

HILLCROFT PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Nurturing children to achieve their personal best

October 3rd 2025

Dear families,

Autumn is truly upon us and we have seen some beautiful Autumn days this week. Thank you to those parents who joined Mrs Gear for the virtual phonics workshop. The slides are on the school website and have been sent to families in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 via Parentmail.

Our Forest School needs your help. Do you have a trolley you would like to donate to us? Do you have some nails laying around? Do you have bits of wool, string and rope you no longer want or need? Do you have any plumbing pipes looking for a new home? Forest school at Hillcroft would kindly take all of these off your hands! Please hand to the school office.

Thank you,

The Hillcroft Team

Key Dates:



Please click on the link below to access our key dates document. This is updated throughout the year and we encourage you to check it regularly to ensure you have up to date information about the key events happening in school.

Key Dates Document

Follow us on Instagram:

@hillcroftprimaryschool



Sign Language

Each week we introduce a new sign to children in our whole school assembly. This week we combined some of the sign we have learned and used them in this song. Click the Makaton image below for a video.



Black History Month



This October, Hillcroft are proudly celebrating Black History Month with the theme **Standing Firm in Power and Pride**.

Across the school, children will explore the lives and contributions of inspirational Black individuals—both past and present—through engaging lessons and activities. From Early Years to Year 6, pupils will take part in learning that highlights historical figures and the importance of Black History today. Years 3, 4 and 5 will also enjoy a special Black History Workshop. If you'd like to contribute to our celebrations, please speak to your child's class teacher.



Using AI ChatBots for Good

You've probably heard of ChatGPT, the wonder AI chatbot. From writing poems to C.U.s, it seems there's nothing this artificial intelligence can't create! That does, unfortunately, include homework.

ChatGPT's terms of services says users must be at least 13 years old and those under 18 must have their parent or legal guardian's permission. However, between the press coverage and the lack of age verification, it's likely that many young people are using it regardless.

But is it really helping with homework? Here are some points to consider if the young person in your care wants to use an AI chatbot.



SOMETIMES AI CHATBOTS ARE WRONG!

This means if someone is relying on them for facts, they might be wrong too. And it might become obvious that they've used AI to complete their work.



CHATBOTS AREN'T ALWAYS UP TO DATE.

ChatGPT knows about the world up until 2021, after that its knowledge is limited.



CHATBOTS ARE BANNED IN SOME PLACES.

If a young person is using chatbots but their school has banned it, they might have to face the consequences of breaking the rules.



EVERY VOICE IS UNIQUE.

Although you can ask a chatbot to create text in a certain way, it's incredibly unlikely that it will sound identical to the user... and even if a young person doesn't think they have a writing style, you can bet their teachers do!



CHATBOTS AREN'T ALWAYS SHORTCUTS

By the time you're finished fact-checking and editing the grammar, you may as well have written it yourself!

Alternative ideas for using AI together

PRACTICE FACT CHECKING

Knowing how to fact check is a very useful skill, both for school and for everyday life. Ask ChatGPT for facts then check them together by Googling, in the news and even in good old-fashioned books!

Being able to tell fact from fiction will also help you and the young person in your care spot fake news and misinformation on social media.

USE CHATGPT TO INSPIRE

Instead of making the chatbot do all the work, use it for prompting ideas. For example, you can give an example of your favourite novel and ask for recommendations of similar books you might enjoy.

I am 14 years old.
My favourite book is the Hobbit.
Can you suggest three novels I might like?

Sure, here are three book suggestions you might enjoy based on your love of The Hobbit:

1. Eragon by Christopher Paolini ...

MASTER THE SKILL OF EDITING

The text produced by AI chatbots usually needs a lot of changing. Practising editing text for spelling, grammar and comprehension could help improve schoolwork.

LEARN ABOUT AI

There's no denying that artificial intelligence like chatbots can be fascinating. How does it learn information? Who made it? Researching this together could even inspire a future career in AI!

STAYING SAFE WHEN USING AI

Make sure the young person in your care knows who their trusted adults are and that they can talk to them if they see something that upsets or worries them online.

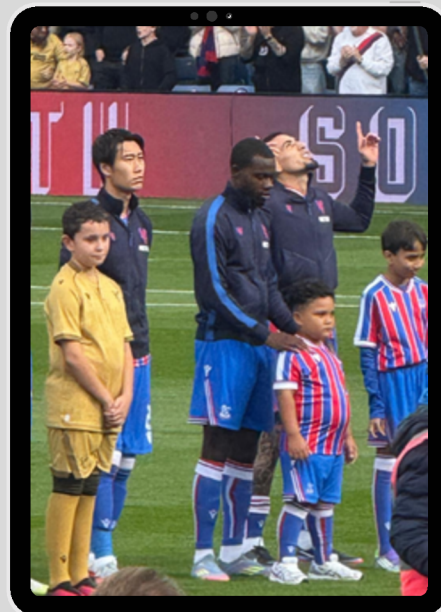
Harmful, unhelpful and untrue answers on ChatGPT can be reported by selecting the 'thumbs down' button beside the answer.

Some young people have been using AI for mental health advice. Talk to the young person in your care about what to do if they're feeling depressed, stressed, or upset.

childline

CALLING ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME
childline.org.uk | 0800 1111

TALENTS AND INTERESTS



Pippa	Year 2	Swimming
Isla	Year 3	Running Record
Baden	Year 2	Running Record
Logan	Year 2	Football Mascot
Logan	Year 5	Swimming



ATTENDANCE

Just to remind parents/carers that if you take your children out of school without authority for 5 or more days (which do not have to be consecutive), then the following will apply:

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children in a rolling 3 year period since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of the receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
1. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 9 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to your child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice - Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, per parent/carer, in the Magistrates Court under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

SICKNESS AND MEDICATIONS

When should I keep my child off school?

The Following NHS guidelines state;

- Chicken pox; for at least 5 days from the onset of rash and until all blisters have crusted over.
- Diarrhoea and vomiting; return 48 hours after last episode of either.
- Cold and flu like illnesses; if your child has no temperature then minor symptoms can be managed at school. With a temperature, keep them home until this has subsided and they are feeling well enough.
- Impetigo; Keep your child home until all sores have crusted and healed or 48 hours after they have started antibiotics.
- Measles; Keep your child home until at least 4 days after the rash first appeared.
- Mumps; keep your child home for 5 days after the swelling started.
- Scarlet Fever; keep your child home until 24 hours after starting antibiotics.
- Whooping Cough; keep your child home until 48 hours after starting antibiotics.

Children can attend school with;

- Hand Foot and Mouth, if they are well enough.
- Head Lice; Please ensure you treat the child/family according to the treatment, and repeat as instructed. Also, please let school know as soon as you are aware.
- Threadworms; Please treat accordingly and ensure hand hygiene is practiced often.
- Slapped Cheek.
- Tonsillitis.

Calpol may be administered in school if you feel there is a need for your child throughout the school day. Please speak to office staff who will provide a medication form to be completed. Where possible please supply the Calpol/paracetamol as we have only limited emergency supply.

Antibiotics can be administered again with a medication form, however only if the medication is needed 3 or more times a day.

A high temperature is classified as 38 degrees. If your child has a temperature during the school day, we will contact you to come and collect them. Please do not send your child/children into school with a high temperature. Always seek medical advice from your GP.

A message from Mrs Pearson.

For the rest of this half term, we are going to be looking at Validating our Emotions.

What does it mean to validate feelings?

When children are feeling different emotions, it is good to validate the feelings so that they know you are acknowledging, accepting and respecting the emotions that a child is experiencing. It involves communicating to that child that their feelings are real, understandable and legitimate.

Validation does not necessarily mean that you agree with the content of the feelings but rather you are recognising that the emotions of the child are valid and meaningful for them. I would always say to the child "I can see you are feeling sad/scared/angry" or completely the other way and say "I can see you are happy/excited/thrilled.

Acknowledging Feelings

Acknowledge the child's emotions directly by using phrases like this.

- *I am here to support you through this... *I am sorry you are going through this...
- *I understand this is difficult for you... *Your feelings matter to me...
- *It's ok to feel the way you do...

Empathy

Put yourself in the child's shoes and try to understand their perspective.

Non - Judgement

Avoid passing judgement on the child's feelings and just listen to them/me.

Support

Express your willingness to provide support. You will help them. Let the child know that you are there for them and that their feelings are important to you

Here is a video to watch called "Validate your child's emotions while holding to your boundaries." By Dr. Laurie Santos, let me know your thoughts.



APPEAL FOR THE

BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION!



Are you able to donate any of the following items:

- Clothing, Shoes and Handbags
- Books
- Bric-à-brac
- Small Electrical Items (Hairdryers, Table Lamps, Radios etc)

Note: Clothing and textiles that are not in perfect condition should be cleaned and placed in a bag clearly marked 'TEXTILES FOR RECYCLING' separate from other donated items. for example: a dress with a broken zip, or old towels or sheets.

Please donate any items at **Scouts, 105 Godstone Road, Caterham, CR3 6RF** on the following dates/times:

THU 30 OCT

3.00PM - 5.00PM

FRI 31 OCT

9.00AM - 1.00PM

SAT 1 NOV

9.00AM - 1.00PM



ALL ITEMS TO BE DONATED BY 1:00PM ON SATURDAY 1ST NOVEMBER

For more information call:
0787 814 949 | events@caterhamrotary.org.uk

Caterham Rotary Registered
Charity Number 254116