



Hillside

First School

Part of the Initio Learning Trust

initio
Learning Trust

HANDBOOK 2024-2025



'where children are at the heart of everything we do'

Introduction

The information given in this handbook is intended for parents/carers who have children about to start Hillside First School or are interested in joining. This handbook provides important information about day-to-day life at Hillside First School.

On the following pages you will find information about:

- **Welcome to Hillside First School**
- **About Us**
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Welcome to Hillside First School

We are a community school for children aged 4-9 years. We aim to provide our pupils with the skills, knowledge, attitudes and understanding that will enable them to flourish in the modern world and meet the challenges of the future with confidence and compassion.



As a first school we educate children from Reception (4 years of age) to Year 4 (9 year olds). Our standard admissions level is 60 with two classes of up to 30 children, per year group.

The school is situated in spacious grounds that border heathland and forest. The school consists of a main block, which accommodates Reception and Key Stage 1 and a new build that accommodates Year 3 and Year 4.



We have a large field, as well as a hard play surface that is marked for tennis, netball and football. We have an outdoor classroom and a 'Trim Trail', to further enhance the grounds. In addition, we have a garden area where children can go at playtimes and lunchtimes for quieter, more reflective activities.

We have recently created a Creative Media Suite where children can enjoy a range of activities including coding, junk modelling, programming, arts and crafts along with a range of other activities.

About Us

Part of Initio Learning Trust

Since January 2019, Hillside First School has been part of [Initio Learning Trust](#). The Trust is a growing multi-academy, currently looking after 17 schools in Dorset. The Trust provides an all-through education for children in the community from aged 2 to 18, ensuring children are given a broad and balanced education which prepares them well for success in their future lives.

How is the school organised?

The school is led and managed by:

Mr Dave Graves, Headteacher supported by: Mrs Karen Pain, Deputy Headteacher and Mrs Clare Corrie, SENDCo who form the Senior Leadership team.

The school is organised into three key stages:

- Early Years Foundation Stage – children in Reception
- Key Stage One – Children in Years 1 and 2
- Key Stage Two – children in Years 3 and 4

Local School Committee

Our Local School Committee works in collaboration with staff to ensure that the school successfully fulfils its aims.

The Local School Committee is made up of representatives from the local community, including parents, representatives from local business, teaching and support staff. The Local School Committee meets half termly.

Values

We are committed to maximising pupil progress, achievement and development. Our core values at Hillside promote **RESPECT** and give our children the best possible start to their school life:

Responsibility, **E**xcellence, **S**upport,
Perseverance, **E**mpathy, **C**ommunity Spirit
and **T**olerance



Admission Arrangements

Children can attend Hillside First School at Foundation Stage by joining our Reception Base, Little Owls. Little Owls is for children who will reach five years of age between September 1st and August 31st in the year of admission.



At Hillside First School we adhere to the Local Authority Admissions Policy.

Full details of school admissions together with additional information and advice can be requested from the school office, or found on the Dorset Parents Guide, located [here](#)

Term Dates 2024-25

	Autumn Term 2024	Spring Term 2025	Summer Term 2025
Term starts	Thursday 5 th	Tuesday 7 th January	Wednesday 23 rd April
Half term	Monday 28 th October – Friday 1 st November	Monday 17 th Friday 21 st February	Monday 26 th - Friday 30 th May
Term ends	Thursday 19 th December	Friday 4 th April	Tuesday 23 rd July

Inset Days	Tuesday 3 rd September 2024 Wednesday 4 th September 2024 Monday 4 th November 2024 Friday 20 th December 2024 Monday 6 th January 2025 Monday 24 th February 2025 Tuesday 22 nd April 2025 Friday 4 th July 2025
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May Day Holiday	Monday 5 th May 2025
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School Information

School Times

The school day runs as follows:

School gates are open	08:30
Registration	08:40
Morning break at	10:05 – 10:20
Morning session ends at	12:00
Afternoon session begins	13:00
KS1 afternoon play	14:00 – 14:10
End of school	15:00

School Travel Plan



Families are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school where possible. This helps promote a healthy lifestyle and is good for the environment as well as reduce the number of children travelling to school by car.

We are a Sustrans Bike-It School and support safer routes to school. Children who wish to cycle to school must wear a helmet and be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Bikes can be locked and kept dry in the bike shed area at the front of the school building. Bikes and scooters must be pushed on the school premises.

Breakfast and After School Clubs

Children also have access to a breakfast club run by the Pre-School. This means that children can be dropped off from 07:45 and eat breakfast in a leisurely fashion before being taken by staff to the appropriate class. Staff from breakfast club will take the children directly to their class.

There is an after school club run in Hillside Pre-School after school each day in term time. Children attending Hillside First School have the opportunity to attend this after school club, which is located on the same site. After school club staff will collect the children from their class at 15:00.

This is an excellent provision providing outstanding care for the children in a familiar environment.



Pupil Premium

The Government provides some extra funding for schools to help families in challenging circumstances. The school can use this to provide for extra learning support, help with uniform costs, travel costs for school trips and extra resources.

Families in receipt of pupil premium are entitled to free school meals during their time at school. The easiest way is to apply online [here](#).



You will need your National Insurance number to hand. You will find out straight away if you are eligible.

Safeguarding Procedures

Our first priority is to your child's welfare and we will usually discuss any concerns we might have about your child with you. We have an agreed Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy which ensures that all staff in our school are clear about the actions necessary with regard to a child protection issue. There might be times, however, when we have to provide information to, or consult with other agencies such as Social Care before we contact you. Our responsibility to do so is determined by Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Inter Agency Child Protection procedures. Hillside First School is part of Operation Encompass and work in partnership with Dorset Police. If you want to know more about these procedures, please speak to the Headteacher.

Our Safeguarding Team



David Graves
Safeguarding Lead



Karen Pain
Deputy Safeguarding Lead



Heather Harris
Deputy Safeguarding Lead



Karen Smith
Safeguarding Governor

The designated Child protection members of staff are Mr David Graves (Headteacher), Mrs Karen Pain (Deputy Headteacher) and Mrs Heather Harris (Inclusion Manager and Family Support).

We require all adults employed and working in a voluntary basis at the school to have an Enhanced Disclosure in line with statutory procedures.

The Curriculum

Overview

At Hillside First School we want our children to develop the best possible character and become respectful, resilient and compassionate citizens, who have the skills to succeed in our diverse, ever-changing global community. To achieve this, our curriculum is designed to provide a progression of knowledge and skills, which pupils develop through inspiring, interconnected learning. Our curriculum remains flexible to respond to the needs and interests of our pupils and changes in the local community and wider world.

Leaders maintain a strong focus on the curriculum and are accountable for its design and implementation. All staff make valued contributions towards the planning, delivery and review of the curriculum in order to continually provide the best possible outcomes for our pupils.

Early Years



The reception year is the year where the firm foundations are laid for your child to learn to read, write and understand number. During the school day your child will have access to activities that cover a broad and balanced curriculum. During the Autumn Term we particularly focus on personal and social skills, physical development and communication and language.

We do lots of fun activities like doh disco, funky arms, storycise and squiggle and wiggle to help us strengthen our muscles and control our bodies to become successful writers. We follow the Heartsmart scheme to help us with our wellbeing and Boris the Robot helps us to learn about our emotions.

During the school day the children have inputs on phonic/sound work, text work from a big book and number work during our snack time. Plan Do Review is when your child will access the curriculum through adult led activities and planning their own activities. As the year progresses the children will be encouraged to review their work and challenge themselves independently.

KS1 and KS2

Each curriculum subject, and its associated knowledge and skills, is valued and afforded appropriate coverage. Subjects are either combined meaningfully in learning contexts that are thematic and age-appropriate, or they may be taught as discrete subjects, when it is considered that this will achieve the intended learning outcomes more effectively. Basic skills in English, Mathematics and other subjects are regularly applied in cross curricular contexts.

Progression of learning in all subject areas is a key element of our curriculum. Skills and knowledge are carefully developed in all subject areas based on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and locally agreed syllabuses. The school has high expectations of all pupils and provides varied, rich opportunities to inspire them to achieve their full potential across all subjects.

Assessment

Assessment is used not only to inform teachers of progress, identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills, but also to reflect on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the taught curriculum, its design and implementation.

Pupils work towards 'targets', expressed as small steps so that they can recognise their success. In accordance with national procedures, Hillside First School participates in compulsory assessments at the end of EYFS, Year 1 Phonics check, statutory testing at the end of Key Stage 1 and the Year 4 multiplication timestables check. These are largely teacher assessments but are supported by some tests.



We use this data to help us inform teacher's assessments and also identify areas of strength and aspects for improvement. We believe that our broad, rich curriculum and rights-respecting ethos prepares pupils to perform confidently in assessments and equips them with the tools to be successful learners with high aspirations for their future.

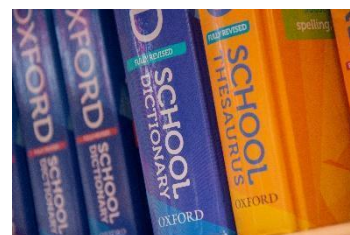
Religious, Spiritual and Moral Education

Our school is part of a multicultural society and is not affiliated to any religious denomination. We follow a Trust wide Religious Education syllabus that considers all faiths. Assemblies are used to encourage children to consider moral issues through the use of current news items, stories, fables, folk stories and discussion. Assembly provides a moment of quiet reflection. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from religious education and acts of collective worship.

Home Learning

Home Learning is set via Google Classroom and the aim is to:

- Forge and strengthen the home/school partnership and involve parents/carers in children's learning.
- Consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- Exploit resources for learning of all kinds at home.
- Extend school learning, for example through additional reading.
- Encourage children, as they get older, to develop the confidence and self-discipline needed to study on their own.
- Enable children to investigate and explore in more depth and at their own pace.
- Provide parents/carers with insight into the children's progress.
- Show children that parents/carers are interested in their learning progress.
- Create opportunities for families to work together on a project or activity.



Trips and Residential Visits

Throughout the school year, trips provide an excellent opportunity for children to link their learning to the world in which they live. It is our view that education visits offer essential, motivating, first-hand, real-life experiences which they will remember for many years to come.

We benefit from finding ourselves on the edge of forest and heathland. We make good use of this environment, particularly during the summer term. We are well supported by local churches and the Verwood Heritage Centre.





Some of our visits have included; Priest's House Museum, Blashford Nature Reserve, Russell Cotes Museum and Marwell Zoo. We rely on voluntary contributions to support the school visits and usually seek parental assistance on such trips.

Our Year 4 children have the opportunity to attend a residential visit at Hooke Court. The children attend for 3 days and two nights and take part in a range of educational and engaging (hands-on) activities.

Local Visits

When your child starts school, you will be asked to sign a consent form, giving permission for your child to visit local places of interest; 'local' means within walking distance. For all other trips you will be sent a letter describing the trip and asking for your permission. If we do not have your permission, we will not take your child out of school.

Teachers plan trips that have an educational value and that are reasonably priced. We do ask parents/carers to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of trips. If sufficient parents/carers do not contribute to the cost of a trip, the trip may not take place.

To ensure the safety of our children on trips out of school, teachers complete a risk assessment. Teachers will visit the destination in advance of the trip in order to complete this. Children are insured for all trips out of school.



Extra Curricular Activities

Our philosophy for providing after school clubs is to give the children an opportunity to participate in a variety of engaging and enjoyable activities.

There are various clubs on offer to the children in all year groups. These include:

Tennis
Rugby
Football
Multi-Skills
Dance
Gardening
Creative Club
Rocksteady Music

Clubs take place at lunch time or after school. These clubs provide the opportunity for your child to try new activities, as well as develop new skills.



Several of our sports clubs are run by professional coaches on a private and fee paying basis.

These clubs enable the children to interact with their peers as well as developing their self-confidence.

Attendance

Being at school is a very **important** part of any child's life. It enables them to learn, to make friends, to gain important knowledge and to develop a variety of skills which will prepare them for adult life. School and parents/carers are partners in making this a success. As parents or carers it is **your legal responsibility** to make sure that your child makes the most of this opportunity by attending regularly and aiming for at least 95% attendance.

1. We are unable to authorise school absences without a good reason.
2. We will try to ring you if your child is absent and we have not heard from you.
3. We monitor attendance carefully and we will write to you if your child's attendance drops below 95%.
4. If attendance remains low we will ask you to meet with us to discuss the way forward and possibly ask you to provide medical evidence before we will authorise any more absences.



If your child is away from school, you must contact the school before 09:30 so that we know that your child is safe with you. This is a legal requirement and any unauthorised absences will be noted on your child's Annual Report.

Please let us know in advance if your child is going to be withdrawn for medical or dental treatment. If your child has to leave school for an appointment, or because they are unwell, please sign your child out at the school office. Time in school is important and, if possible, try to ensure appointments are made after school and during school holidays.

Holidays

Following the changes to the Attendance Regulations, schools are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances." Under these regulations, holidays are not considered as exceptional circumstances and may result in a penalty notice.

The Local School Committee at Hillside First School have determined that exceptional circumstances are:

- Bereavement. Up to 3 days for a close family bereavement. (Close family is the child's great grandparents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings (brother/sister), cousins, mother, father, carer and guardians.)
- Any major incident in the lives of parents or carers of the child, causing practical difficulties for a child getting to school will be given up to 3 days leave of absence.
- Any family crisis. Up to 3 days.
- Close family wedding. (members as above) Up to 2 days per year.
- Leave following the return of a lengthy absent parent

All other exceptional circumstances need to be discussed with the Headteacher. All applications for leave of absence during term time must be made by letter to the Headteacher.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

The Local School Committee and staff at Hillside First School have a commitment to inclusion, and children recognised as having additional learning needs. We aim to ensure the best match between identified need and provision. The ethos of Hillside First School aims to support positive attitudes towards individuals with different needs. This is expressed through the language we use, our relationships with one another and through the resources and environment we provide.

In school, there will be children with SEND and these may include children who find reading and writing difficult, have speech and language difficulties, who find concentrating hard, who may have behaviour challenges, or other needs. In Hillside First School, the class teachers are responsible for teaching and caring for SEND children under the guidance of our SEND Co-ordinator (SENDCo). This means that the SENDCo will be able to ensure these children receive any extra help that may be available.

Regular consultations with parents ensure the best possible outcomes for the children. We also liaise with a range of outside agencies including Health, Education and Social Care.

The school recognises that parents have a wealth of knowledge about their child and always seek to work in partnership with parents. Parents are fully involved in all arrangements concerning their child.

The Local School Committee and staff at Hillside First School continually improve and review accessibility and actively seek support and advice from the Local Authority advisors to make appropriate provision. The staff also ensure that access arrangements are taken into consideration when planning activities and field trips.

Family Information Service

The Family Information Service provides a wide range of information on their website [here](#), offering advice, guidance or help for families, carers and young people. They will also give information over the telephone or via the internet.

These are a few of the many subjects covered:

- Looking for 0-19 information, advice, guidance or help?
- Brokerage and outreach services
- Support for children with additional needs
- Childcare information
- Activities and clubs
- Holiday club information
- Financial support

Equal Opportunities

We uphold the right of all pupils to receive the highest quality education regardless of age, race, ethnicity, special needs or disability, family or social background. We believe that the community of the school should reflect the diversity of its local and regional community and that diversity can, and should, enhance the 'life experience' of those within the community.

School Uniform

We have a uniform at Hillside First School. The owl is our school mascot and appears on our royal blue sweatshirts, cardigans and fleeces.

Uniform for Boys



Grey shorts or trousers
Sky blue polo shirt
Royal blue sweatshirt or fleece*

Uniform for Girls



Grey skirt, pinafore or trousers
Sky blue polo shirt
Royal blue sweatshirt, cardigan
or fleece*
Summer option: blue and white dress

All Children

Shoes: flat, velcro, buckled or laced shoes (black or navy).
Summer option: flat sandals with closed toes.

Please note fashion footwear, trainers, shoes or sandals with heels and opened toes are not suitable.



P.E. Kit: black football shorts or cycling shorts, white collarless (not polo) t-shirt and trainers with velcro fasteners. Black tracksuit bottoms and black tracksuit top. *Please note skorts are not suitable.*

Coat: warm, waterproof coat for playtimes and lunchtime.

** Items with the school logo are only available from Threads & Treads school uniform shop, in Verwood.*

**PLEASE ENSURE ALL ITEMS OF CLOTHING ARE CLEARLY
AND PERMANENTLY LABELLED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME**

It is not appropriate for children to wear jewellery to school, nor should nail polish be worn. Children are allowed to wear earrings during the school day, provided they are small studs. These must be covered for PE and parents accept responsibility for injury caused or loss of items.

Key stage two children may wear small, discreet watches (they must not have a photo facility on them), but will need to remove them for PE. The school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to watches.

Shoulder length hair should ideally be tied up at all times, but definitely for PE.

Food, Money and Personal Possessions

Hot School Meals

At Hillside First School, hot School meals are offered to all children in the school who stay for lunch. These are ordered online from Chartwells [here](#).

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free school meal under the governments 'Universal Infant Free School Meal' scheme. However, parents/carers should still apply for FSM as all children who are registered as being eligible will also receive additional Pupil Premium funding which can be used to support their learning and give access to educational experiences.



Packed Lunch

Please put your child's packed lunch in a watertight container, clearly marked with your child's name. Please do not bring fizzy drinks or use glass containers. Drinking water is freely available at lunch time. Children are encouraged to bring water to school in a water bottle. The bottle should be clearly named and will be stored in the classroom. For health reasons, children should take the bottle home to be rinsed and refilled daily.



Mid-Morning Snack

As part of the government's health eating policy, the school is provided with fruit and vegetables daily for children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. In Year 3 and 4, children are encouraged to bring fruit, vegetables or a healthy snack to school with them.

Cool Milk

Milk can be ordered online from [Cool Milk](#). This is kept refrigerated during the morning. Children under five years of age are entitled to this free of charge.

Money and Personal Possessions in School

Unless specifically asked to do so, children should **not** bring any money to school. Mobile phones, other electronic devices and toys are not permitted in school.

Health & Wellbeing



The school has a number of trained ELSAs (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants). We are able to offer a range of interventions to support with specific emotional needs, including a nurture group.

Illness

Please think carefully about whether or not your child is well enough to be at school.

A child who is unwell will gain very little from being at school, whereas some quiet time at home is likely to help them recover more quickly and prevent the spread of illness. In cases of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, please keep your child at home for two school days after the last episode to prevent the spread of the virus.

First Aid

Staff are trained to deliver first aid at school. A qualified first aider will always be present on any school trip. If a child requires first aid for any reason, while at school or on a school trip, we will record the incident and a report slip will be given to the child to take home. In the case of a head injury, parents/carers will be informed in person or by telephone regardless of how minor the injury appears.



Medicine

If your child needs prescribed medicines during the school day, please contact the school office to complete the necessary consent forms. Please note we will only administer antibiotics at school if they are needed 4 times a day.

Asthma Inhalers

Parents/carers should ensure that named asthma inhalers are with children in school at all times. If your child needs an inhaler, these will be kept in your child's classroom. Please speak to the school office to complete the appropriate paperwork.

Communication to Parents/Carers

By knowing the children really well we can respond to their needs, build confidence and support their learning. We learn about the children by establishing trusting relationships with them and by building good relationships with parents. We will keep you regularly updated with information regarding your child's learning.

Parent helpers are welcomed in school and on school visits. All adults in school must have clearance from the Disclosure & Barring Service. We also invite parents to class showing assemblies and performances where pupils celebrate their work.

Our Home School Agreement outlines the way that school, parents and children should work together.

We will communicate with you through:

➤ **ParentMail**

This is our main form of communication. Parent Mail is available via an app or website and you will just need to register in order to receive notifications. You can access ParentMail [here](#).



➤ **Newsletters**

All newsletters are sent out via ParentMail and are available on the school internet. We try to make them informative and notify you of future events and dates.

➤ **Parents and Open Evenings**

There are two formal parents' evenings in the Autumn and Summer terms when parents can discuss their children's progress with the teacher. There is also an opportunity in the Spring term for parents to see the children's work.



➤ **Curriculum Plans**

At the start of each term parents are sent information about what curriculum areas and skills the children are studying that term.

➤ **Annual Reports**

A written report is sent home near the end of the Summer term. Progress reports are also sent home in the Autumn and Spring terms.

➤ **Website**

Our school website [here](#) has a good deal of information that parents will find useful.

Parents are also welcome to talk to teachers about their child at any time during the school year.

The best time is at the end of the day when more time is available.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

We have a committed PTA, who organise a wide range of events throughout the school year. These are as much for fun as for fundraising. All parents are automatically members of the Association and we welcome contribution in whatever capacity they have the time and /or talent for.

Whatever the occasion, do come along and enjoy yourself. It is a good way to get to know all the parents and staff that make up the Hillside First School family, whilst at the same time generating much needed funds, which give the school the "extras" that make such a difference to the children's school experience.

In recent years the PTA have helped raise funds for play equipment, Creative Media Suite, Outdoor Learning, reading books, party entertainers and classroom games and equipment.



Transfer to Middle School

The majority of our children transfer to Emmanuel Middle School. Admissions to middle schools are made through Dorset Council. A small number of children transfer to other local schools including Cranborne Middle and West Moors Middle. We have excellent links with all middle schools and are able to make the transfer a smooth and enjoyable one for all involved.

There are a variety of visits for the children to familiarise them with their new school and to prepare them for the next stage of their education. Hillside First School staff liaise with middle school staff in order that they can get to know the children quickly.

We hope you found this handbook informative.
Please contact the school if you would like further information.

**We look forward to welcoming you
to the Hillside First School Family!**



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initio
Learning Trust

