



Hillcross Primary School

Nursery Welcome Pack





Hillcross Primary School

Welcome to our Nursery!

Transition to Mainstream School

At Hillcross, your child's transition to our setting begins when they are first accepted into our school community. We will provide you with all the information you need to ensure your child is fully prepared for their mainstream school experience and we will do all we can to find out as much as we can about your child before they start. A successful transition into school is paramount to supporting your child's personal, social and emotional development. Children will learn best when they feel happy, safe and secure. Once the children are settled, feel safe and are happy their learning journey will truly take off! For parents and carers, the move from having their child at home with them, or the transfer from a Pre School setting, childminder or Day Nursery, is a very different experience that you may need help to navigate and we hope this booklet will provide the essential information you need to settle in to a mainstream school environment.

What is it like in a nursery class in a mainstream school?

Nursery classes in mainstream schools are different from Day Nurseries and Pre Schools in a number of ways. The biggest difference is that our main focus is on education and the teaching of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. This is not to say that other nurseries do not offer any education, nor that we do not prioritise the care of our children, but our Nursery is led by a qualified teacher, working alongside highly skilled Early Years Practitioners. In addition, the team is led by the Foundation Stage Leader, a teacher who is also a member of the senior leadership team.

One of the outcomes we focus on in a mainstream school nursery class is to prepare the children, over time, for joining primary school (statutory education starts when children join a Reception class). Learning through play forms the foundations of our day to day teaching and staff at Hillcross will use this approach to teach and assess children as they move through the school year.

Our setting offers full-time and part-time early years education through structured sessions and benefits from having access to the attached school's resources and facilities. The benefits of School based nurseries is also explained in this [Government webpage](#).

What are the other differences between Nursery school and a Pre School/ Day Nursery?

- Ratios: At a day nursery, the government has set a 1:8 staff to child ratio for 3-4-year old's, whereas, due to the qualifications held by staff in schools, they have set the staff to child ratio for mainstream school nursery classes at 1:13. We try wherever possible to have additional staff working within our nursery but this is not always possible in every session.
- Developing Independence: During our nursery sessions children independently access the toilets, get a drink from their water bottle and choose milk and/or fruit from the 'cafe station'. They hang up their coats and bags and put them on/take them off independently when they choose to play outside. These routines are supported by staff when the children first join but become independent quickly.
- Toileting: We encourage families to potty train their children prior to starting at our nursery because, although we are happy to support children who are still developing their independence in this area, with a ratio of 1:13 we are not able to offer children regular daily individualised toileting support. We will make reasonable



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adjustments for children according to each child's personal circumstance and we sensitively support children when accidents occur - they often do when they first join nursery even if they were fully independent before because they are having such a wonderful time they forget to go until the last minute!

- **The Daily Routine:** Our daily sessions involve a mixture of adult directed and child initiated learning opportunities - this is where children choose their own activities from a selection of carefully planned options. They also take part in daily large group sessions such as phonics lessons, storytimes and lunchtime (if your child stays all day). There is no designated area for children to sleep in but if they do get tired when they first join our nursery, there are quiet spaces where they can rest.
- **General Communication:** Due to the difference in staffing levels, some Day Nurseries and Pre Schools are able to provide parents with very detailed, daily feedback on the children's including things like what they have eaten and how often they have been to the toilet. In a school based nursery, your child will be assigned a key worker who will closely monitor their personal, social and academic progress, they will only contact you if they feel there is specific information that you need to know e.g. your child's behaviour has recently changed or they were involved in an accident whilst at school. We do try to share other incidental information with you at drop off or collection times.

You can share information with whichever member of staff is in the playground at the beginning or end of the day, or via info@hillcross.merton.sch.uk (the message will be passed on), such as changes to who will be collecting, any sleeping difficulties they may have had, things that have affected their mood that morning or any queries you have.

- **Information on how your child is developing:** There are three opportunities to meet with your child's key worker (a teacher or nursery nurse) face to face across each school year (virtual or in person) to discuss your child's development over time. These 10 minute meetings happen at the same time as the rest of the school, once termly assessment judgements have been made. In the final term of nursery and the summer term of Reception, you will receive a written End of Year Report detailing end of year assessment information and an overall pupil profile commentary. You will also be invited into school each term for our Progress Celebration Evening, where you will have the opportunity to view your child's Learning Journey (a book containing evidence of the learning they have been doing e.g. staff observations/commentaries and work samples). If we have concerns about your child's progress or we feel they excelled in an area of learning we will get in touch at that time, we will not wait until the formal meeting.

We encourage you to do the same, however, to ensure we can focus our attention on the children at the beginning and end of the session/day, communication at this time is kept as brief as possible. If you would like a more detailed conversation relating to your child's development, or to any concerns you have, please request a meeting by emailing info@hillcross.merton.sch.uk.

What does the Hillcross School Nursery Class offer?

Our outstanding school nursery is an environment that offers a wide range of opportunities, highly skilled staff and excellent teaching and learning experiences to children and helps the children gradually develop both independence as well as the educational foundations that will help a smooth transition into our Reception unit and their first experience of compulsory schooling. Please see our most recent OFSTED report for their view by clicking here: [OFSTED Report Oct 2024](#)



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Transition for Children into Hillcross- How We Support This

Stay and Play Sessions

At Hillcross the children benefit from a large space both indoors and outdoors in which to play. However, for some children this space can be a little overwhelming, especially if they have not visited the school before. All children new to the school are invited, along with their parents, to visit and play in the Nursery before they join the school. **The 'Stay and Play' sessions** offer families a chance to see our nursery environment in action and for the children to play with the resources, investigate the rooms and find out about where the important places, such as the toilets, are. The details, date and time of the session your child can attend has been shared in the email you received with this booklet.

Pre- setting visit

If possible, we also carry out pre-setting visits for children who have attended a childcare provision before joining our school nursery. These visits give the staff a chance to visit the children in their current setting and to see them interact with their friends and familiar adults. This also enables their current key worker to share information with our Nursery Team so that they can build a picture of your child's likes, dislikes and interests. The more we know about your child, the more we can personalise their settling in period at Hillcross. If we are unable to carry out a face to face visit, we will try to arrange a phone call or virtual meeting with your child's current care provider. We will contact your child's current setting using the information you have provided on our admissions form, if you did not complete this section of the form and your child attends a pre-school setting, please email admissions@hillcross.merton.sch.uk providing us with the relevant details.

Home Visits

For all new nursery children, even if they have siblings in the school, we will carry out a home visit, which will last approximately 20-30 mins. These help to establish positive and trusting relationships from the outset. The visit allows us to get to know your child on a more personal level, your child's favourite toys and any medical information or allergies we need to be aware of. **We are also required to see your child's passport or birth certificate to confirm their date of birth, and the Red Development book to check their 2yr developmental check results, please have these available at the visit.** Your home visit date and time will be sent to you electronically.



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Staff Information

At Hillcross we ensure that all our staff are highly qualified and share our school ethos of nurturing and teaching our children holistically.

- The staff to child ratio is a minimum of 1:13, but we increase this wherever possible.
- We employ Early Years Practitioners/Nursery Nurses who have a sound knowledge of learning in the early years and at least one member of the team is a qualified teacher.

All children will learn alongside **all** members of the nursery team, not just their key worker, so that they have access to all of the expertise that each staff member offers. There are a number of roles that the nursery team take on each week:

- 1) **Outside Leader:** This adult will plan, set up and develop the outdoor learning environment building on the ideas of the children. Activities will help children secure and develop their skills within specific areas of learning including Maths, Literacy, Expressive Arts and Understanding of the World. They will also collect evidence of all children's learning linked to the Prime Areas of Learning - Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication and language.
- 2) **Activity Leader:** This adult will plan, set up and develop the main nursery rooms and engage all learners in activities linked to the topic. They will lead the larger group learning times where children are taught specific knowledge and skills and they will be the adult at the main door at the beginning and end of each session.
- 3) **Interactor.** This is a crucial adult role within the team. This adult will interact, scaffold, support and challenge children's independent play so that children have the opportunity to practice and apply knowledge and skills they have learnt previously, helping them to know more and remember more. They will also play alongside children to encourage the children to extend and challenge their thinking and to focus on their specific learning targets.
- 4) **Small Group Leader (Learning Lab):** The role of this adult is to work with children individually or in small groups leading activities that will support them to close gaps in learning or to develop targeted skills. The activities led by this adult are often practical, quieter activities designed to build Communication and Language skills, Social skills and Physical Development. They will also lead the larger group learning times where children are taught specific knowledge and skills and be at the door to dismiss. They will also be in the Learning Lab to welcome children in the morning and assist in supporting families to use the Nursery Lending Library.

These roles will be rotated weekly so that families get to know all the adults their children learn with. All staff receive Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time every week. This is time out of the unit to complete paperwork. This time is covered by other staff members who take on the role of the person they are covering.

Key Worker

Each child/family will have an allocated key worker. Key Workers offer families a familiar person to talk to and discuss their child with during their nursery experience. The Key Worker is responsible for collecting evidence of your child's learning, liaising with other staff to develop their learning journey, assess their development ongoing and planning next steps and targets for them. Parents meetings, which are offered at least twice across the school year and these will also be led by your keyworker. Where possible, they will keep their key worker for the duration of their time in nursery but this is not always possible.



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School Uniform

At Hillcross we have an agreed school uniform in order to enhance school pride, unity and community spirit—wearing a school uniform also reduces the chance of children making judgements about each other based on appearance. As a member of Hillcross Primary School all children are expected to observe this policy.

| Recommended EYFS Uniform | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain black jogging bottoms, thick black leggings or thick black cycling shorts no shorter than mid thigh (no logos). • White or maroon short sleeved polo shirt (with or without logo). • White, grey or black socks. • Plain black trainers (no additional coloured marking) with Velcro fastening (no plimsolls). • Maroon long sleeved cardigan or V-neck sweatshirt with school logo. | |

| School Uniform | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maroon long sleeved cardigan or V-neck sweatshirt with school logo. • White or maroon short sleeved polo shirt (with or without logo) or white shirt/blouse. • Grey tailored pinafore dress, skirt, skort, shorts or trousers. Clothing should be knee length and tight pencil skirts are not appropriate as they are too restrictive. • (Plain) white, grey or black socks or tights (no leggings to be worn under uniform). • If your child wears cycling shorts, or similar, under a school skirt or dress, these must be white, black or grey and must not be seen below the hem. • Plain black shoes (not sling-back, open toed or heeled) or trainers (no coloured markings) with Velcro fastening until children can manage their own shoelaces/buckle. No boots, plimsolls, canvas pumps or coloured trainers. <p>Warm Weather Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pink/white or red/white checked summer dress (not all in one or 'hybrid' versions). • White/black closed toe leather sandals (in summer). <p>Other compulsory Uniform Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hillcross Logo School Rucksack (Small rucksacks or book bags are available for children in EYFS & KS1). One small discrete key ring may be attached to help your child identify their bag. • Transparent Hillcross Water Bottle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nursery and Reception have water bottles with a maroon or white lid. Alternatively, parents can source their own transparent water bottle with a black, white, grey or maroon lid/tint. • Sunhat - Hillcross logo hat recommended (no visors as these do not provide full protection). <p>Optional Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reversible Fleece-Lined Jacket. • Fully Zipped Fleece. <p><i>Children should not wear non-school uniform hoodies/sweat jackets instead of coats. The above items can be purchased if children do not want to wear a coat and their school sweatshirt is not warm enough.</i></p> | |



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Other Items/Requirements

- A warm coat should be worn to school. The outdoor learning environment is open to the nursery and reception children whatever the weather!
- Waterproof coats and wellies (with school shoes to change into) should be worn on wet days.
- **To ensure the children's safety we recommend that they do not wear earrings to school at all.** However, if it is necessary for them to do so, only one small plain gold or silver round stud (no larger than 4mm) in each ear is allowed. Children should not wear earrings on a PE day, or a day they attend an extra-curricular sports club. Where earrings are worn, they will be removed and stored by the child for all PE sessions. Alternatively parents can cover their child's earrings with a plaster. Staff cannot accept responsibility for lost jewellery.
 - Please do not send your child to school wearing hoops or dangly earrings or those that have corners or edges such as diamond earrings as these are much more likely to catch and cause very painful accidents.
- Long hair (that touches the shoulder or is longer) should be tied back with a plain, discrete hair tie in school colours (black, grey or burgundy).
 - Hair styles should be smart, tidy and appropriate.
- Sunglasses and umbrellas are not permitted - parents/carers will need to bring them to school and take them home again if they wish children to use them on the journey to and from school.
- Makeup, including nail varnish, should not be worn.

Uniform Supplier arrangements

We ensure our uniform supplier arrangements give the highest priority to cost and value for money (including the quality and durability of the garment). We avoid single supplier contracts but where we do have only one provider we engage in regular tendering competitions where more than one supplier can compete for the contract and where the best value for money is secured. All contracts will be retendered at least every 5 years. **Branded items can be ordered through the online school uniform shop at Mapac: <https://www.mapac.com/education/parents/uniform/hillcrossprimarySM4>.** Please be aware that the final order date for guaranteed delivery pre September is Wednesday 31st July.

Pre-loved (Second-hand) School Uniform

Second-hand uniforms can benefit all families, particularly those on low incomes. In addition, by extending the life of garments, it is more sustainable. Preloved school uniforms can also be bought by any families at one of our weekly preloved uniform sales. We ask for a minimum donation of £1 for all items —all money raised through this avenue goes towards enhancing the children's curriculum experiences.

Label everything!!

All items of school uniform (this includes shoes, lunch boxes and school water bottles) should be labelled. Parents are asked to regularly check the uniform their child brings home - it is very easy for items of uniform to get mixed up. If this has happened parents are asked to bring back anything they find that is not their child's and the school will reunite it with its owner.

Developing Independence

All uniform items should enable your child to manage dressing and undressing themselves e.g. velcro instead of laces, elastic waistbands instead of buttons. This will help them to become independent as quickly as possible.



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Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance at school is paramount to ensuring your child has the best nursery experience. Consistency is key. Although Nursery is non-statutory we do monitor attendance and the expectation from the Local Authority in accepting a Nursery school place is that you will use all booked sessions consistently.

Please bring your child to school on time. 100% punctuality is the expectation at Hillcross. Lateness can mean that children miss out on valuable social and learning opportunities and can be unsettling for the child. If you are late you will then need to report to the main school office and sign your child in. It is vital all children are registered correctly in the case of an emergency. Your child will then be taken to the nursery by a member of the Admin team, in order to adhere to our safeguarding procedures, parents cannot go with their child if they are late.

Arrival and Dismissal

A smooth and happy start to the day is essential for the children's wellbeing and development. At the beginning of each session there will be a member of staff on the door to welcome the child into school. You will also be able to pass on any quick messages regarding your child.

Beginning of the Nursery Session: In the morning the gates are opened at 8.30am and families can enter via the **Monkleigh Road or Ashridge Way entrances**. The doors to the nursery will open when the school bell rings at **8.30am** and will close at 8.45am when the second bell rings. The playground gates will be locked at this time. Once the bell has rung you will need to take your child to the school office to sign them in as late.

If you are arriving to drop off your child to the afternoon nursery session you will need to enter the site via the Ashridge Way entrance only. The afternoon session **begins at 12.15pm**. We will open the main school gates just before this time and the Nursery door will open at 12.15pm allowing parents to enter and drop off their children. The Nursery door will be **closed at 12.20pm** so that we can complete the register. If you arrive after 12.20pm, you will need to take your child to the school office to sign them in as late.

End of the Session: The morning nursery session finishes at **11.30am** and children attending the **afternoon session or an all day session must be collected between 3pm – 3.15pm** (this flexible collection time is in place to take account of families who also collect siblings from other areas of the school). We will not dismiss your child to someone we do not know unless this has been agreed in advance. If it is a regular arrangement that different people collect your child on different days, please provide a timetable that will be added to the school system.

If someone different is collecting your child on an ad hoc occasion, you can email the school to inform us of a pre-planned change (please allow 48 hours prior to the day). Alternatively, please inform a member of the Nursery Team when you drop off or call the school office with as much notice as possible. We recognise that families are not always able to give notice and in this instance we will ask the person collecting to tell us your parental password - if the person collecting your child does not know the password we will not dismiss your child to them until we have spoken to a person with parental responsibility.

Health and Safety when coming onto site each day

Whilst in the playground it is really important that all parents/carers ensure health and safety rules are followed. This includes ensuring that your child (or younger siblings) is NOT riding on scooters or bikes in the playground or playing unsupervised anywhere, especially on the field, adventure trails or climbing equipment. Please do not let children play with the toys or resources in the outside learning environment. These have often been set up ready for learning or packed away to keep the equipment safe and from being ruined.



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The Part Time (Universal) Nursery Session

This is an example of a general day in the Nursery for the part time Nursery children. The session will differ on P.E. days and additional activity days.

| Time | Session details |
|---|---|
| 8.30am-8.45am or 12.15-12.30pm | Parents and carers are welcome to come into the nursery with their child. Each child will self register by putting their name card into a designated container - this is a valuable learning activity so please refrain from finding the name for them! Once your child has self-registered they will hang up their coat and bag, then you can settle them at an activity before saying goodbye. This is also the time to change your books in the nursery Lending Library. <i>Some children do all this independently and staff will support children who need help if their parent/carer is unable to come in with them.</i> |
| 8.45am-9am or 12.30-12.45pm | Staff interact with the children in their self-initiated play and/or work with children in small groups or on a 1:1 basis to develop a specific skill or to revisit previous learning they need to practice/need support with. This time allows us to help the children consolidate skills and close any identified gaps in their learning. |
| 9am- 9.10am or 12.45-12.55pm | The children and staff all participate in 'Wake Up Shake Up!' - a physical activity session. This session helps to develop children's strength, dexterity, coordination and muscle development. It is a great way to enhance their physical skills, their motivation and their ability to think flexibly. It also helps to promote positive wellbeing! |
| 9.10-9.30/ 9.30-9.50am or 12.55-1.15pm | Adult-led larger group learning time teaching key skills that children will use across the session, including details of the day's activities and the learning challenges to be completed. This will be completed in groups of approximately 20 children and will last for 10-15 mins. Whilst one group takes part, the other children will be engaged in child-initiated learning in the nursery unit. |
| 9.50am-11 am or 1.15-2.30pm | Child-initiated learning time and adult-directed learning activities. The children will interact and take part in adult-led and child-initiated learning experiences inside and outside. All children are encouraged to help tidy up at the end of the session so please encourage them to do this at home too! |
| 11am-11.20am or 2.30-2.50pm | Story and Rhyme Time! |
| 11.20am-11.30am or 2.50-3.00pm | AM: All day children get ready for lunch. Morning only children collect their belongings and get ready to be dismissed. PM: children collect their belongings and get ready to be dismissed. |
| 3-3.15pm | Song and Rhyme time whilst waiting to be collected. The children will be available to collect from 3pm, as part of our flexible end of day procedures (see above). |

The Full Time (Extended Day Offer) Nursery Session

- **11.15-12.15: lunchtime** (see below for more details)
- **PM adult-led larger group sessions** will be based on practical and interactive activities, learning walks in the school or games. The focus will be on developing the Prime Areas of Learning.
- **PM adult-led activities** will extend children's play and build on the morning learning focus. Additional resources set out will support this. Full time nursery children also have access to the ICT suite, Adventure Trail, Studio Hall and other specialist rooms to complete a range of adult initiated learning opportunities.
- Please click here for further information about our [All Day Nursery Provision and Flexible Hours Offer](#)



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Lunchtime Procedures: For Full Time Nursery Children

Lunchtime is an exciting part of the school day for the children. We are proud of our Healthy School Gold Status and work with families to ensure that all children enjoy a healthy and nutritional lunch.

Parents of full time nursery children can send in a healthy packed lunch for their child or they can choose to purchase a hot school meal provided by Caterlink - nursery children are not entitled to a free school meal, under the government Universal Infant Free Schools Meal (UIFSM) scheme or the Mayor's Programme. Our school lunches are freshly prepared on site in our fully equipped school kitchen and (in our experience) children are much more likely to try new food (and enjoy it) when they are not with their family so it is a good idea to let them try out a hot meal in their first half term. We do not want the children to go hungry so we will keep a close eye on how much they eat during this period and liaise with parents where necessary. Remember no news is good news!

| Lunchtime Options | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Purchase a Hot School Meal | <p>As well as a hot lunch, the children are free to take a piece of freshly baked bread and choose from the salad cart which offers a range of freshly cut vegetables each day. The school menu offers vegetarian and Halal options. Through liaison with families the kitchen team can accommodate allergy and dietary needs - please speak to a member of staff from the admin team with any queries of this nature. Menus change twice a year and our Junior Leadership Team works closely with our catering providers to ensure school meals are both nutritious and appealing to our children.</p> <p>You can view the current menu on the school website. Click here to view a sample menu on our website: https://www.hillcross.merton.sch.uk/virtual-office/school-dinners</p> |
| Packed Lunches | <p>If you choose to provide a packed lunch for your child, this must be in a named lunch bag or box. We suggest that a small amount of food should be provided (most parents provide enough food to feed a whole class when their child first starts school!) and this can be gradually increased if your child eats everything and is still hungry. We will liaise with families in these circumstances and will ensure no child will be left feeling hungry - they will have access to fruit and milk throughout the day.</p> <p>We actively promote healthy lifestyle choices in line with our Healthy School status. Children should not have chocolate, packets of biscuits, sweets or fizzy drinks in their packed lunches. Suggestions for items to be included are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Savoury option such as a sandwich, pasta or filled wrap● Fresh or dried fruit and/or vegetable● A bottle of water or juice● Crisps, savoury biscuits, cheese pieces or yoghurts.● A small treat may be included if felt necessary <p><u>Please note that we are a NUT FREE school so please do not send any nuts or products containing nuts (such as peanut butter, nutella or cereal bars with nuts) into school with your child.</u></p> |

The children will be supported in the dining hall by two members of the EYFS team and their designated Midday Play Leaders (MPLs). They are encouraged to eat their healthy savoury option first, then their fruit and finally their treat. Water is available on the tables for all children to drink. All children are encouraged to eat at least half



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of their lunch by staff but we cannot force them to eat. They will then play outside in the EYFS playground, supervised by the MPLs.

Snacks and Water

To promote children's physical health and emotional wellbeing, we help the children to develop an understanding of how to be healthy by promoting the development of good eating and drinking habits. We should all aim to enjoy a balanced diet, which includes plenty of water and fruit, alongside a variety of nutritionally healthy meals.

Eating breakfast and/or lunch before coming to nursery is essential and we urge all families to ensure their children have a suitable meal before coming to school so that they have the energy they need to be fully engaged and make the most of every learning opportunity.

Throughout their day the children have access to fresh drinking water to keep them hydrated and alert for learning. Your child will need to bring their own named Hillcross water bottle (see school uniform page) to school each day. We also have a 'Self-service Café' which has a fridge where children can get a carton of milk and choose a piece of fruit.

Good hygiene habits are encouraged through formal direction and informal encouragement. The children are encouraged to wash their hands regularly.

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Fruit | Fresh fruit is provided free of charge to all children under seven years old by the government. Fruit options include; apples, satsumas, pears, tomatoes, bananas, raisins and carrots. All fruit is washed but we do not peel or chop the fruit. Children are encouraged to eat at least one piece of fruit a day from the Self-service café. Please do not send any other snacks to school. |
| Water | The children have access to their water bottles throughout the day. In warm weather we encourage the children to stay hydrated. We <u>do not</u> allow any other drink in their water bottles but you can provide a separate juice drink in their lunchbox to drink at lunchtime. EYFS staff will refill the water bottles across the day as required. |
| Milk | The 1st January 2016 marked the first anniversary of the new School Food Standards. As part of the standards, there is legislation that stipulates that <i>all children in primary school education must be provided with the option of lower fat drinking milk during school hours.</i> Therefore, all children under five are entitled to free school milk and the government provides this to schools without the need for you to register. Once your child is five their entitlement to free school milk stops, however you may continue to buy school milk for your child whilst they are in our reception class by registering at http://www.coolmilk.com/. Children will be encouraged to drink milk but we do not keep a daily record of who has drunk their milk. |

If your child has any allergies or dietary needs it is vitally important that we know about these immediately and in advance of your child starting with us in order to ensure they are kept safe at school. When we carry out cooking sessions or have food tasting opportunities, we will liaise with families where we are aware of allergies, therefore it is extremely important that any allergies are highlighted to school as soon as they are known.



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Celebrations

In line with our inclusive practise we ask that no homemade or shop bought treats or sweets are sent in for any celebrations, including birthdays. An alternative option is to bring something into school that all children can enjoy in school such as felt pens, creative materials, a game or a book to share.

The First Few Weeks

Starting school for the first time can be a daunting experience for some children and we work hard to ensure every child has a positive start to their time in our school. We carefully stagger the entry of children into our nursery and have additional staff on hand in order to help the children to settle in happily and ensure they have time to adapt to the new environment and routines in a calm and contented way.

In the first few weeks we spend time getting to know your child, **finding out what they already know, what they can do and what their next steps are.** We also complete some baseline assessments on each child so we can effectively plan ahead for future learning.

We try to give feedback to families as frequently as we can about how their child is settling in and staff will pass on general comments at drop off and collection times but we do not operate in the same way as a private day nursery and we are not able to provide detailed daily updates for all children. We will always speak to parents about incidents or accidents that have happened at school or if we have any concerns.

You Can Do It!

Positive Approach to Behaviour Management

Whilst the children settle in, we will be working with them to establish routines and expectations. The main way we do this is by introducing them to our positive behaviour programme - You Can Do It! Through this initiative the children learn appropriate behaviours for learning and socialising. Across the year, children are rewarded with tokens when they use words, actions or behaviours that demonstrate the focus areas. The tokens are then added to the child's individual reward section on the You Can Do It! Chart.

The four focus areas of You Can Do It! are:

- **Confidence;** overcoming fears, trying new experiences and interacting with others.
- **Persistence;** not giving up! Changing their behaviours and trying again.
- **Organisation;** being able to follow the rules, organising their own resources,
- **Getting along;** sharing with others, involving new friends in their play, saying please and thank you to everyone.

The tokens will then add up to the following rewards:

- 10 tokens in one area = a certificate
- 10 tokens in all areas = a medal
- 20 tokens in one area = a badge
- 20 tokens in all areas = an invitation from a Senior Leader to join a celebration party.



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- 30 tokens in one area = a wrist band
- 30 tokens in all areas = You Can Do It! Teddy

All awards are given out during the weekly Early Years Foundation Stage Collective Worship.

Physical development and PE in Nursery

At Hillcross we believe that Physical Education (PE) is an important aspect of children's overall development and a crucial part of developing a healthy lifestyle. We aim to foster an interest and enjoyment in physical activity, sport and games that will stay with them throughout an active and healthy life. Through an extensive programme of activities our children will also develop their self-confidence, self-esteem and interpersonal skills as well as an appreciation of fair play and honest competition.

In the Spring and Summer term our Nursery children take part in PE sessions every Tuesday and Thursday. On these days, we kindly ask that the children wear their **casual Nursery uniform**, including jogging bottoms or leggings, instead of dresses, skirts, or trousers, to ensure they can comfortably participate in physical activities.

Children's gross motor development will be observed every day during Wake Up! Shake Up!, during their outdoor learning sessions and in P.E. sessions. Through these ongoing observations and evaluations we are able to ensure the learning targets key areas and skills to ensure continuity and progression of skills and to ensure skills are supported and challenged every day.

Promoting Independence

Although the children will not be required to get changed for PE, they do have to remove their shoes, socks and jumpers when taking part in physical movement sessions in the gym and when in the Nursery unit for some activities. They will also need to be able to put on, fasten and remove their coats a number of times across the school day to be able to access the outside area and they will need to manage their clothing when using the toilet.

Independence is a key skill that is taught in the nursery unit and to help with this we suggest that all families begin to encourage their children to dress and undress independently in preparation for starting school. Buttons, laces and zips can often cause difficulties so we recommend avoiding them in the clothes you select for your children or you give them plenty of practice fastening and unfastening these at home.

To ease your child's transition and promote their independence we would also suggest that they do not wear multiple layers under their school uniform. The classrooms are warm and a simple vest under their T-shirt, along with a school jumper, is sufficient in the winter months. We also discourage the wearing of shorts on top of underwear, underneath dresses for hygiene reasons.



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Assessment

We encourage parents to be actively involved in their children's learning and development as you know your children better than anyone. Our assessment and monitoring system allows for school and home to collect evidence and work together to show the development of the child.

On entry to Nursery, staff will begin to teach, interact and learn alongside your child whilst they are immersed in meaningful play opportunities. They will collect videos, photographs and observations of your child's interactions, language skills and physical development. These pieces of evidence allow us to make a Baseline Assessment of their knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Using this baseline, we plan, support and challenge your child to develop and learn. Each child in the nursery has their very own 'Learning Journey', both electronic and a scrapbook containing all their learning observations, photographs and work samples. Parents are invited into school at the end of each term to share the Learning Journeys with their child at our 'Progress Celebration Event'.

Your child's achievements and next steps will also be discussed with you at the end of their first half term in school. If we have specific concerns about your child's development we may also arrange meetings to discuss any external referrals we feel would support their progress. Early identification and referrals to outside services is key to ensure all children develop and meet expected developmental milestones and are not an attempt to 'label' children.

Home Learning/Google Classroom

Your child will have a Google Classroom account which will be accessed via unique log in - this will be sent home once your child starts with us. Staff will upload weekly home learning opportunities and parents can upload their own videos, photographs and observations of their children. These can be special events your child can share with their friends (thus building confidence in speaking and listening) or examples of them demonstrating a new skill such as threading, counting or reading. All contributions help us to build a picture of what your child can do in different settings.

Sharing concerns and Worries

If staff are concerned or worried about your child's development they will contact you to discuss this. Equally if you have any concerns or worries then sharing these with staff as soon as possible is always recommended. Whilst we know that children develop at different rates across the Early Years, early intervention is crucial and can be accessed by school via referrals to Speech and Language Therapist or Occupational Therapist. We also work closely with the NHS and regularly liaise with Health Visitors and Paediatricians. Some of these services are only accessible before the child turns 5 or by the end of Reception.



Hillcross Primary School

Preparation for starting school - How you can help.

The EYFS framework sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop the knowledge and skills they need to set the 'foundation' for future learning. During their time in our Nursery your child will learn a whole range of skills that develop them holistically as a learner. In preparation for their journey into school life, there are a number of ways you can help them to be 'nursery ready'.

Developing their independence: Help your child to develop their independence in the following ways: dressing themselves e.g. putting their coat on/off, fastening their buttons and zip, putting their shoes on/off, using a knife and fork, using the toilet and wiping, washing and drying their hands. [Click here for more information on PSED](#)

Toileting: Whilst we understand the difficulties around toileting and moving from nappies/ pull ups into knickers/ pants, we would encourage all families to start the processes of toileting before they start Nursery.

Developing their speaking and listening skills: encourage your child to ask questions about the world around them. Talk to them and encourage them to take turns in conversation. [Find out more information on our website.](#)

Developing their Physical development skills: Gross and fine motor development is crucial to early writing skills. Climbing, swimming and dancing are key to supporting this. [Click here for more information.](#)

Developing their confidence in Mark making: Drawing and developing confidence in pencil control is key to early writing. There is lots of information on our website about how you can help and support your child in this area, [click here](#). White board and white board pens are available via parent mail for families to purchase. Practising and familiarising your child with our pre-writing YELs will also help their handwriting journey. Once children are secure with forming the YELs we then move onto forming letters in our Hillcross Cursive Script.

Developing their Early Reading skills: Share stories with your child. Talk about characters in the books and sequence the story into 3 parts; beginning, middle & end. [Find out more information on our website, which includes our virtual library](#)

Starting their Phonics journey: Phonics is the basis for reading and writing skills. At Hillcross, we set children up for lifelong reading and spelling when we teach phonics rigorously and comprehensively. Phonics develops the skills needed to hear sounds in words (phonemes) and match them to the corresponding visual representation (Graphemes). Reading and writing are like a code: phonics is teaching the child to crack the code. At Hillcross, our phonics Programme is Phonics International (PI). [Find out more about Phonics International here](#), which we begin teaching directly in Reception. Before we start our journey into phonics and focusing on phonemes (sounds) and Graphemes (Letters), there are key Pre-Phonics skills that children need to know. These include singing Nursery rhymes, listening and distinguishing between sounds in the world around us, understanding rhyme and alliteration. [Click here to find out more information about how you can support your child's journey into phonics.](#)

Developing their Maths skills: Maths is more than just reciting numbers and counting out loud. The new focus across school is on developing fluency skills and deeper understanding of numbers. There are now 6 areas within maths we focus on; cardinality, composition, comparison, pattern, shape and space, measure. Alongside the EYFS



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framework we also follow Maths Mastery and NCTEM. More information on how you can support at home can be found on our website, [click here](#).

Communication and collaboration between home and school

Staff are available at the beginning and end of each session to receive/share brief messages but it is important that their focus is on welcoming, settling and supervising the children at this busy time. Therefore, if you have anything you wish to discuss in private or may take more than a minute, please let us know and we will organise a suitable time to call/meet with you. We recommend that if you want to speak to a member of staff in a little more detail or wish to raise a concern that you email info@hillcross.merton.sch.uk so that we can arrange a meeting at a convenient time or arrange for someone to call you. There are also members of the Senior Leadership Team at the school gate and you can talk to them if you need any guidance.

We believe full partnership with all members of our school community is the best way to ensure success for our children and therefore encourage you to engage in school life. For parents, there are a range of opportunities for you to get involved in, including parent workshops, membership of the FOH (Friends Of Hillcross), attending performances, volunteering in school and accompanying classes on school trips.

Bromcom/My Child At School (MCAS)

Once you have joined the school you will be asked to register to access our parent portal linked to our Bromcom Management Information System called 'My Child At School' (MCAS). This facility allows you to interact with the information we hold about your child, track their attendance, receive announcements and emails from the school and you will be able to see the personal information we hold about you. You can update this information at any time which helps keep records up to date. It will also be the place where you can book school dinners, extra-curricular after school clubs, pay for trips, book and pay for places at Breakfast Club, After School Club and Holiday Club, book parents evenings and more!

On the day your child starts with us, you will receive an email link so that you can set up your account and begin to access the features of the portal. This will contain the usernames and passwords you need for 'My Child at School' (MCAS), so it is important that we have up-to-date contact information for you. **Please make sure you have notified us of any recent changes in your contact information that you have not already shared with us (email addresses and mobile numbers) to ensure that the information we transfer to Bromcom is the right information.**



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Breakfast Club, After School Club and Holiday Club - The Copse@Hillcross

At Hillcross we run our own high quality on-site breakfast club and afterschool club called The Copse. This provision enables families who require extended childcare the opportunity for their child to be cared for at our school from 7.15am until 6pm each day as required.

If you would like to request a place for your child, it is imperative that we know which sessions you require so that we can try to plan appropriate staffing to be in place and meet your requirements as quickly as possible. This is a popular service and places are allocated on a first come, first-served basis so please express your interest as soon as possible by clicking on this link: [The Copse Registration Form](#) . Please ensure you include specific information about which sessions and days you will require.

Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club operates from Monday to Friday (term times) from 7.15am until 8.35am when the main school starts. Children have the choice of cereal or toast, alongside water and juice as a refreshment. They will be able to play games, read or chat to their friends in our welcoming club.

After School Club

Our very popular after school club runs from the end of the school day until 6pm from three different locations across the school: our nursery and reception children are based in the main Copse building and our older children are based in either The Tulip Room (middle of the school) or in The Orchard (Monkleigh end of the school). All spaces have both indoor and outdoor provision that the children can access. They also have quiet spaces available where children can complete home learning or relax and unwind after a busy school day. The children are offered a snack prepared by Caterlink, our catering team, and this is eaten in the main school hall.

Please note that although The Copse and Early Years Team work closely together, the staff are not the same. Therefore, if the Nursery team has any specific and important information to share with you, they will call you. Similarly, the Copse Team will not be able to provide a detailed overview of each child's time in the Copse or to be able to give feedback on their day in Nursery when you collect them.

Holiday Club

At our holiday club, which is only available for children who attend Hillcross, the children have a choice of indoor and outdoor activities. We provide a range of resources for your children to play with and help them socialise in a friendly setting such as books, board games, puzzles and the use of a computer with educational/age appropriate games. Children also engage in fun experiences such as arts, crafts, a range of sports and cooking activities. We plan themed weeks such as 'Art Attack' and 'Beautiful Beasts' and when possible, a range of special activity days such as dress-up days, picnics and trips to the park.

For more information on The Copse and for our Terms and Conditions, please go [to our school website](#).



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If you have any other questions, please refer to our school website in the first instance.

The **'Parents'** tab and the **'Virtual Office'** tab are useful places to look and you can also use the search function to find the information you need.

If you need more personal guidance, please email admissions@hillcross.merton.sch.uk and someone will get in touch as soon as possible.