

Safe Natural environments for children to explore, discover and learn are constantly under threat from development. Hilltop is a survivor of the ever-decreasing areas that provides this opportunity for our children. We are very concerned that the proposal by Norfolk County Council to develop an area of AONB on the doorstep of Hilltop (when other sites are available) will see further loss of this childhood right.

Our school visit Hilltop to complete our children's education in preparation to become knowledgeable, confident, considerate, healthy adults. Our residential visit to Hilltop includes Challenge Activities, Field Studies and Woodland Discovery sessions. The Hilltop environment is well placed to cover areas of the national curriculum otherwise difficult to achieve in a school setting. As such, Hilltop holds a 'Learning Outside the Classroom' Accreditation. Our school visits during term time as part of our children's schooling education.

The unspoilt natural setting plays a large part in building our children's respect for the countryside and the motivation towards protecting and preserving this for future generations. Crucially, it also allows children to step away from the modern pressures they feel and concentrate on themselves and learning. Currently we have a mental health crisis in young people, links between the natural environment and positive wellbeing have now been proven.

Unsurprisingly, the unique features of Hilltop attract schools from great distances including a number from London, Cambridge and Kent, for this very special experience.

We would ask Norfolk County Council to consider carefully concreting over a protected area in the Norfolk Coastal Area, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and while potentially damaging the unique environment that makes Hilltop so special.