



NEWSLETTER

Friday 22nd May 2026

Dear Parents, Carers, and Members of Our School Community,

After just one week as Principal of Hillside, I am already seeing some incredibly exciting developments taking shape. We are working collaboratively across the Trust to explore how we can strengthen our provision and widen the opportunities available to our learners. Our shared aim is clear: to remove barriers so every young person can thrive. GCSE examinations continue, and our Year 11 pupils have shown exceptional commitment. Their daily attendance, focus, and determination during this crucial period is genuinely inspiring.

Thank you to every member of staff who has supported Year 11 in their final push towards success. Their encouragement, consistency, and belief in our learners makes a real difference.

As we reach the end of this half term, I would also like to wish all pupils, staff, and families a restful and enjoyable break. We look forward to welcoming everyone back on Monday 1st June.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Anderson-Nicholls, Principal.



Year 11 🍦🌟

As a little reward for all your hard work so far, we've got a tasty surprise arriving at school today... an ice cream van! 🎉
Well done for your effort – you've earned it!



Thought for the week: "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." Marcus Garvey

FIDGET TOYS

Fidget toys provide controlled, repetitive hand movements that help the brain regulate attention, stress, and sensory input. By offering steady physical stimulation, they support calmness, focus, and grounding for both children and adults.

Your brain constantly manages sensory information, and fidgeting can supply the right level of input to maintain engagement without becoming overwhelmed. Actions such as squeezing, clicking, or spinning activate neural pathways linked to the prefrontal cortex, which governs focus, impulse control, and emotional regulation. This gentle activation can sharpen concentration and channel restless energy in a manageable way.

Fidgeting also supports the body's shift out of a heightened stress response. Predictable, rhythmic movement reduces muscle tension and helps quiet anxious thoughts by giving your hands a controlled outlet. This redirection of physical and mental energy can ease the fight-or-flight response and promote a return to a calmer state.

In a classroom, fidget toys work best when they're framed as tools rather than toys. The ADHD Foundation recommends that a fidget toy should;

- Be able to be used with the non-dominant hand
- Should fit in the palm of your hand
- Should not need to be looked at whilst using it
- Should not serve as a distraction

We are seeing an increase in large fidget toys including the viral "butter block" from Tik Tok shop. These are not suitable for school and pupils have been advised this week not to bring these type of fidget toys to school. Any fidget toy must meet the criteria stated above. Below are some examples of suitable fidget toys. Thank you in advance for your support.



Mrs Miller

SEND Coordinator

ABSENCE

If your child is unable to attend school you will need to ring the school office on

0151 525 2630 between 7.30am-8.30am.

The call will be received by one of our admin team who will discuss the reason for your child's absence. Please help us by letting us know if your child has an appointment or will be absent for any reason.

PE STAR PERFORMERS FROM LAST WEEK

Jarda	8 SA
Charlie	9 EB
Matthew	8 SKe
Poppy	8 SA
Andrei	9 OM
Zack	9 KBH
Erikas	8 RLC
Jayden	7 HP
Erin	8 SA
Kenneth	7 CL
Lexi	8 HT
Louis	8 RLC
Semo	7 JMu

KEY DATES MAY/ JUNE

May
22 nd May - End of Term
June
1 st June - Start of Term- Back to school
5 th June - Year 8 HPV Vaccine-Immunisations
23 rd June -Catch-up Immunisations Yr7 - Yr11
16 th June - End of Year 11 GCSE Exams
25 th June -Year 11 Prom & Yr6 Transition day
26 th June - Inset Day

Raising Awareness for Tourette's Awareness Month

From 15th May to 15th June, we are proud to recognise Tourette's Awareness Month, an important opportunity to increase understanding, challenge misconceptions, and promote inclusion for those living with Tourette Syndrome.

As part of our commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive school community, all staff recently took part in a valuable Tourette's awareness training and educational workshop, delivered by Lucy from Tourette's Action. The session gave staff a deeper understanding of Tourette Syndrome, how it can present in children and young people, and, most importantly, how we can best support pupils in school.

Tourette Syndrome is a neurological condition that causes a person to make involuntary sounds and movements known as tics. These may be motor tics, such as blinking, facial movements, shoulder shrugging, or repetitive movements, or vocal tics, such as throat clearing, sniffing, repeating words or sounds. Tourette's presents differently in every individual, and symptoms can vary in frequency and intensity over time.

A common misconception is that Tourette Syndrome always involves swearing or shouting inappropriate language. Whilst this symptom, known as coprolalia, can occur, it affects only a small proportion of people with Tourette's. For many individuals, Tourette's may be less obvious but can still significantly affect learning, social interactions, emotional wellbeing, and confidence.

Our staff training focused on breaking down these misconceptions and helping colleagues understand the importance of responding with empathy, patience, and informed support. By increasing awareness, we can make meaningful adjustments that help pupils with Tourette Syndrome feel understood, included, and able to succeed in school.

The recent BBC drama *I Swear* has also helped shine a spotlight on Tourette Syndrome and the stigma many people face. The programme highlighted the daily realities of living with Tourette's, including social misunderstanding, judgement, and the emotional impact of being misrepresented. Its recognition at recent awards has helped bring even greater awareness to the condition and the importance of authentic representation.

To continue raising awareness across our school community, we will be selling Green awareness ribbons after the half-term break, giving pupils and staff the opportunity to show their support and help spark important conversations around understanding, acceptance, and inclusion.

Awareness matters because knowledge reduces stigma. For children and young people living with Tourette Syndrome, being understood can make a significant difference to their sense of belonging, confidence, and overall school experience.

Together, we can continue building a school community where differences are understood, celebrated, and supported.



"Thank you so much TEENfest for giving me the experience of feeling happy and being myself."

What is a TEENfest weekend?

Our residential weekend events for unaccompanied teenagers with TS aged 14-17 years old.

What is TEENfest?

TEENfest provides a safe, non-judgemental environment where young people can relax, have fun and make friends, without their adults with them!

We keep you busy, with challenges and games, giving you the opportunity to share your TS stories with others and build confidence and independence away from home.

All the venues have been chosen for their open spaces, range of activities and friendly staff. The accommodation is warm and practical but very basic - it is NOT hotel standard! Participants are usually in shared accommodation, offering the chance to form new friendships with others and the bathroom facilities are generally shared. Gender neutral facilities are available.

Please note:

- TEENfest is for ages 14-17 years only and proof of age and diagnosis of TS will be required on booking.
- A small charge of £65 is requested per participant, and includes all accommodation, activities, food and a personalised hoodie as a keepsake.
- We want our events to be accessible to all, so if financial constraints are preventing you from applying, please reach out to us.
- If we are oversubscribed, please see Terms and Conditions below for our allocation process.
- Please note we are unable to accept dogs at TICfest, other than fully trained support dogs (please ask for our policy on this if required).
- A needs analysis will be required to ensure safety of Teens and staff before acceptance. This will be sent to all who express an interest in TEENfest.

A group of young people standing in front of several small, round, wooden huts (tents) outdoors.

Local History Month

May is Local History Month and the aim of the month is to increase awareness of local history, promote history in general to the local community and encourage all members of the community, especially school children, to participate. Activities happen across the UK and include trips, library exhibitions and local lectures. It's a great opportunity to take the time to highlight local history and for local people to engage and get involved.

At Hillside we ensure that local history is sprinkled throughout the history curriculum such as the role of King John (of Magna Carta fame) in establishing Liverpool as a town in year 7; living conditions during the Industrial Revolution and the experiences of Liverpool during the English Civil War in year 8 and the experiences of people in Bootle during the Liverpool Blitz during Year 9.

Recommended Activities for May

Take a walk down the Dock Road and not only admire the beautiful views but Liverpool's rich maritime history; discover the many war memorials to the brave men and women of the Royal and Merchant navies during World War One and Two and be sure to get a photo with the Beatles statue, the four lads from Liverpool who made up one of the most influential bands of all time!

Booking in a tour of the Williamson Tunnels is also recommended in the Edge Hill area of the city. Excavated by Joseph Williamson for reasons unknown in the 19th century, you can take a tour of this fascinating underground world and learn about one of Liverpool's most eccentric characters. What theory do you have for the purpose of the tunnels?

For those interested in the Tudor period, a visit to Speke Hall, ran by the National Trust, is a must. A magnificent and rare Tudor house on the edge of Liverpool, it is surrounded by beautiful gardens and woodland walks. Inside the hall you can find all about the Norris family and the features of a genuine Tudor upper class home.

Those interested in the Blitz and the Battle of the Atlantic can visit the Western Approaches museum, which is an outstanding opportunity to visit the actual bunker from which the efforts of the Royal Navy were directed to combat German U-Boats and bring supplies from America safely into Liverpool via the convoy system. The museum also affords you the chance to walk through a street mocked up to look like an every day road from the Second World War during the Blitz.

Reflection Questions:

- What places in your local area feel important to you and why?
- What stories about Bootle or Liverpool have you heard from family members?
- If you could create a museum exhibit about your area, what would you include?
- How might your local area look different in another 50 years?

