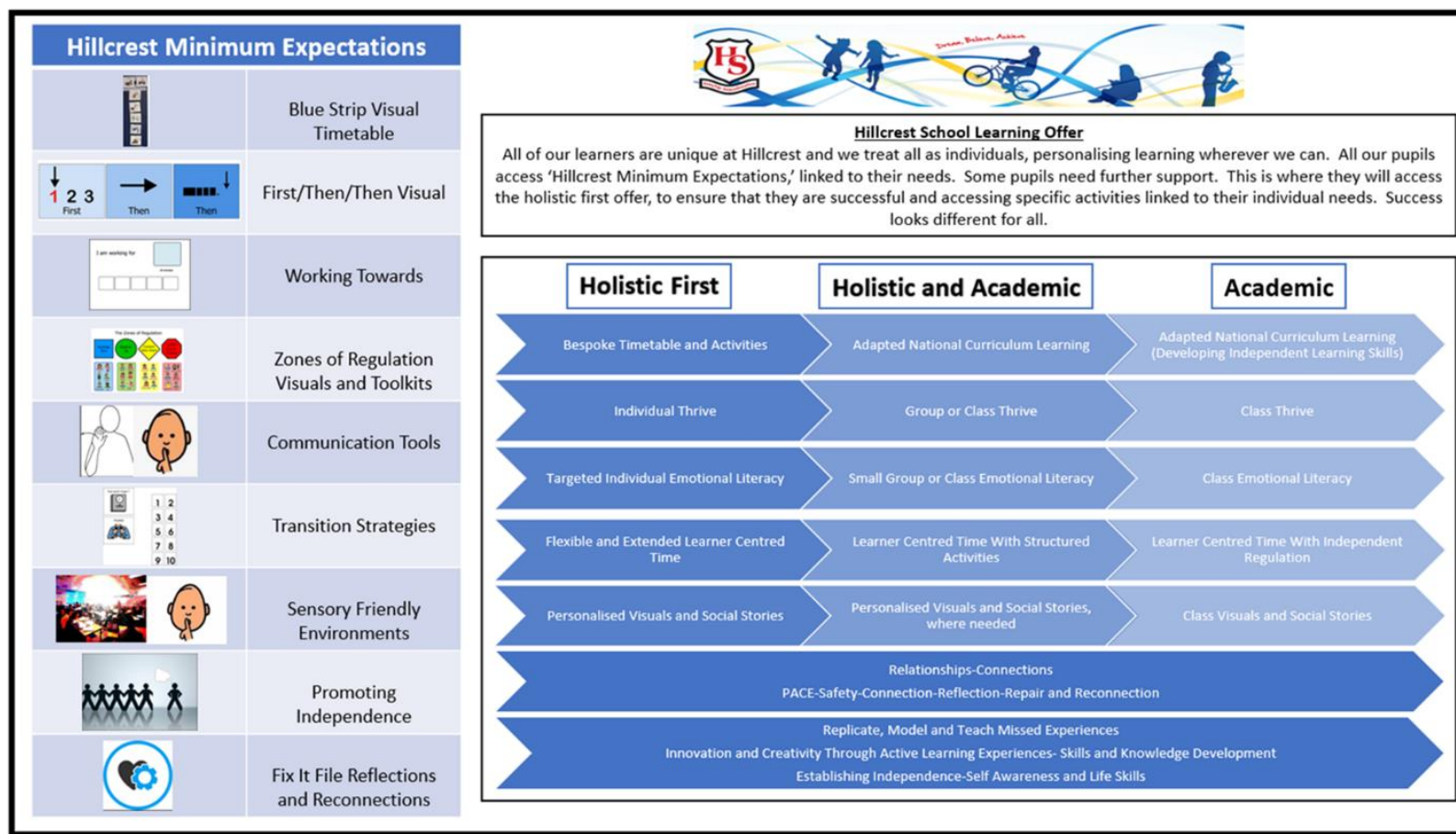
Cookery / Crafts

All students participate in cookery/craft lessons as part of their curriculum. To assist school in running these sessions we ask for an annual contribution of £25. This can be paid weekly, monthly or termly. 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 one 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. The curriculum document is published on the school website.





Discover

Discover is a specialised educational program designed to meet the distinct needs of some students at Hillcrest. The program, underpinned by a flexible, therapeutic, and inclusive approach, offers individualised support through 'The Discovery' program, fostering strong relationships and understanding among the class team and the students.

We are really lucky to have a huge outdoor area, that benefits all of our pupils. Discover is our outdoor classroom, where areas are used for various outdoor activities. In Discover we have a bike track, pond, firepit area, hammocks, bird hide, digging area, etc. This is always changing and the areas are developed by our students.

EHCP Reviews

All students in school have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP). This is a legal document that outlines the needs of the student, with long term targets and provision needed. EHCP reviews happen in school, on an annual basis. You will receive a letter notifying you of the date and parent/carer form to complete. In the meeting you will go through the EHCP and make any additions or amendments. Long term targets will also be discussed and reviewed. Students also have their own input, with their views.

In school, students have short term targets that are reviewed half termly, where objectives are built into the week. Student ILP (Individual Learning Plans) are monitored weekly and evidence supports the progress pupils make towards each target.

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 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 sessions across the curriculum, 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.

Our school website has a wide range of information, tips and support. Please also see:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/#guides>

<https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/>

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.

Forms

Forms are available from the school office for medications, parental consent, leave of absence during term time, home school agreement and 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.

Hillcrest Expects



Hillcrest Expects are our school core values, supporting students to develop skills in these areas.

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.



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 lead (DSL) is:

- Andrea Mead (Head Teacher)

Our deputy safeguarding leads (Deputy DSL's) are:

- Alison Miller (Deputy Head Teacher)
- Joanne Coyne (Lead TA)












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

Lunch

We have two lunch sittings where students eat together in their own classroom. 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 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.

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 their classroom. It is important that any packed lunches are balanced meals. For example: sandwich, fruit, yoghurt, carrot sticks and 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 not keep paracetamol in school or administer it.

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.

NHS – School Nurse

We have access to a school nurse, who is able to see students and families regarding child health matters. This is by appointment only.

Parents/Carers Evening

We hold two parent/carer evenings in the academic year, normally October and March. You will also receive an academic progress report at the end of the school year. We also host a transition meeting in July, so you can meet your child's new teacher.

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.

Some 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, through the PSHE Association SEND framework. 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. You may request resources that have been used in school, to support at home.

Staff receive training, advice and resources through agreed schemes and tailor this to the needs of our students. If you wish for your child to be withdrawn until the age of 16, please contact school.

Smoking Policy

A 'No Smoking' policy has been adopted within school grounds and must be adhered to by all staff, visitors, contractors and 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

Our current school term dates and holidays are available to view in the Parents/Carers area of our school website. http://www.hillcrest.northumberland.sch.uk/website/term_dates/440525

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.

You must apply for school transport through the local authority. This is separate to school, please refer to the link on the school website or call 01670 629670 for more advice.

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 in a timely manner.



Uniform-Comfort is Key

All coloured Hillcrest tops are available online from Cloud9Leisure, Cramlington - www.cloud9leisure.co.uk

Uniform for Hillcrest is:

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



PE Uniform:

- Comfortable sports clothing
- Trainers

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

To save cost, pupils do not need school branded clothing.

Values (British)

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



These are firmly upheld by all members of Hillcrest School.



Social-Moral-Spiritual-Cultural



School key drivers supporting us to become active, functional and independent members of the community.



We have a say and a voice at Hillcrest. The pupil council shares our voice and we can share our views in the 'have your say' box. We can take part in decision making by taking part in lessons.



We know that Hillcrest Expects keeps everyone safe and allows everyone to learn. We understand that school has key rules, like laws. We will respect these and the laws in society.



We understand that we are responsible for our own learning, as well as the staff. We understand that we have the responsibility to allow others to learn. We will reflect on our actions, where needed, and take steps to repair them.



We will listen to other people's opinions and understand that they may not think the same as us, as long as it does not promote extremism. We understand that everyone is entitled to their say. We will listen to others as we would like to be listened to.



We understand human rights and follow these in school and out. We have the freedom to think. We have the freedom to make choices that affect us. We will reflect and be honest about mistakes.



We know everyone has different beliefs and opinions. We will accept these. We are a community that learns, cares for everyone and respects one another. We will be open to learning about differences and have sensible discussions around this.

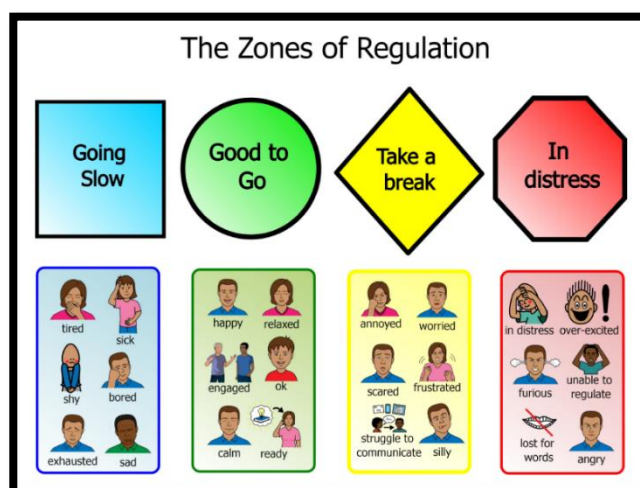


Your Views

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



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 diagram 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 can be demonstrated to parents/carers who may also find this useful to use outside of school.