

20th July 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians

I am thrilled to announce the new structure of our new Senior Leadership Team, which will guide and inspire our school community from September onwards.

Firstly, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Mrs Punter-Bruce, who will be assuming the role of Head of Primary. She will be taking over from the incredible Mrs Geldard, who has served our school admirably. Over the past few days, we have held numerous farewell events for Mrs Geldard where both students, staff and parents have had the opportunity to wish her well in early retirement. I would like to personally thank Mrs Geldard for all that she has done for Gildredge House; she has been integral into helping the school grow and develop into what it is today. I am confident that Mrs Punter-Bruce will continue to build upon the strong foundations laid by her predecessor, alongside Mr Stephens who remains our Assistant Head and SENDCo for the Primary phase, in fostering a nurturing and stimulating environment for the children.

Mrs Punter-Bruce - Head of Primary writes:

I am thrilled to introduce myself as the Head of Primary at Gildredge House from September 2023. With great pleasure and enthusiasm, I bring over twenty years of experience in education and leadership, and throughout my career I have been driven by a deep passion for fostering a nurturing and inspiring learning environment for children.

At Gildredge House, I am committed to continuing the values and ethos already well established and ensuring all children experience academic excellence, creativity, and personal growth. It truly is a unique school, offering so many opportunities to everyone within the school community. I am excited to embark on the Gildredge House journey, working hand in hand with the talented staff, you as supportive parents and carers, and, of course, the exceptional children.

I look forward to getting to know you all in September and hope you all have a wonderful and restful summer break.

Additionally, I am delighted to introduce Mrs Jenkins as the new Head of Secondary. This is a new position within our Senior Leadership Team, created to provide focused attention to the needs of the Secondary phase and its students. Mrs Jenkins brings a wealth of experience in leading on Quality of Education and I have every confidence that she will make a positive impact on the academic and personal development of our Secondary phase students.

Mrs Jenkins writes:

It is with great excitement and a deep sense of responsibility that I step into the role of Head of Secondary, committed to fostering a nurturing and inclusive environment for your children's growth and development.

I firmly believe in the power of collaboration and open communication between parents, teachers, and the school community. Together, we can create a supportive educational experience that enables every child to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. I am dedicated to ensuring that our school remains a place of inspiration, creativity, and excellence, where each student can unlock their full potential.

I hope you have a wonderful summer break and I look forward to meeting each one of you personally, forging strong partnerships, and building a shared vision of educational success from September.

Moreover, I would like to congratulate Mr Towner and Miss Graffham on their appointments as Deputy Heads. Mr Towner will assume the role of Deputy Head responsible for the Quality of Education, ensuring that our students receive the highest standard of curriculum, assessment and teaching and learning across all Year Groups. Meanwhile, Miss Graffham will take on the vital responsibility of Deputy Head for Behaviour, Attitudes, and Safeguarding, ensuring that our school remains a safe and inclusive environment for all.

In addition, Mr O'Driscoll will be transitioning to the role of whole school Assistant Head responsible for Culture for Learning. In this capacity, he will oversee all aspects related to teaching and learning, working closely with staff to further enhance our pedagogical practices. I am pleased to announce that Mr Addems is the successor to Mr O'Driscoll, as our new whole school Assistant Head for Inclusion. Mr Addems will lead our efforts to ensure that all students receive equal opportunities to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce that Mr Simmonds will be taking on the role of Assistant Head for Personal Development. In this capacity, he will spearhead initiatives related to Personal, Social, Health, and Citizenship Education (PSHCE), careers guidance, and the organisation of enriching extracurricular activities and trips.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Mrs Logan, who will continue in her role as our Director of Finance and Administration. Her dedication and expertise have played a pivotal role in ensuring the smooth operation of our school since 2013, and I am grateful for her ongoing commitment.

My role as Executive Head Teacher, will be to provide leadership and guidance in shaping the strategic direction of both the Primary and Secondary phases of our school across the trust and ensure the continued success of our school and its community.

With the formation of this new Senior Leadership Team, I am confident that our school is poised for continued success and growth. These individuals bring a wealth of knowledge and passion to their respective roles, and I have no doubt that they will inspire and support our students to achieve their full potential.

It is always an incredible challenge to capture the spirit and summarise the many achievements of our school community each term in my letter to parents and this one is no exception.

In the Primary phase, this term has been filled with countless achievements and memorable experiences. Primary phase students performed at the East Sussex Children's Book Awards, while Year 1 visited Herstmonceux Castle and Year 3 explored Drusillas. Our students also participated in Bikeability training and enjoyed activities with Hands-on History. The children celebrated Medieval Day, hosted a Teddy Bears Picnic for the new EYFS students, and enjoyed successful transition days. Beach visits, music concerts, engineering workshops, and Year 6 'Pantastic' performances further enriched our curriculum. Our students and Secondary phase Student Leaders took part in fantastic Primary phase Sports Days.

In the Secondary phase, our Year 6, Year 11, and Year 13 students have completed their public examinations and Year 10 mocks. Students have embarked on the adventurous Duke of Edinburgh Award Expedition, showcased their artistic talents in the Art and Product Design Showcase, and Year 10 students have gained valuable work experience and career insights.

We welcomed our new Year 7 cohort where the students were provided a nurturing experience guided by Mr Young the new Head of Year 7. The Transition Day was a seamless experience for our Year 6 students, where they attended blended subjects and forged new friendships. Our Parent Partnership Event explored important topics such as mobile phones, social media, and artificial intelligence; strengthening the bond between the school and parents.

Celebrations were in order as our winning Houses in Years 7-9 enjoyed a well-deserved day off timetable, and our Year 11 leavers bid farewell in a wonderful celebration assembly and, arguably, the best Prom I have ever attended. Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 all had day trips planned for the last couple of days of term to celebrate the year and as a way of being rewarded for all their hard work. Looking ahead to the upcoming academic year, we have appointed Heads of Year to ensure continued support and guidance is in place for our students as follows: Year 7 - Mr Young, Year 8 - Mrs Forsyth, Year 9 - Mr Applegate, Year 10 - Mr Dyer, and Year 11 - Mr Temple.

In the sporting arena, our students continue to shine and make us proud. Here are just a few highlights. In cricket, Gildredge House became the Eastbourne Area Champions and Sussex Finalists in both the Mixed and Girls teams with the boys Years 5/6 Boys cricket team reading the finals. The Year 7 Super 6 Athletics team became South Downs Area Champions and Sussex School Games Finalists achieving third place overall. In tennis, we were U8/9 Sussex Shield semi-finalists and Boys U10 Semi Finalists and Girls Finalists achieving silver medals with an additional Gold Medal for Fair Play. I am also delighted to announce that Gildredge House came third in this year's Town Sports Athletics Competition against all local schools for Years 7-10.

I would also like to say thank you to our school community as a whole for your continued support of the Friends of Gildredge House (FoGH) events in raising over £13,000 this academic year. Our dedicated team of FoGH volunteers have worked hard to create memorable experiences and fund-raising opportunities to support our school. The money raised has gone towards supporting outdoor play equipment, chess boards, books, inflatables, library books, instruments and much more.

You will remember that I wrote to all parents back in March to inform you that, following the outcome of the consultation on the phased closure of the Sixth Form, the Governing Board had approved moving to the next stage in the process and making a full submission to the Department for Education (DfE) and Secretary of State for Education.

The DfE have confirmed that they are in support of, and have approved, the phased closure plans. As such, we will not be admitting Year 12 students into our Sixth Form in September 2023. As mentioned before, the closure will not affect our students currently in studying in our Sixth Form. Our current Year 12 will continue into Year 13 with no changes or disruption to their studies. We also remain absolutely committed to our Year 11 cohort post their exams who have all have secured post-16 education places or employment. We are grateful for your feedback as part of the consultation process. We remain disappointed to have needed to make this decision but believe strongly that this is in the best interests of the school.

The end of the academic year is also a time where we say farewell to members of staff. In our Primary phase, we are sad to say farewell to Miss Polglaze, and Miss Goodman who is leaving us to train to become a teacher. We are delighted to be welcoming Miss Vinson to the Primary phase teaching team from September.

We must also say farewell to Mrs Hawkins, our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, who is leaving to pursue her qualification in counselling, and Jess Williamson, our Place2Be School Project Manager and counsellor, is also moving on.

In the Secondary phase we say goodbye to Miss Padget, who is leaving the teaching profession to focus on time with her family. Mrs Butchers is departing for the USA to teach in the British International School of Houston. From the English department, we are also saying farewell to Miss Sutton Smith, Mrs Newby, and Miss Fox. Mrs Dowle is leaving the Maths team after nice years with us at Gildredge House.

Departures also mean we need to give a Gildredge House Welcome to Mr Filtness-Davies and Mr Webster, who are joining us to teach History, Religion and Philosophy, and Mrs Breslin and Mr Cheetham are joining the English team. We are also delighted to welcome back Mrs O'Driscoll who has recently been appointed as our new Secondary phase SENDCo and will be joining us sometime in the new term.

Starting in September, it will be compulsory for all Secondary phase students to bring a pencil case to school every day. We believe that this change will help instil a sense of organisation, responsibility, and readiness among our older students. By having their own set of essential writing tools readily available, students will be empowered to actively engage in classroom activities and create an optimal learning environment. To assist in ensuring that student pencil cases are well-equipped, compulsory items include: blue and/or black ink pens, several pencils, erasers, a ruler, a pencil sharpener, and green and purple pens (for peer and self-assessment). Additional items which are not compulsory, but recommended, include highlighters, coloured pencils, and a glue stick. For Years 10 and 11, our exam-level students, we highly recommend that pencil cases meet the external examination requirements set by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) which states that all pencil cases must be see-through. This new compulsory requirement will greatly benefit students by promoting active participation and a sense of ownership. We appreciate your cooperation in implementing this requirement and supporting students in being well-prepared for their daily school activities.

We also kindly request all parents ensure that their child has the proper school uniform as outlined in our policy, available on our website, including appropriate school shoes. Please take the summer to ensure you and your child are familiar with the updated policy and that your child has the required items. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated, and we thank you for your ongoing support.

It is safe to say that this academic year has been an extraordinary journey and I believe we can look back with pride on all that has been achieved. I consider myself privileged to be able to observe the tremendous growth and development of all our students. Countless unforgettable experiences, cherished friendships, and enriching learning opportunities have marked the path.

Please be reminded that Years 6, 7, 11 and 13 start the new academic year on Tuesday 5th September 2023 for the Learning to Learn Day, with all other Year Groups joining them on Wednesday 6th September 2023.

Wishing you and your families a wonderful summer together and we look forward to welcoming the children back in September.

Kind regards



Mr C. Bull
Head Teacher