



HILLCREST SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

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A: Stonehouse Lane, Birmingham, B32 3AE

Leadership Team:

Samuel Abbotts (Headteacher)
Steven Connor-Hemming (Deputy Headteacher/DSL)
Shamim Palmer (Deputy Headteacher)
Thomas Squires (Assistant Headteacher)
Sharron Johnson (Strategic Business Manager)

15 July 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

As we approach the end of a very busy year, I would like to express my gratitude for your continued support in our partnership during my first year as Headteacher at the school. This has ensured that every Hillcrest student has been encouraged and supported to achieve their very best.

At the end of this academic year, we say farewell to four members of staff who are leaving Hillcrest.

Mr Connor-Hemming is retiring after nearly 14 years of dedicated service as Deputy Headteacher. Mrs Bunce, our Safeguarding and Welfare Coordinator, is also retiring after an outstanding 26 years of commitment to the school. I would like to express my sincere thanks to both for their many years of hard work and exceptional service to our school community.

We also say goodbye to Dr Cooper (science teacher) and Mr Abshir (maths teacher), who are both moving on to new opportunities. We wish them both well for the future.

Listed below are the leadership team for September 2026:

Senior Leadership Team September 2026:

Mr S Abbotts - Headteacher
Mr D Gariff - Deputy Headteacher (DSL)
Mrs S Palmer - Deputy Headteacher
Mr T Squires - Assistant Headteacher
Ms N Birmingham - Assistant Headteacher (SENDCo)
Mrs S Johnson - Strategic Business Manager

Mobile Phone Policy - September 2026:

Before the end of term, I will be sending you a letter regarding our mobile phone policy from September 2026, which includes amendments based on the new Department for Education guidance. **Please ensure you have read this to be aware of the changes.**

Please note that the term will end on Friday July 17 2026, at approximately 12:30pm. The remainder of this letter contains reminders regarding the next academic year, safeguarding information and how to register for Bring it on Brum! Summer 2026.

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Please see below for the return-to-school dates:

Year 7: 2026-27

Day 1 'Hillcrest Ready' Induction - Wednesday 2 September 8:45am - 3:15pm

Day 2 'Hillcrest Ready' Induction - Thursday 3 September 8:45am - 3:15pm

Years 12 and 13: 2026-27

Y12 Induction Day 1 - Thursday 3 September 8:45-11:10pm

Y13 Re-enrolment - Thursday 3 September 1:00pm-3:00pm

Y12 & Y13 Induction Day - Friday 4 September 10:15am

Years 8, 9, 10 & 11: 2026-27

Return to school Friday 4 September 8:45am

Students must be in school by 8:40am and seated in registration by 8:45am. Students who arrive after this time receive a late mark.

Uniform List: Compulsory for all students, Years 7-11

We expect our students to take pride in their appearance, and we believe that the wearing of a school uniform fosters a sense of identity. If students attend school inappropriately dressed, their parents/carers will be contacted. The uniform policy can be found on the school website. As per Department for Education guidance, and to keep costs to a minimum, only three items of branded uniform are required. A blazer with the Hillcrest School logo, the school tie and the PE top.

Jewellery:

The only jewellery to be worn is one pair of small stud earrings. Body piercing, nose studs, eyebrow studs or tongue studs are not permitted. (Plasters covering piercings are also not allowed). Students will be asked to remove their piercings and will be sent home if they do not. Jewellery, if worn, will be taken and returned to students at the end of the term. Alternatively, parents/carers may collect the item in person. Makeup, nail varnish, and nail extensions should not be worn to school, and no unnatural hair colourings or extensions should be applied.

ID Card and Lanyards:

Students are issued an ID card to borrow books from the library, check their ParentMail canteen balance, and access key doors around the school. If the swipe card is lost or damaged, a replacement can be purchased for £1.50 through ParentMail or at Student Reception. (Year 7 will be issued swipe cards as part of the induction).

The cards are used to:

- Purchase food in the canteen
- Access the student entrance and toilets at break and lunch
- Loan books from the school library
- For safeguarding purposes, for example, identifying students at various events.

A reminder that students' ID cards are part of the uniform requirement. If students do not have their ID cards visible, they will be issued a 30-minute same-day detention. Staff will make regular checks throughout the day.



Books and Equipment:

Last September, your child was equipped with the necessary equipment and stationery required for school. This was a one-off purchase by the school, and if students lose any of the equipment, they will be asked to pay to replace it.

On Friday, students will have the opportunity to leave their pencil case, Knowledge Organiser folder and school equipment in their form group's storage box. The school will safely store these items over the summer holiday, ready for students to collect when they return in September.

If you would like your child to take advantage of this opportunity, we would be grateful if you could encourage them to leave their equipment in school on Friday. This will help ensure they return in September with everything they need for a successful start to the new academic year.

Please note that if students choose to take their equipment home and any items are misplaced or lost over the summer holiday, replacement items will need to be purchased by the student.

A reminder that students should have the following items of equipment:

- 2 black pens
- 1 green pen
- 2 pencils
- 1 pencil sharpener
- 1 30cm ruler
- 1 rubber
- 1 highlighter
- 2 whiteboard pens

Students will also be given a Knowledge Organiser folder, which they must bring to school each day. This contains the key facts and information that they need to retain in their long-term memory to master topics studied across several subjects. Students will be trained in using these so they can self-quiz. You can play a key role in supporting your child's learning by quizzing them on definitions and key terms.

The school provides books and teaching materials, but students are responsible for replacing any lost or damaged books or equipment and will be charged **for any damage to school property**. It is standard practice for students to take items home from lessons such as Food Technology, and in these circumstances, parents and carers are asked to provide the necessary resources.

Your child can, if they wish, purchase additional equipment such as those listed below:

- A selection of coloured pencils

- A glue stick
- A notebook for rough work
- A protractor and compass
- A Casio fx-83GT PLUS Natural-V.P.A.M. Scientific calculator (available from most supermarkets)
- An English Dictionary
- A French Language Dictionary

Some equipment is available for purchase from the library.

Homework and Class Charts:

Class Charts enables you to keep track of your child's behaviour, their positive behaviour points, access their weekly timetable, view assigned homework tasks and track scheduled detentions. In September, we will post announcements through Class Charts with important reminders and information. All parents/carers have a unique login for their child. If you have more than one child, you can access Class Charts information about your children from a single, centralised parent account. Class Charts for parents/carers can be accessed via the website. <https://www.classcharts.com/parent/login>

Lunch Money and ParentMail:

If your child is purchasing food in the school canteen at breakfast, mid-morning, and lunch breaks, can you please ensure they have enough money on their card to cover the cost. If your child is eligible for free school meals, they are allocated for lunchtime. However, any food or drink purchased in addition to the free school meal, or items purchased during breakfast and mid-morning breaks, are chargeable to parents/carers. You can check how much your child has spent, and their card balance on your ParentMail account, and students can check their balances on the screen by the library. Parents/carers are contacted if a student's account goes into debt and are asked to add money as soon as possible to clear it. Please have a conversation with your child about what they purchase at school and agree on their spending limits with them.

ParentMail:

The school uses an online communications system called ParentMail for the following:

Communicating with Parents/Carers:

- Sending you important emergency text messages, for example, if the school is closed due to bad weather
- Text reminders of parents' evenings or school events
- All school letters and newsletters are sent to you via email.

Online Payments:

The school is cashless, so that students do not bring cash into school; you will need to use ParentMail for the following:

- To put money on your child's ID card so they can purchase food in the canteen
- To pay for all school trips
- To purchase ID cards or school resources.

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How do you register and use ParentMail?

Registering with ParentMail is extremely easy! The school will send you a text message or email from ParentMail, and you just need to follow the instructions in the message.

How do you access ParentMail?

There are two ways you can access your ParentMail account:

- 1) online via the internet www.parentmail.co.uk.
- 2) or you can download the ParentMail App. Just search for "ParentMail" in your app store and download the app to your phone.

Keep your contact details up to date:

If you change any of your contact details, please ensure you update your ParentMail account. This is essential so that we can send you important school information and letters. Please also inform the school of any changes to your home address or contact details, such as your phone number, as soon as possible.

If you need any help to set up ParentMail:

Please contact the school at 0121 464 3172 or email enquiry@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk if you require a ParentMail activation message to be sent to you, or if you have any further questions or need assistance setting up ParentMail.

Emergency Closure of School:



In extreme weather conditions or other emergencies when it is necessary to close the school, details will be posted on the school website, sent via X and through ParentMail. The school will always try to give as much notice as possible.

If, for any reason, we were unable to reopen, due to secondary factors (e.g., burst pipes, heating failure), this will be communicated as above. Please do ensure that students have an alternative place of safety should it become necessary to close the school early in an emergency.

Parking at Hillcrest School:

The car park will remain a designated waiting area for students waiting for siblings in other year groups and will therefore be closed to cars at the end of the day until 3.25pm. Parents and carers will need to park on the school side of Stonehouse Lane and on nearby roads, and arrange to meet their child in an area away from the front of the car park to allow the flow of traffic along Stonehouse Lane at the end of the school day. Please do not park in the entrance to the fire station, local businesses or pavements, and please be considerate to local residents when parking near the school. We ask for your support in keeping all our students safe and in not parking and blocking the entrance to the school.

End of Term Arrangements:

Any confiscated jewellery will be given out this week as follows:

Years 7 and 8 - END OF THE DAY ON THURSDAY 16 JULY

Years 9 and 10 - END OF THE DAY ON FRIDAY 17 JULY

Confiscated mobile phones can be collected at Main Reception on Friday 17 July at 12.30pm.

'Keeping Safe':

Please visit our website for guidance on keeping children safe for parents and carers. By clicking the blue icon at the bottom of the homepage on our website, you will find information on health and well-being, relationship education, study skills, and online safety, including internet and social media safety, as well as preventing radicalism and extremism.



USEFUL LINKS FOR PARENTS/CARERS and a reminder of services that are available:

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) is a safeguarding charity. Visit their website for more information - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/staying-safe-away-from-home/>.

Birmingham and Solihull bereavement support:

0121 687 8010

Email: support@crusebirmingham.co.uk

<http://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help>

The Cruse Bereavement Care Freephone National Helpline is staffed by trained bereavement volunteers, who offer emotional support to anyone affected by bereavement. The number is 0808 808 1677.

You can also email helpline@cruse.org.uk

Pause:

If you need someone to talk to or are struggling to cope with your feelings.

0207 841 4470

Email: askbeam@childrenssociety.org.uk

[Forward Thinking Birmingham - Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust](#)

Kooth:

Free, safe, and anonymous service supporting young people's emotional and mental health in Birmingham. Kooth gives children and young people the opportunity to access online counselling from qualified counsellors, available from midday to 10pm every weekday and from 6pm to 10pm at weekends. Young people can drop in for one-to-one instant text-based chats or book a session in advance.

<https://www.kooth.com/>

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As always, please do not hesitate to contact the school via email if you require any further support or guidance. If at any time you have concerns about a Hillcrest student, please email safeguarding@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk or contact the Children's Advice & Support Service (CASS) on 0121 303 1888. For all other queries, please continue to use enquiry@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk.

Early Help Hubs:

Support for families in need can still be accessed through the Early Help Hubs. Early help locality hubs will be operational to provide advice, guidance, and a range of early help support, including access to food banks. The following will be connecting together in ten localities: community, voluntary and faith sectors, health, family support, social work, police, schools, further education, nurseries, children's centres, health visitors and GPs.

Reminder: We have already contacted you about **Bring it on Brum! which is back for summer 2026!** Bring it on Brum! is running **FREE activity clubs in Birmingham throughout the summer school holidays** for young people aged 4-16 who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals.

If your child is eligible, you will have received a code via ParentMail:

Holiday clubs will run from Monday, 20 July, to Friday, 28 August 2026 (excluding weekends and Bank Holidays). Bookings opened from Monday 29 June 2026 at www.bringitonbrum.co.uk

To book holiday activities through the Bring it on Brum! website or directly with the holiday club, parents/carers will need the Hillcrest School **Bring it on Brum! Code**, which is **330 4012**.

Thank you for your continued support throughout this summer term and the entire school year. I wish you and your family a restful summer.

Yours sincerely



Mr S B Abbotts
Headteacher