

# HILLCROFT PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

*Nurturing children to achieve their personal best*

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February**

## ★ **School Highlights**

This half term has been full of wonderful learning opportunities and experiences. As I write, the children in Year 4 are enjoying their first residential trip. They are sure to have a fantastic time in the outdoors and will return with new memories made and a real sense of independence.

## 📅 **Save the date**

After half term, we will be sending out parents evening appointment times. Elm class, please see the separate letter that has been sent home, as your dates differ to the rest of the school.

- 5<sup>th</sup> March - World Book Day
- 20<sup>th</sup> March - Red Nose Day

## 📱 **A Community Reminder**

Please could we kindly remind parents and carers that when you come into school for sessions such as Open Classroom, phones should remain out of sight. This is essential to ensure we are safeguarding all children at all times. We are also asking that children in Year 5 and Year 6 keep their phones out of sight once on the school playground. Thank you for your support.

Have a wonderful half term!

## 📅 **Key Dates** 📅

Our [website](#) is currently being updated to display key dates with more clarity.

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](#)**

## **Staffing Update**

We are writing to share the news that our Acorns Manager and Thrive Practitioner, Shannon, will be leaving Hillcroft on 6<sup>th</sup> March to embark on an exciting new professional chapter. Shannon has been an integral member of our team for several years, and her influence has been felt right across the school. From her dedicated work in the classroom to her specialist leadership within Acorns, she has consistently championed the well-being of our pupils. In her role as a Thrive Practitioner, Shannon has provided a nurturing environment for many of our children, helping them build the resilience and emotional strength they need to thrive. We know our families will join us in thanking Shannon for her commitment and wishing her the very best for her future endeavours. ★



The UK is a multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-denomination society. According to the Office of National Statistics 2021 National survey, the six major religions represented in the UK include Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Buddhist. These religions are considered in our RE curriculum across Hillcroft School.

As a predominantly Christian society, events such as Christmas and Easter are prominent in our calendars. Less obvious are the celebrations and festivities of the other religions. Throughout the year it is our intention to share with our community information regarding some of these events.

One such event is Ramadan - a special and sacred month in Islam. It is the 9th month of the Islamic lunar calendar and is all about fasting, reflection, prayer, community, and charity.

During Ramadan, many Muslims around the world fast every day from dawn until sunset, which means no eating or drinking while also trying to be kinder, more mindful, and closer to Allah.

The month is significant because it's believed to be when the holy Qur'an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and it's one of the Five Pillars of Islam which include Salah (prayer), Sawm (fasting), Shahada (faith), Hajj (pilgrimage), and Zakat (alms) which are the foundation of Muslim life.

In 2026, Ramadan is expected to begin on the 17th or 18th February depending on the moon sighting and lasting about 29-30 days.

To mark the end of Ramadan, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr, a joyful holiday where people gather for special prayers, enjoy feasts and exchange presents with family and friends, give charity to those in need, and wear new clothes. Eid is expected around the 19th-20th March, which again depends on the moon sighting.



We introduce Makaton in Nursery and incorporate small elements into whole school assemblies and as part of our teaching of key vocabulary in Early Years. Follow [this link](#) to find out how Makaton can help your child when they are in the early stages of speech.

# SAFEGUARDING



At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [nationalonlinesafety.com](http://nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

## Top Tips for... MANAGING SCREEN TIME

According to the latest stats, people aged between 8 and 17 spend four hours on digital devices during an average day. Obviously, a new year is ideal for fresh starts and renewed efforts – so lots of families are trying to cut down their combined screen time right now, creating more moments to connect with each other and relying less on gadgets to have fun. Our top tips on reducing screen time are for everyone, so you can get your whole family involved in turning over a new leaf this year!

- GET OUT AND ABOUT**  
If the weather's decent, spend some time in the garden or go for a walk. Even a stroll to the local shop would do the main thing is getting some fresh air and a break from your screen.
- TRY A TIMED TRIAL**  
When you're taking a screen break to do a different activity or a chore, turn it into a game by setting yourself a timer. Can you complete your task before the alarm goes off?
- GO DIGITAL DETOX**  
Challenge yourself and your family to take time off from screens, finding other things to do. You could start off with half a day, then build up to a full day or even an entire weekend.
- LEAD BY EXAMPLE**  
Let your family see you successfully managing your own screen time. You'll be showing them the way, and it might stop some of those grumbles when you do want to go online.
- AGREE TECH-FREE ZONES**  
Nominate some spots at home where devices aren't allowed. Anywhere your family gathers together, like at the table or in the living room, could become a 'no phone zone'.
- HOLD A SCREEN TIME AMNESTY**  
As a family, agree specific windows when it's OK to use devices. This should help everyone to balance time on phones or gaming with enjoying quality moments together.
- BE MINDFUL OF TIME**  
Stay aware of how long you've been on your device for. Controlling how much time you spend in potentially stressful areas of the internet – like social media platforms – can also boost your wellbeing.
- 'PARK' PHONES OVERNIGHT**  
Set up an overnight charging station for everyone's devices – preferably away from bedrooms. That means less temptation for late-night scrolling.
- SWITCH ON DND**  
Research shows that micro-distractions like message alerts and push notifications can chip away at our concentration levels. Put devices on 'do not disturb' until you're less busy.
- TAKE A FAMILY TECH BREAK**  
Set aside certain times when the whole family puts their gadgets away and enjoys an activity together: playing a board game, going for a walk or just having a chat.
- SOCIALISE WITHOUT SCREENS**  
When you're with friends, try not to automatically involve phones, TVs or other tech. Having company can be loads more fun if your attention isn't being split.
- WIND DOWN PROPERLY**  
Try staying off phones, consoles, tablets and so on just before you go to sleep. Reading or just getting comfy in bed for a while can give you a much more restful night.

**Meet Our Expert**  
Mindy Hirst designs and delivers a UK's only specialist postgraduate master's degree in education. They also provide training and support to education organisations and local authorities – all powered by school leaders and staff with the knowledge and tools to bring their settings into inclusive communities where the mental health of pupils and personnel is protected.

**DEVICE BOX**  
The National College  
National Online Safety  
#WakeUpWednesday

Twitter: @natonlinesafety  
Facebook: /NationalOnlineSafety  
Instagram: @nationalonlinesafety  
TikTok: @national\_online\_safety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 03.01.2024

Please note that as part of our uniform policy 'smart' watches are not allowed to be worn in school.

Thank you for your support with this.



A message for Mrs Pearson:

WOW! I cannot believe it's half term already, where has the last 6 weeks gone. This half term we have looked at Self-Esteem, Respect, Feeling Safe and Kindness. This week is Children's Mental Health Week, and the theme is "This is my place". We want to encourage creating environments where children feel they belong, are safe, and are valued. We want the children to think about belonging and how we can feel a sense of belonging and help others feel like they belong too. We can do this by using encouraging words such as:

- \* You are loved.**
- \* You make me smile, we believe in you.**
- \* Your choices matter to me.**
- \* You are gifted and unique!**
- \* We love spending time with you.**

These encouraging words will help your child develop a positive mindset, help build a safe and supportive home life, boost self-esteem and help your child to believe in themselves.

It also means feeling like you're part of something, such as your family, your school, your group of friends or a team. These happy moments help us feel connected, valued, and accepted. When we feel like we belong, we feel happy, safe, and ready to learn and play. It helps us grow strong in our minds and bodies, and it makes it easier to make friends, do well in school, and feel good about ourselves.

Take time this half term making special memories, feeling loved and helping one other.  
Have a wonderful half term!

[D.Pearson@hillcroftschoo.org](mailto:D.Pearson@hillcroftschoo.org) or [tcopard1@gifschoo.org](mailto:tcopard1@gifschoo.org)

***New date to keep:***

*Thrive Day will be on Thursday 25th June 2026*

*More details to follow.*



## BAG 2 SCHOOL

Donate your second hand clothes to school. Bags 2 School will collect good quality adult and children's clothing, paired shoes, hats, belts and handbags.

They do not accept duvets, pillows, soft toys, curtains, towels, cushions or school uniform.

All bags are weighed and the school receive money based on weight.

The previous collection was cancelled. There is a new date of **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February** to return any bags of clothing to school.



## A helping hand for a healthier family

**Do you need help to achieve a healthy weight for your child or teenager?**

*Be Your Best is a funded healthy lifestyle programme for Surrey families with children & teenagers aged 5-17 years, who are above the healthy weight range. We can help you make a positive difference to your child or teenager's health & wellbeing.*

**The programme is made up of one-to-one and group sessions:**

**Sessions include**

- Live cooking workshop
- Meal planning for the whole family
- Easy food swaps
- Managing screen time
- How to become an active family
- Importance of sleep

**One-to-one sessions**

- With a health & wellbeing advisor at a mutually agreed time & location
- Online group sessions for parents/carers**  
Week days after school via Zoom
- Online physical activity sessions**  
Group sessions via zoom or on-demand video content

*"Me and my boys are really enjoying this programme and we are so grateful to be taking part." - Mum*

Find out more :



### Parent Empowerment Group

**A four week online course for effectively supporting children and young people who are experiencing anxiety.**

Our FREE\* course covers the following topics:

- ✓ Understanding the science of emotions and anxiety;
- ✓ Using quality time to support increased resilience and wellbeing;
- ✓ Parents supporting each other;
- ✓ Steps to success, building braveness with compassion;
- ✓ Managing your child's worries;
- ✓ Creating a bridge of connection between home and school.

The course receives consistent positive feedback from participants and parents feel that the strategies have improved family life.

*Please note: In order to get the best out of the course, participants need to commit to attending each week, using the tools and strategies at home, and share their experiences within a nurturing and supportive space.*

**Future course dates are :**

Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	OR	Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2026
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2026		Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2026		Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2026		Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
From 9.30am until 11am on Teams		From 9.30am until 11am on Teams

To register for our FREE\* course, please follow the link below:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Or book, using the QR code:



\* This course is funded by Mindworks Surrey for parents of children & young people living in Surrey only.

## APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR JUNIOR BAKE OFF

Aged between 9-15 and love to bake?  
We'd love to hear from you!

[WWW.APPLYFORJUNIORBAKEOFF.CO.UK](http://WWW.APPLYFORJUNIORBAKEOFF.CO.UK)



**APPLICATIONS CLOSE 15TH MARCH 2026**

## FOREST SCHOOL NEEDS YOUR HELP!



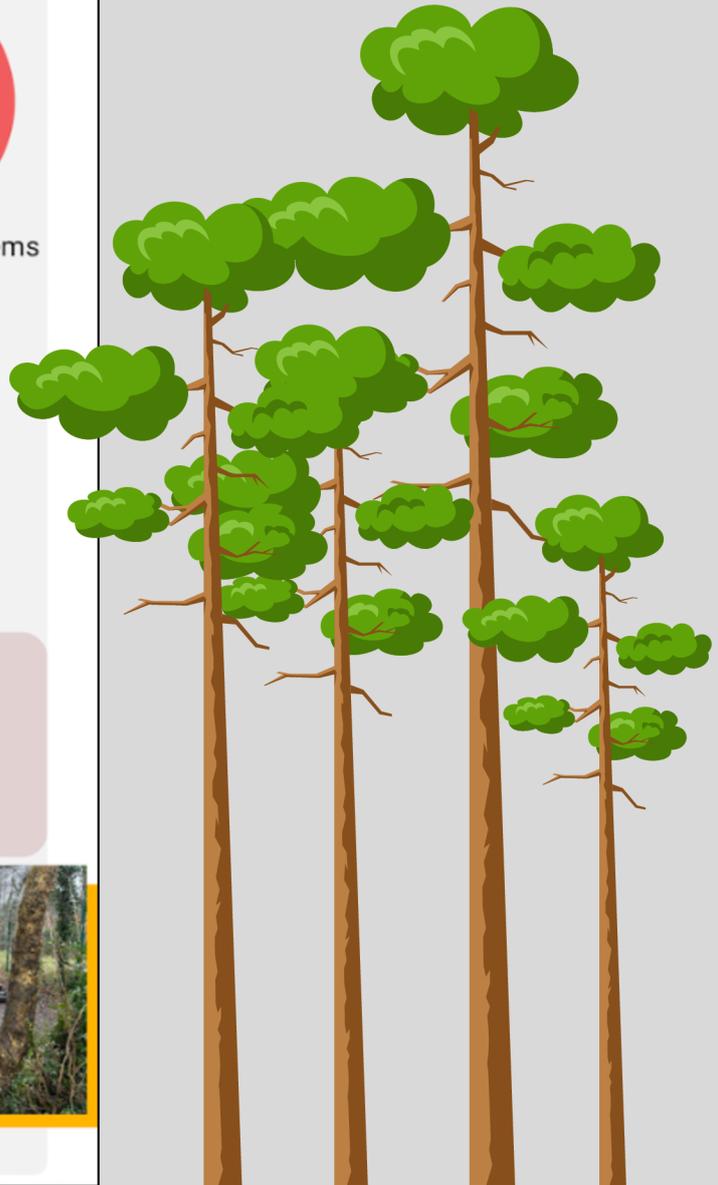
We are looking for the following items to help with our forest school provision:

- wood to use for fires and building.
- old guttering
- nails (any size)
- mud kitchen/ play house/ climbing opportunities
- plant pots (any size)
- wooden pallets



our forest school values:  
holistic development  
confidence and independence  
child-led learning  
community oriented experiences  
risk-taking & managed risk  
connections to nature

Please contact Mrs Winsor if you have anything you would like to donate  
[l.scourfield@hillcroftschoool.org](mailto:l.scourfield@hillcroftschoool.org)



## Year 5 & 6 Google Drawings Competition!

Over the holidays, log into Google Drawings and get creative! Use the skills you have learnt in class to create whatever image you want!

It could be a *dragon in a castle*, a *flower in a field*, a *car on a race track* or a *robot in a futuristic land*. **Be creative!**

Please share your final piece to [F.Meyer@hillcroftschoool.org](mailto:F.Meyer@hillcroftschoool.org) by Friday 27th February. There will be prizes for the top three in Year 5 and Year 6.



Google Drawings



Creations by our current Year 5s this year.

Nursery  
Admissions  
Deadline  
13 March 2026



Nursery applications for 2, 3 and 4 year olds are now live for September 2026 starts



Visit our website to apply!



[www.hillcroftschoool.org](http://www.hillcroftschoool.org)

# TALENTS AND INTERESTS



Cleo	Year 1	Reptile Care
Liliwen	Year 3	Car design
Thalia	Year 3	Hockey
Louisa	Year 4	Brownie Bronze Award
Henry	Year 6	Tri Club Swim Award
Maddie	Year 5	ParkRun



# ATTENDANCE

Just to remind parents/carers that if they take their 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 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.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 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 the 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.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this 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 per child, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Surrey County Council is not responsible for authorising pupil absence and therefore cannot withdraw any Penalty Notice requests without the written permission of the Headteacher.

## 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.