



New Parent Information Pack

Written by parents for parents - all the things you need to know when your child starts at Hill West Primary School.

June 2017

Welcome to your parent information booklet

This booklet is written by parents for parents of children at Hill West Primary. It's designed as a quick guide to all the things you need to know.

The booklet includes things you need to know before your child starts at school and their first day, as well as information about other key aspects of school life across the years your child is at Hill West.

You'll find various top tips which are things other parents have found helpful to know and wanted to share. Top tips are easy to spot and look like this:



Thanks for taking the time to read through this, we hope it makes starting at Hill West Primary School that much easier.

If you think of anything that's not in this parent booklet and you believe should be, please do let us know so that we can add it for future editions. You can email the Parent Council directly at parentcouncil@hillwest.bham.sch.uk or via the school office.

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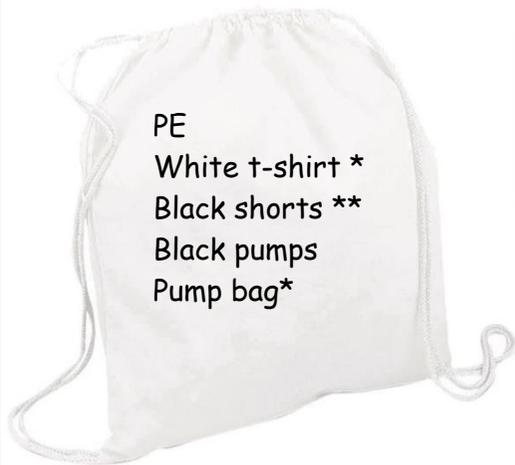
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School blurb you need to know!

EYFS	Early years foundation stage (Reception)
KS1	Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2 - although Reception are often included under this in HW due to their location)
KS2	Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6)
PPA	Planning, Preparation and Assessment
MUFTI days	Wear your own clothes to school, non uniform days
ATLP	Arthur Terry Learning Partnership, the Academy that Hill West is part of

School uniform

Boys



Girls



Your child will also need:

- School bag * - smaller the better, although an A4 folder needs to fit inside.
- Drinks bottle *

* Hill West sell clothing with school logo on; sweatshirts, cardigans, fleeces, PE t-shirts, school bags, pump bags, drink bottles, purses, hats. These are not compulsory.

** Hill West sell clothing with no school logo on; PE shorts

If you'd like to order any items of school uniform, this can be done either through the school office between 3-4pm or by completing an order form and sending it in to school with a cheque made payable to Hill West Primary School. Your order will be sent home with your child.

Please ensure all items of uniform are clearly labelled with your child's name, if you hope to see them again!!



Use sew in or iron on name labels in EVERYTHING! 30 green Hill West sweatshirts all look the same and pen often becomes illegible or wears off after a few washes!

Checklist for your child's first day

- ✓ School bag
- ✓ PE kit in a pump bag
- ✓ Black pumps
- ✓ Painting apron
- ✓ Dinner money or sandwiches
- ✓ Drinks bottle
- ✓ Healthy snack for morning playtime (if required, see p.16)

Make sure all the above are clearly labelled with your child's name AND class, on the outside where possible, if you want to see them again! It's also worth making sure they are easily identifiable by your child. Imagine 30 pairs of black pumps, all nameless...!



Many children like to hang something, for example a small key ring, to their school bag, school fleece and pump bag so they instantly know which one is theirs, especially if it's one with a Hill West logo.

Dropping off your child at school

First day in school

If your child is starting in Reception, you will have received a letter giving you a specific day and time slot for your child. Take your child into the school's main entrance in KS1 building and you will be taken with your child into their classroom. Once your child is settled and busy, you can leave.

If your child is joining Hill West in any other years, take your child into the school's main entrance in KS1 building at 9am and one of the school office team will accompany your child to their new classroom.

Subsequent days at school

If KS1 (Reception and Years 1&2), on subsequent days you will need to wait with your child on the KS1 playground and wait for the whistle at 8.50am, which signals to the children that they need to line up by their teacher and classroom. You will not be able to go into the classroom with your child.

If KS2 (Years 3-6), on subsequent days you will need to leave your child by the metal gates at the entrance to KS2 playground. They are able to go and meet up with friends on the playground and wait for the whistle to go before lining up by their teacher and going into class. You will not be able to go onto the playground with your child.

Collecting your child from school

KS1 (Reception, Years 1 and 2) finish at 3.20pm each day and come out onto KS1 playground.

- Wrens exit from 1st door
- Robins exit from 2nd door
- Swallows exit from 3rd door
- Swifts, Kingfishers and Owls exit from the far end of the playground, past the building.

Children will be released from their classroom doors or raised slabbed area into the playground once the teacher sees you.

KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 & 6) finish at 3.30pm. Year 3 come out through their classroom exit doors at the front of the school. Years 4, 5 & 6 exit from the metal gates at the entrance to KS2 playground.

If somebody different is collecting your child from school, please send a letter to the class teacher that day to let them know. If the teacher does not know the person collecting your child and has not received a letter, they will not allow your child to leave with them.



The playground is packed at home time so try to stand in a similar place each day and when you see your child is next in line, give the teacher a wave so they spot you quickly. This helps enormously and speeds up the process for everyone!

A typical day at school in Key Stage 1

8.30am	School gate opens to Key Stage 1 playground
8:45am	Classroom doors open and children go straight in to their classes
8.55am - 10.50am	Session 1 and Session 2
10.50am - 11.05am	Morning playtime
11.05am - 12.00noon	Session 3
12.00pm - 1.05pm	Lunchtime
1.05pm - 2.50pm	Session 4 and Session 5
2.50pm - 3.00pm	Afternoon playtime
3.00pm - 3.20pm	Assembly
3.20pm	End of the day

Communication with school

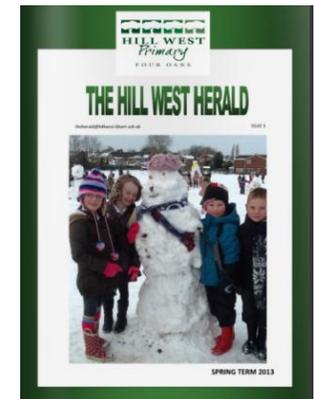
We know how important it is to feel well informed and in touch with the school, so there are lots of ways that school communicate with parents and help you stay up to date:

Hill West uses **Teachers2Parents**, an email based system, to share a huge range of information and is a key route for communication.

All parents' email addresses and mobile numbers are entered onto the Teachers2Parents system. This reduces the use of paper and it ensures information gets straight to parents as quickly as possible.

Hill West Newsletter

At the end of each term you will receive Hill West's newsletter 'The Hill West Herald' via email. It showcases events that have happened during the term and tells parents what has been happening in school.



Pedagogical Newsletter

Each term, Dr Clarke sends out this update, highlighting any key changes happening in the world of teaching and any new practices being introduced into school.

Events calendar

You will receive a weekly and termly list of forthcoming key dates and events via Teacher.

A typical day at school in Key Stage 2

8.30am	School gate opens to Key Stage 2 playground.
8:45am	Classroom doors open and children to straight into their classes
8.55am - 11.00am	Session 1 and Session 2
11.00am - 11.15am	Morning playtime
11.15 - 11.30pm	Assembly
11.30am - 12.30pm	Session 3
12.30pm - 1.30pm	Lunchtime
1.30pm - 3.30pm	Sessions 4 and Session 5
3.30pm	End of the day

School website and Twitter



The school website is a fabulous information tool. Have a look here for the school calendar, information on staff and loads more.

There is a Twitter link on the home page. It is particularly interesting as it is updated daily with snippets of school life.

There is no need to sign up to Twitter if you don't want to, simply view the tweets from the school homepage. This is a good place to look during the winter, as school will post tweets updating parents as to the opening or closing of school in bad weather.



To find Hill West on Twitter simply search for @hillwestprimary

Talking to your child's teacher

If you want to contact your child's teacher you have a number of options. If you need to ensure the teacher receives the message on the day then you can:

- Give your child a letter to hand to their teacher
- Report to the school office at 8.30am and ask if you can see the teacher quickly before the start of the day
- Catch the teacher at the end of the school day for a quick chat
- Phone the school office and leave a message for the teacher - remember to say if it is urgent and they will call you back when they can.

If it's not urgent then you can simply write a note in their homework diary and these are checked at least once a week.



Go through your child's school bag daily to see what is lurking inside!

Communication – some frequently asked questions

How do I let the school know about medical and hospital appointments?

If the appointment really can't be organised outside of school hours then you'll need to write a letter to the teacher who will pass it to the office. The letter should state the date, time, and type of appointment e.g. hospital, doctors etc. If possible, you should include a copy of the actual appointment letter as well.

How will the school let me know if it's closed due to snow?

Whilst the school is determined always to stay open, severe inclement weather such as snow can mean that it isn't safe for pupils to be in school. On these rare occasions the school uses their website, their Twitter feed, Email and direct texting to all those who have registered mobile numbers.

What should I expect at parents' evenings?

Parents evenings take place once per term; October, February & July.

October and February operate with morning, afternoon and evening appointments, available on a first come first served basis which are booked online. You will be able to see your child's books and pre-book a 10 minute slot to talk to your child's teacher about how your child is getting on. It's a chance to hear from the teacher, as well as to ask any questions you have.

July is a drop in evening, where you can see your child's school books and discuss their end of year school report.

When can I see my child's books, their targets & their progress?

At parent's evening or open books evening when school invites you each term to come in with your child to look through their work together.

How can I find out what's going on in school in advance, so that I can plan ahead of time?

Just before the end of term, you will receive via Email, a list of all the events for the next term. A weekly update is also sent for the next week's events.

What should I do if my child is unwell and unable to go to school?

Please phone the school office first thing in the morning to let them know, otherwise school will phone you once the register highlights your child's absence after 9.30am.

When your child returns to school, send in a letter to explain the absence.

Will the school administer medicine to my child?

If a doctor has **prescribed** medicine for your child that has to be taken **four** times a day, the school office team will give it to your child at lunchtime. Please ensure that the medicine is clearly labelled with your child's name and you have completed a medicine form. Medicines must be handed to the office team by an adult.



Never be afraid to ask if you want to know something - if you want to know, the chances are so do other parents.

House Groups

On starting at Hill West, children are put into 1 of 4 houses:

Barnardo	Gandhi
Mandela	Pankhurst

Each house has its own colour as shown above. Children will stay in their house until Year 6 and any siblings will be put into the same house. Houses are used for several things:

- Activities in school are often held in houses. This encourages team building and helps forge friendships across different year groups.
- House points are earned by children every day. Weekly totals show which house has the most points that week and then all children in that house have an extra Friday afternoon playtime called "TeamTime" regardless of whether they are in Reception or Year 6. Children love it!

- As there are too many children to fit into either of the school halls at one time, houses are also often used to split the school up for occasions when families are invited into school. To save parents from coming in twice if they have children in both KS1 and KS2, splitting the school up by houses works brilliantly.



Once you know which house your child is in get a plain t-shirt in the house colour as these are needed for house events such as Sports Days.

Homework

Children will receive a maximum of 3 pieces of homework per week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Generally, teachers allow a week for homework to be completed and handed in.

Monday homework is reading and or spellings, Wednesday's homework is Mathematics and often set online and Friday's homework is usually a project or topic related homework to be completed together as a family.



Ensure children use their reading/homework diary to record what homework they have and when it needs to be done. It really helps you to help them!

Learning Profiles

At the start of every term the children will come home with a personalised Learning Profile. The teacher will have identified the most appropriate learning targets for your child for that term. School would like you to sit down with your child to discuss and fill in the remaining sections together. You then need to return the profile to school as they are used by the children and teacher for the remainder of the term.

Reading in school

Oxford Reading Tree

Hill West uses the Oxford Reading Tree (ORT) system to teach our children to read. There are 16 stages, the first have no words just pictures, the latter have very few pictures, if any. In Reception and Year 1 Floppy's Phonics Scheme (level 1 to 5) is used. Year 2 sees the use of ORT stages once phonic knowledge is embedded. Children will receive 1 book per week to read at home. This book will (generally) be changed on the same day each week.



Make sure your child takes their reading folder with their ORT book and their reading/homework diary into school every day, as even if the book gets changed on a specific day each week, individual and group reading in class could be on any day.

Within each stage, there are 6-8 trunk books and children will need to read each of these before they will be evaluated as to whether they are ready to move to the next stage. If they are not quite ready, more books will be given at the same stage and their progress will be re-evaluated later on. This evaluation looks at the fluency of the reader, the expression used as well as the understanding & recall of the book.



Once you have listened to your child read their book, fill in their reading diary every week to record their progress and improvement. Books will not be changed without your comments.

Parents of Reception children are invited one evening in September, to find out all they need to know about how school teaches and evaluates reading. It also gives vital info on how to help with reading at home, how often to read with your child etc. There's also a really useful Phonics meeting held one evening in September/October too.

School library

Each class visits the school library every week and will be able to choose a book to bring home from a large range of fiction and non-fiction books. These are not necessarily for the children to read alone, especially in KS1 they are often for parents to read with children. Teachers help direct children to age appropriate shelves.



Find out which day your child's class goes to the library, as if the child doesn't have the book in school that day, they have to wait another week before they can change it for a new one!



Mere Green library has a fabulous range of books, for those learning to read and for those who read fluently, both fiction and non-fiction. It's free to borrow books and with online ordering too, it's easy to find books at your child's reading level.

Key events throughout the school year

Children really do love having their parents come into school and there are lots of occasions where you will be able to come and visit.

Celebration Assembly (3.05pm for KS1 & 11.15am for KS2), Every Wednesday birthdays, completed star cards and in school achievements are celebrated. On Friday, achievement for success out of school are celebrated, ie ballet, football awards. Your child will be called up to the front and asked about either their birthday celebrations (usually on the nearest Wednesday to their birthday) and blow out the birthday candle, or asked how they earned their final stamps on their star card or about the award that they have achieved.

100% attendance

At the end of each term, children who have had 100% attendance since September are recognised and rewarded. These assemblies are done in Key Stage groups. You will receive a letter from school if your child has achieved 100% attendance.

Class Assembly

Once a year your child's class will put on an assembly. It is usually performed twice in a week so that all children in the school can see it as well as as many parents/relations as possible.

Parent Open Mornings

Parent Open Mornings take place once a term where parents are invited into class to experience the learning. These are fabulous opportunities to come into school and get an insight into what and how your child learns. The children really do love to be able to show how clever they are and to teach you new things too!



If you are unable to attend an event in school, feel free to ask someone else to go in your place whether it be a grandparent, uncle/aunt, older sibling etc. It really matters to the child that they have a grown up there to look for and show off to!

Nativity

Year 2 put on the Nativity production each year and they perform it in their house groups rather than their classes, so Mandela and Pankhurst perform together as do Barnardo and Gandhi. Parents of Year 2 children have priority over ticket allocation, as numbers are limited. However, every year group sing individual and group songs throughout the performance, so all parents are welcome to come and see the show and hear their child sing, regardless of whether they are in Year 2. There are usually 4 performances in total, 2 from Mandela and Pankhurst and 2 from Barnardo and Gandhi.

Christingle

Christmas is celebrated by a Christingle service at All Saints' Church, Four Oaks. Two services are held on consecutive afternoons and children are split into houses for these.

Christmas dinner

All parents are invited to come into school to have Christmas dinner with their child, regardless of whether the child has school dinner or not. The lunches are held in house groups, so that families can eat together no matter which year the children are in.

It doesn't matter if your child doesn't usually have school dinners

Easter bonnet parade

Reception children have their annual Easter bonnet parade the week before the Easter holidays. Parents are asked to help them create their Easter bonnets at home and are then welcome to come and watch the parade.

Easter lunch

All Reception parents are invited to come into school to have Easter lunch with their child, regardless of whether the child has school dinner or not. The lunches are held in house groups, so that older siblings can join their families and eat together.

Sports day

This is held in June or July and generally KS2 is held in the morning, KS1 in the afternoon. Parents are welcome to come to cheer along their children. Children earn valuable points for their house in order to see which house will be the Sports Day champion!

End of year awards

In July of each year, special achievement is recognised. There's more info on this later on p14, but you will receive a letter from school if your child has won an award.

Rewards and recognition

Hill West Primary School promotes learning and good behaviour through praise, encouragement and by celebrating success. There are a number of ways children are rewarded and recognised.

Star cards



These are used to collect stamps which reward children for their individual achievements including good work, effort and behaviour. Once the card is complete, the child posts it in the "Brilliant Box" and at the



next Celebration Assembly they will be called up to talk about how they earned their stamps and will be presented with their next star card. If your child tells you they have completed their star card, you are welcome to come and see them get their new card in Wednesday's Celebration Assembly.

Attendance Ted

Each week in Friday's House Assembly, the class in KS1 and the class in KS2 with the best attendance rate for that week are awarded Attendance Ted. They get Ted in their class for the week.

House Points

These are given to reward group achievement. All points earned each week are totalled and the children in the house with the most points have an extra Friday afternoon playtime 'team time'.

Certificates

These are awarded each week in Friday's House Assembly. There are 2 different types of certificate.

First, one or two children in each class will be recognised and rewarded each week with a certificate for brilliant work that week. The child receives a paper certificate to bring home.

Second, a special certificate is awarded for exceptionally good behaviour to just one child from each key stage per week. The child receives a paper certificate and a good behaviour badge to wear on their school jumper. This is a real honour.

Maths times table wrist bands

Tests are done on times tables from Year 2 onwards so children can show how brilliant they are at learning their tables. There are four levels of wrist band and these are handed out to children in Wednesday's Celebration Assembly.

<i>Wrist band</i>	<i>Times table</i>
Bronze	2, 5, 10
Silver	3, 4, 6
Gold	7, 8, 9, 11, 12
Platinum	all plus 13

Division awards can also be earned once Platinum has been reached.

End of year awards

In July of each year, special achievement is recognised. There are 7 categories of awards:

- literacy
- numeracy
- sport
- creativity
- kindness
- music
- art

For each category, 3 children from each year will be chosen by their class teachers and presented with certificates in the end of year awards assembly.

Money Matters

School fund

We, the Parent Council, recommended a simpler way of raising money for the little extras school spends on our children. We suggested a one off annual payment of £10 per family, paid in September. This money covers things like Christmas presents, Easter eggs, snacks for the trip to the Pantomime, teaching activities like making pizzas or cakes in class. Cheques should be made payable to Hill West Primary School.

Other Payments

Hill West uses SchoolMoney for all payments except currently for purchase of school uniform. SchoolMoney is an online payment facility which enables you to make payments to school at any time to suit you. You will be given information with your login details once your child has started school. The one thing school requests is that all outstanding payments are cleared by the end of each term so that everyone starts the new term with a clear account.

If you have any concerns or worries about using SchoolMoney please pop into the school office for advice and help.

Benefits

It is important for us to know if you are in receipt of certain benefits as your child may be entitled to free school meals in Key Stage 2 and additional funding can be claimed for the school. This is currently £1,320 per child each year and this money is spent on improving your child's education in school. By providing your NI number and date of birth in the Admission Booklet we can check whether you are eligible.

Dinner money

The cost of a school meal is currently £2.10 per day. You will be able to see how much you currently owe from your SchoolMoney account.

Universal Free School Meals (UFSM)

Under the Government's Universal Free School Meals Scheme, all children in KS1 can receive a free school meal. If you prefer them to bring a pack lunch, just let the school office know. Once they move to KS2, school meals are chargeable and currently cost £2.10 per day unless you are entitled to free school meals.

Milk money

Milk is free for children in Reception but from Year 1, if you'd like to pay for your child to have a carton of milk to drink each day, cost is currently 21p per day, this needs to be ordered and paid for before term starts. Milk order forms are in the stands in school's main entrance. No refunds can be given if your child misses a day, but the carton of milk can be collected from school. Payments should be made via SchoolMoney.

School Uniform Purchases

School uniform bought from the school cannot at present be paid for via SchoolMoney, so please send payments in with your orders marked with your child's name, class and "uniform order" on the envelope. Cheques should be payable to "Hill West Primary School".

Sending things into school

As you've seen above, there are various times when you'll need to send things into school. These should be sent in with your child who should give them to their teacher who will send to the school office.

Alternatively you can use the white post box outside the school office.

As you can imagine, the school office is inundated daily with letters and reply slips and so on. Always write your child's name, class and what it is that you are sending in on the envelope so that it will quickly be given to the correct person in the office.

John Smith
Robins
Uniform Order



Don't feel you need to buy a load of envelopes, save and re-use old envelopes that come through the post to send things into school. So long as there is room to write your child's name, class and what is contained in the envelope they would be perfect!

Trips

School asks that all children go on trips, as they contribute to the child's learning of a current or future topic. Make sure you sign and send back the annual consent form, otherwise your child won't be able to go on trips with their class.

Food

School dinners

There is a three weekly menu, which can be seen on the school website, offering a wide range of food and puddings. Dinners currently cost £2.10 per day and are served in KS2 hall. See info on p15 regarding Universal Free School Meals.

Sandwiches

Where parents opt for their child to have sandwiches brought in from home, rather than school dinners, older children eat in KS1 hall while the younger children eat in the KS2 hall. A full half term's notice is required to switch from dinners to sandwiches.



Children who behave well at lunchtime are recognised and rewarded. There are daily and weekly "Good Behaviour" certificates that are handed out. Great for confirming to you that your child has done well at lunchtime.

Healthy snacks

In KS1, fruit and/or vegetables are offered free of charge every morning playtime. If you would rather send your own snack you can put this into their school bag, so long as it's healthy. No crisps, chocolate or sweets are allowed.

In KS2, children can visit the tuck shop at morning playtime to buy a snack. As with KS1 if you would rather send your own snack you can so long as it's healthy. No crisps, chocolate or sweets are allowed.

Ways to get involved with our school

Governing Body

Since becoming an academy, the Local Governing Body has just 10 governors who work with Dr Clarke on continual school improvement and strategy.

Parent Council

The Parent Council made up of a group of parents and Dr Clarke. It meets monthly and is a discussion forum and advisory body. It is not a mechanism for dealing with complaints of any description but will discuss/debate general issues that affect the welfare and safety of all children. Ideally we would like there to be at least 1 parent from each class to be involved.

Parent, Teacher and Friends Association

The PTFA helps to raise funds for school with a range of events throughout the year. They meet 1 evening every month.

Parent Helpers

Parent helpers are parents who give a few hours per week to help in some way, for example they may listen to children reading.

If you would like to get involved with any of the above groups, speak to the school office for more information.

Other useful info

Mufti Days

These are non-uniform days where children can wear their own clothes to school. These are often held to highlight a theme in school (World Book Day) or raise money for a charity (Red Nose Day).

Teacher training days

There are 5 teacher training days throughout the school year where school is open for teachers only, pupils have an extra day off! They are usually just before or just after a school holiday.

PPA

Teachers use 10% of their teaching time for PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment) each week. This gives the class teacher time to prepare their future lessons away from the classroom and allows the Assistant Heads for each Phase to get to know all of the children better by teaching classes.

easyfundraising .org.uk

Do you shop online?

If so please sign up to www.easyfundraising.org.uk, link yourself to Hill West Primary School and then whenever you shop online, open the site via the easyfundraising home page and Hill West receive a donation each time.

It's totally free for you, but raises money for school. Last year, one local primary school received over £2000 from easyfundraising. So whether it's food, clothes, travel or insurance, whether you use ebay, Next, Amazon, M&S, Argos or Tesco, go via easyfundraising and help raise money for Hill West for free. There are 100's of different companies and retailers signed up, so have a look if the one you're buying from is listed.

How much uniform to buy?

Many parents have asked for guidance on this. Questions to ask;

- how messy are your children?
- how often do you wash?

We'd recommend having at least;

- 5 polo shirts 1 for each day
- 3 pairs of trousers/skirts/dresses
- 2 sweatshirts/cardigans
- PE kits - 1 set is usually enough as children keep them in school and they only come home for washing at the end of each half term.

Some final top tips!

If your child is in Reception or Year 1, find out which days your child has PE so you can make sure your child is wearing clothes that are easy to get off and back on. Imagine 10 or so 5 year old girls all fighting with their pinafore dresses and tights!

Buy shoes with velcro straps until your child is confident doing buckles or laces.

If you have missed any order forms or letters, go to school's main entrance hall in KS1 building and you'll find them in the information stands there.

The school office phone number is 0121 308 5392. Save it on your mobile phone in case you need it in an emergency.