

Frequently Asked Questions

Welcome to the Hillcrest School SEND Department. Below are some of the questions we are frequently asked about what we do here for our students with Additional Needs.

What are the different types of support available for students with SEND at Hillcrest?

We believe that the most important support all Hillcrest students receive is the high quality targeted classroom teaching offered in every lesson.

For your child this means:

- Subject teachers will have the highest possible expectations for all students in their classes.
- Subject teachers are fully informed of the individual needs of the students in their classes and use teaching styles, resources and specific strategies to support all students to learn successfully and as independently as possible.
- Subject teachers will monitor the progress made by each student in their classes and take steps to address any gaps in a student's learning. This may include providing extra support in class or meeting with parents and the SEND staff to make sure all students are supported to make rapid progress.
- The support your child will receive will be based on allowing your child to "Keep up rather than catch up." We aim to intervene early if any student has difficulty with learning.

English and Maths Support:

- To accelerate Hillcrest students' progress, Year 7 students who arrive from Primary school not working at the expected standard in Maths or English receive extra support.
- All Year 7, 8 and 9 students follow the Accelerated Reader programme to improve their reading and comprehension skills which are the key to success in all subjects.
- In Maths students' learning is supported by access at home and in school to the Hegarty Maths online tool. This programme helps students to go on to gain better GCSE grades.

Other Support:

- Students who have difficulty learning compared to other students of the same age or who experience emotional, physical or health issues may need additional support as well as the high quality teaching provided by their subject teachers. These students will receive short term targeted intervention programmes focused on their areas of need e.g. handwriting, speed writing, spelling, communication skills. These will be delivered by the SEND team. All students receiving interventions will have a Student Passport which will guide their teachers to adapt their teaching to meet the individual student's needs.
- Some students have more complex learning, physical or emotional needs and will require additional support. These students may have an Educational Health Care Plan [EHCP] which will set out the specific support they need to achieve academic success.

Who are the best people to talk to at Hillcrest about my child's difficulties with learning / Special Educational Needs or Disability [SEND]?

Hillcrest's Inclusion Team Members are:-

SENCO - Julie Penn

jpenn@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk

Responsible for:

- Co-ordinating the support for Hillcrest students with SEND.
- Developing Hillcrest's SEND policy to make sure all students' needs are consistently met.
- Making sure parents/carers are involved in supporting their child's learning; are informed about support and are involved in reviewing the progress their child is making.
- Working with external agencies who come into school to support individual students e.g. Educational Psychologist, Pupil Support Service, the Communication and Autism Team.
- Updating Hillcrest's SEND register and keeping records on the interventions students receive.
- Ensure all students with SEND have help deciding on a clear and appropriate career path.
- Provide appropriate specialist training to teaching and support staff to develop their skills to support students with SEND to make rapid progress.

Deputy Head Teacher Inclusion – Steven Connor-Hemming

sconnor-hemming@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk

Responsible for:

- The day to day management of pastoral / inclusion systems in school.
- Line managing the SENCO to ensure students with SEND are provided with appropriate support.
- Evaluating the impact of interventions [i.e. value for money]
- Co-ordinating support for students and families with safeguarding concerns.
- Informing the governing body of any changes to Hillcrest's SEND provision.

Learning Co-ordinators – Nightingale College-Emily King; Parkes College-Abiyola Adenike; Malala College-Steven Kennard

Responsible for:

- Monitoring the progress of all students.
- Collaborating with parents/carers to produce Individual Pastoral Support Plans to assist students with behavioural and attendance needs.

Senior Learning Mentor / Looked After Co-ordinator – Mary Bunce

In conjunction with Steven Connor-Hemming and Julie Penn responsible for:

- Making referrals to external agencies for students if safeguarding /child protection issues are raised.
- Representing Hillcrest at meetings e.g. CIN, CIC reviews, PEP meetings
- Co-ordinating student referrals to the School Nurse and other health agencies.

SEND Link Governor- Lewis Palin

On behalf of the Governing body, responsible for:

- Making sure that Hillcrest meets statutory SEND requirements.
- Working closely with the SENCO to ensure interventions are in place to meet the needs of all Hillcrest students with SEND.

Teaching Assistants – Yvette Preston [Higher Level TA], Katie Hughes, Monika Rahl

Responsible for:

- Providing student support as directed by the SENCO.
- Delivering targeted intervention programmes.
- Meeting with parents/carers to inform them of progress made by their children on intervention programmes.

Attendance Officer – Michelle Stuart

Responsible for:

- Providing College Leaders with data to allow them to monitor the attendance of all students.
- Contacting providers of Alternative Educational Placements to monitor student attendance.
- Contacting parents/carers to identify reasons for absence and offer appropriate support.

Student Receptionist – Louise Meggitt

Responsible for:

- Circulating student Health Plans to members of staff.
- Preparing medication for educational visits and work experience placements.

What extra support is available for students with SEND outside of lessons?

A range of extra support is offered to students.

In the morning:

- ❖ Students can come to Room 19 from 8.00am every day to gain support with their work and to talk to a member of staff before lessons start.
- ❖ The OLC is open from 8.00am to 8.45am every morning. Miss Parveen, librarian, is available to offer individual support for students.
- ❖ Room 2 is available for supporting students with homework and emotional issues.

Break and Lunchtime:

- ❖ Students can come to Room 19 at break and lunchtime for support with work and emotional support.
- ❖ Students are encouraged to come to Room 19 to help them to widen their circle of friends and develop their language skills.
- ❖ Students can come to Room 19 on designated days to spend time with Milo the Therapy dog.

After school:

- ❖ Homework Club is offered every evening, apart from Wednesday, for one hour after school.

How does the school identify students as having special needs and how will parents/carers be informed?

- As advised by Birmingham LEA Hillcrest follows the graduated model set out in the SEN Code of Practice to assess and identify students with SEN.
- Our main feeder primary schools are visited by the Deputy Head Inclusion or a member of our Inclusion Team.
- We collect students' SATs scores from primary schools and other evidence of students' achievements.
- Students identified as having significant difficulties with learning are individually tested.
- Students who join us late are assessed on entry.
- All staff are given information on the needs of each student with SEND and this information is regularly updated.
- Teaching and support staff are given regular training on how to best support students with SEND so they can differentiate in lessons to meet the variety of student needs.
- Parents/carers of students newly identified as SEND at Hillcrest are invited into school to discuss their child's needs and the provision Hillcrest will put in place.
- Parent/carer consent will be needed for referral to specialist help e.g. Pupil and School Support Service, Educational Psychologist, Communication and Autism Team.

How does the school listen to the voice of students with SEND?

The opinions of all of our students are very important to us.

We used the following tools to listen to their views:

- The school parliament meets regularly to discuss issues raised by all students.
- All subject areas, including SEND, regularly carry out student voice surveys to use to improve our provision.
- Informal conversations between students and staff take place daily and students are encouraged to speak to staff.
- Hillcrest encourages a partnership approach to learning which is supported by promoting open and honest communication between students, staff and parents/carers.

How are the teachers in school helped to work with students with SEND and what training do they have?

- ❖ It is the responsibility of all Hillcrest staff to ensure their lessons are differentiated and students with SEND needs are catered for.
- ❖ Student Passports are given to staff so they know each students' needs and how best to support them to make rapid progress in each subject.
- ❖ The SEND Team work with staff to ensure they are informed and trained to cater for students' individual needs.

How will the school measure the progress of my child in school?

- Progress reports share students' working at grades with parents/ carers each term so you can track the progress your child is making.
- A full report is issued once a year.
- You will be invited to a parents' evening once a year.
- Regular Progress Review meetings with parents/carers are held for students with SEND.

How can I let the school know if I am concerned about my child's progress in school?

- We aim to provide support for students with SEND which enables them to make rapid progress by ensuring they have high quality teaching which allows students to have full access to the curriculum. Staff also work hard to deliver lessons which support students to enjoy and achieve at Hillcrest school.
- If you are concerned your child is not making academic progress please contact the SENCO, Julie Penn, in the following ways to arrange a meeting:-

Email: jpenn@hillcrest.bham.sch.uk

Telephone: 0121 4643172

What support does Hillcrest provide for parents/carers of a child with SEND?

- ❖ The SENCO can be contacted to discuss your child's progress or any concerns you may have and to share information about what is working well at home and school so similar strategies can be used.
- ❖ The College Leader is available to discuss your child's behaviour, attendance, social and emotional well-being or any concerns/worries you may have.
- ❖ You will receive regular updates on your child's progress.
- ❖ Homework will be adjusted as needed to your child's needs and you can track your child's homework by logging in to Show My Homework.
- ❖ If homework is a problem your child can receive support by attending Homework Club which runs every night after school for an hour, apart from Wednesday. This is run by the SEND team who will support your child to complete their homework successfully.

Who do we work with to provide your child with services to support them in school?

There are various outside agencies who work with Hillcrest to ensure that students' needs are met.

The CAT Team

- The Communication and Autism Team (CAT) is a team of specialist, dedicated professionals working to support children and young people with autism and their families and schools. CAT help schools identify issues surrounding autism and develop a plan to deal with them in an inclusive way which helps all children and young people rise to their full potential. CAT work in over 420 schools in Birmingham and have helped develop the National Autism Standards providing a framework for support in schools all over the country.

Lisa Walmsley, Access to Education is Hillcrest's CAT Team worker

Educational Psychologist Service

- Educational Psychology provides professional psychological services for children, young people and families in a wide range of educational and community settings. The service uses expertise of psychological theory and research to develop an understanding of the most complex situations, addressing a wide range of child and adolescent development issues, including special educational needs. Educational Psychologists work collaboratively with key adults to enhance the achievement and wellbeing of children and young people. The support we provide can be targeted at individuals, groups and also at the wider level.
- We work with children one to one. We use problem-solving approaches, apply expert knowledge of child development, and work holistically with children and young people. Educational Psychologists have specialist skills in assessment, designing programmes of support and at times we offer therapeutic input. Our aims for children are to: promote learning, develop language and communication skills, encourage social interaction, improve behaviour and enhance wellbeing.

Carrie Stewart is Hillcrest's Educational Psychologist

Pupil and School Support

- Pupil and School Support (PSS) works with schools to help pupils with cognition and learning difficulties and other vulnerable groups to progress and achieve to the best of their abilities. Following an assessment of pupils' needs, we support schools to put in place provision and interventions to ensure that all pupils have access to the curriculum and are able to make good progress. PSS work closely with other agencies to support positive outcomes for children and young people.

Kate Butcher is Hillcrest's Pupil and School Support worker

The Sensory Support Service

- This service provides support to staff, parents/carers and students to ensure students have full access to the curriculum.

Oaks Emotional Well-Being Practitioner

- Supports students who are experiencing emotional and mental health difficulties with in-school sessions. This work is carried out with our Senior Learning Mentor, Mary Bunce.

Dannielle is Hillcrest's Emotional and Well-Being Practitioner

How is Hillcrest accessible to children with SEND?

- We aim to ensure that equipment used is accessible to all children regardless of their needs.
- We work with the Sensory Support Service to ensure we are providing appropriate support for pupils with auditory and visual impairments.
- After school provision is accessible to all children including those with SEND.
- Extra-curricular activities are accessible for children with SEND.

How will we support your child when they start Hillcrest?

The transition between primary school and secondary school can be a daunting prospect for both parents/carers and pupils. We aim to ensure that the move to secondary school is as smooth as possible. The following shows the transition programme we currently offer:

September

- ❖ Open Evening and days happen in September and offer parents/carers and their children the chance to look around the school and meet the staff and students at Hillcrest.

May

- ❖ Transition Meetings – parents/carers and students are invited to the school to meet key staff. The meetings are an opportunity for you and your child to find out about what Hillcrest offers and to let Hillcrest know about your child's achievements and needs.

July

- ❖ Induction Day and Evening - Year 6 students spend a full day at Hillcrest in order to get to know the school and meet key staff such as their form teacher. Students are joined by their parents/carers in the evening and have the opportunity to meet key staff, purchase uniform and finalise any queries.

September

- ❖ The first two days - on students' first two days there is a staggered start where only Year 7 pupils attend and the other year groups join them later in the first week. This gives students the chance to further settle into their surroundings and get to know their timetable.
- ❖ Year 7 Form Group team building visits to Blackwell Court will take place at the end of the month to support students with friendships and confidence.

On Going

- ❖ Parents/carers can contact key staff by telephone on 01214643172.

How will we support your child when they move from Hillcrest?

We understand that preparing our students for success in life after they leave Hillcrest is important and we aim to ensure they leave fully prepared for their future.

Work Experience

- In the summer term of Year 11 students go on two week's work experience. This offers them a chance to experience life after school and can help them with their choice of a future career path.

Interview Experience

- During the summer term of Year 10 students take part in an interview experience where they have the chance to apply for and interview for a job of their choice. Professionals from all over Birmingham carry out the interviews and provide advice to your child on how to improve their interview skills.

Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

- Gurjit Matto, our IAG worker will meet with your child in Year 9, 10 and 11 to discuss their career choices. Gurjit will also help your child to secure their place on suitable post-16 course. Parents/carers are welcome to attend these IAG meetings and should contact Mrs Abbotts, Hillcrest's IAG co-ordinator on 01214643172.

Understanding SEND - Key words and their meanings

- **Special Educational Needs (SEN)** - Students have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for additional educational provision to be made for them (SEND code of practice, DfE, Jan 2015)
- **Special educational provision** - is educational provision provided for some students which is additional to or different from the educational provision made generally for students of the same age.
- **Learning difficulty or disability** - A young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they have either:
 - A significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age.*
 - Or *A disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the facilities generally provided for children of the same age.*
- **Differentiated** - Teaching and resources are changed to ensure students can access them and are challenged to make rapid progress.
- **SPAG** -Spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- **Student Passport** – Every student with SEND will have their individual student passport which describes their main learning needs. These are shared with teachers so they are aware of how to help every child to make progress. Students write their own student passport with staff from the SEND team. Parents/carers are also given a copy of their child's passport and are encouraged to contribute to them.
- **EHC Plan** - Education, Health and Care plans replace the SEN Statements and are provided for students with significant difficulties in accessing the teaching and learning or the facilities offered by mainstream schools like Hillcrest.
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SEND Policy

The Schools SEND Policy is available to Download. Simply [Click Here](#)

Accessibility Plan

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