



**Gildredge
House**

Inclusion Newsletter- Spring Term

Forest School Programme

A year has passed since we first introduced Forest School at Gildredge House, and we would like to share the achievements of the participating students.

This term, a mix of new and returning students have been enjoying the challenges and variety of skills and experiences that Forest School offers. Our sessions always begin seated around the firepit, where we remind ourselves of the rules and risks associated with the forest and our activities. By the end of the term, the students were able to conscientiously lead this part of the session, demonstrating how to manage and act responsibly with fire and tools. They learned how to navigate the fire circle safely and understood the principles of the fire triangle (fuel, oxygen/air, and heat), knowing that if one element is removed, a fire cannot exist.

The new students from Years 3 and 4, along with our senior students from Years 7 and 8, have all gained a substantial set of skills. These skills include constructing and lighting fires, whittling with knives, and cooking over an open flame. Our fire circle is always busy, with children often engaged in whittling sticks or learning knots to craft tools and artifacts.

Cooking on the fire has been a highlight for both groups. Some students have discovered or cultivated a passion for cooking. From week one, they have all enjoyed sampling the food they prepared. They have made bread with melted cheese or chocolate for dipping, and everyone has loved the pizzas and pancakes. They also made soups and cheesy tomato pasta, which were very welcoming on cold days. Additionally, they melted marshmallows on sticks they prepared to make their campfire treat, s'mores.

Particularly notable is one of our senior students' attention to detail and perfection when preparing dough balls and similar recipes. Another senior's wish for spaghetti with tomato sauce prompted him to do all the prep and cooking, including tending to the pasta while it cooked and serving his peers.

Over the sessions, the teams have bonded by organizing their own games and projects while exploring the woods and getting to know their surroundings. They seem to enjoy this





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freedom and soon began adapting their environment by making bases, dens, and swings. One of our Year 7 boys has become an expert at putting up swings, which the group has enjoyed. He has also passed on his techniques to other students, remembering the names of the knots he has been learning. More recently, our Year 3 and 4 students took on the task of excavating reinforced concrete debris and removing protruding metal wire, ensuring the safety of other woodland users—both animals and humans.



Learning safe tool skills is a gradual process that builds up week by week. It begins with using a peeler to sharpen green wood and progresses to learning how to use a knife for whittling. Our fire circle is always busy with children engaged in whittling projects, which sometimes involve learning knots to craft tools and artifacts.

The pleasant weather has allowed us to gather firewood onsite, with the children knowing where to harvest dry, dead wood. The delivery of our new saw-horse last week enabled the children to harvest larger branches, working in pairs with the bow saw to make logs. They use the bow saw, loppers, and secateurs to cut green wood for their creative projects. The students' creativity with the tools has been intense and inventive, with some of the Year 3 and 4 students making recorders and flutes. Notably, three students from this group used the bow saw to cut sections off a fallen tree to make drum sets.



The weather has not always been kind to us. We have endured very cold days, windy days, and even heavy rain, where we had to put up a tarp. Both groups have been resilient, staying out for the full two and a half hours. Lighting the fire was more challenging, and cooking in the rain was certainly harder. However, the children were not deterred. Most still explored the woods, sliding around in the mud, while some stayed around the campfire, practicing their tool skills, lighting 'baby' fires, and chatting.

It is always a sad moment when a term ends, and we say goodbye to our current students. Yet, we are proud of the skilled, survival-ready, risk-assessing individuals they have become, braving a term outside 'whatever the weather'. We wish you all a fantastic Easter break and look forward to welcoming our Year 2 and Year 1 students for the summer term, as well as welcoming back our Year 7 and Year 8 students.

Kathleen Bailey and Laura Boothroyd (Forest School Leadership Team)





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SEND Parent Partnership - Supporting students with dyslexia.

On Friday 28th March, we hosted our next Secondary SEND Parent/Carer workshop. This workshop was on a topic that has been requested by parents - 'How is dyslexia assessed and diagnosed?' The workshop was run by Emily Dewar and Natalie Carpenter from Dyslexia East Sussex (www.dyslexiaeastsussex.co.uk) who are Level 7 specialist dyslexia teachers and assessors. Emily discussed some of signs and strengths of dyslexia and how to explore a dyslexia diagnosis.

Following this, Emily and Natalie met with our reading ambassadors to discuss how they could help in still a love of reading with our dyslexic students. A secondary reading ambassador shared their thoughts on this training:

This training supported us as a team to help all students with their reading, particularly those who have dyslexia. The key message that we want to pass onto other students is that being dyslexic means you are creative, resilient and a good problem solver. Dyslexia can mean it takes longer to de-code and process information; taking time and reading slowly should be praised and celebrated with readers! We also shared how practising high frequency words is so important for dyslexic students.

Thank you, Emily and Natalie, for your time and sharing your expertise.
Mrs O'Driscoll (Secondary SENDCo)



Scholars Programme Year 10 Trip to Goldsmiths University



Following the successful completion of The Scholars Programme, our Year 10 students attended a graduation event at Goldsmiths University, London, to celebrate their success.

The day involved students receiving certificates of graduation, a tour of the campus and an opportunity to listen to current students at the university about their experiences and ask questions they may have about university life.

Our Year 8 students are currently involved in The Scholars Programme and will be attending a graduation event at Goldsmiths in May.

EALS Parent Partnership

Last term saw our third Multilingual Families Parent Partnership event take place, delivered by Mr Addems and Linda Deon (EALS Specialist Practitioner). The session looked to further embed a collaborative approach to support our multilingual students at Gildredge House, provide parents/carers with opportunities for dialogue both with staff and each other and to provide training around how they can use technology and their home languages to support their child at home.

The session was a great success, and we look forward to hosting our summer term event on Tuesday 8th July 9:00 - 10:30am.





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Empathy Week

From 10th-14th March we celebrated Empathy Week, an opportunity for students and staff to develop their understanding of the needs and feelings of others, supporting those who sometimes need our help.

Students were challenged to complete a checklist over the course of the week, which included tasks such as gaining empathy ASPIRE points, taking part in empathy-based tasks in lessons and celebrating others in their life that have shown great empathy towards them.

The week culminated with a non-uniform day, where students brought in a voluntary contribution towards an empathy-based charity that Gildredge House currently works with.

The week was a huge success, and students truly embodied the value of empathy in all they did.



Literacy Specialist Teacher Interventions

Work has continued with students from Years 5-11 that have been identified as requiring extra support with their literacy skills.

Year 5 and 6 have been reading the beginning of lots of different books and talking about how to choose a suitable book to read. They have also learnt about how reading different types of books can help their writing too.

The Year 7 reading group have been reading the book *Wonder* (photo). The group have been working hard on reading with expression and being able to answer questions on what the characters might be thinking and feeling.

Year 11s have been preparing for their GCSE English Language exam by looking at a variety of texts, written in different styles, as well as focusing on the punctuation and grammar aspects of their writing.

All groups have been exploring comprehension and meaning from different texts. Improving vocabulary is so important and being able to have a understand what a word means can really help with all subjects.

Quote of the Year so far: *"Miss, I've actually read 10 pages of my book at home. My parents couldn't believe it!"* - Year 8 student.

Mrs Lord (Literacy Intervention Specialist)





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Interventions

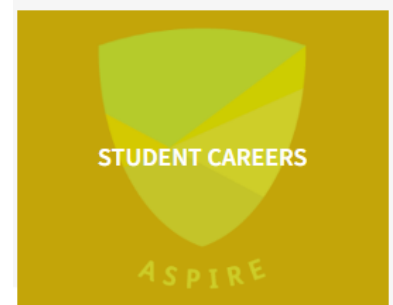
We continue to provide a variety of interventions to support the academic, social and emotional development of our students at Gildredge House. Interventions include English GCSE breakfast intervention, reading fluency and comprehension, Maths pre-teaching, social skills, language development and mentoring programmes.

These interventions are targeted and intensive, supporting students to catch up and keep up with their peers, so that intervention is no longer required, and they make expected progress as a minimum.

Inclusion Careers

I-Can Careers Fair 2025

Year 9 students attended the I-Can Careers Fair on Monday 7 March 2025. This careers fair was designed to include students who would not benefit from attending a large and busy careers fair such as The Eastbourne Careers Fair or the Big Futures Show. Students got the opportunity to meet Post-16 providers, employers, uniformed services, and organisations offering volunteering programmes for young people with SEND. There were lots of hands-on activities and students enjoyed laying roof tiles and having fun with practical activities.



Year 11 Mock Interview for students with SEND

Following on from the success of the Year 11 mock interview and apprenticeship day, Joyce Swann (Governor) returned to school to deliver mock interviews for our Year 11 students with SEND. The feedback from the students who engaged in this opportunity was excellent with all of the students giving excellent feedback on how much they had gained from being interviewed in a quieter setting. They also all said that this opportunity had boosted their confidence for any interview they will face in the future.

Year 10 Work Experience 3-7 March - bespoke support for students with SEND

Our Year 10 work experience programme was a big success, but this year the successes came from our SEND students. Sara Bray worked alongside ESCC to support our SEND and vulnerable students to find a bespoke employers for these students for their work experience. This was hugely successful. All the employers offered employment opportunities for our students, with one of our SEND students winning this year's work experience prize.



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COMPASS
CAREERS BENCHMARK TOOL

Careers Compass Scores for Inclusion Score 100%

Based on the Careers and Enterprise Compass+ scores (21 March 2025), the Gildredge House careers programme scored 100% for Benchmark 3, 'Addressing the needs of each student'. 60% of schools nationally achieve 100% and within East Sussex 59% schools achieve 100%. Further information on the Gildredge House Compass+ scores can be found [Here](#)



Year 10 Steps to Success Programme

To support our inclusion careers programme, Sara Bray has been working alongside ESCC on a Year 10 pilot scheme called 'Steps To Success'. Our most vulnerable students have been offered mentoring and support and ESCC will be tracking their Post-18 destinations. Students have received support with work experience, and they will be having termly mentoring sessions. They have already met their key worker twice and so far, the programme is proving to be positive with students looking forward to their sessions.

Mrs Bray (Careers Advisor)

Exam Access Arrangements

Our Year 11 students were involved in mock examinations in the Spring term, with many receiving exam access arrangements. The SEND team and Exams Officer have worked extremely hard to ensure students receive the arrangement they are entitled to, to give them a chance to achieve the best possible grade they can in each subject exam.

Assessment will continue with Year 10 students, in preparation for their mock exams coming in the summer term.



Gildredge House
Empowering Every Learner



Adaptive Teaching CPD

This term, our Special Educational Needs Coordinators in Primary (Mr Stephens) and Secondary (Mrs O'Driscoll) delivered professional development sessions to staff in their respective phases on adaptive teaching.

The focus of each session has been targeted and relevant to the needs of each phase of the school. Our Empowering Every Learner adaptive teaching framework and Student Support Profiles continue to underpin all the work being done to support those students that may require additional support in the classroom.



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Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA)

Our ELSA programmes in Primary and Secondary have continued this term. ELSA is an initiative developed and supported by educational psychologists, that recognises that children learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are also addressed. They aim to provide students who may need emotional support, with strategies to help them cope better. Activities include 1 to 1 and group work sessions such as friendship circle sessions, to help students understand how they can interact and support their peers.



A few words so far from students that have been supported through ELSA for various reasons:

'By the end, I liked talking about and remembering Grandad and the grief booklet we did helped with this a lot. It helped me feel better'

'I learnt how to ask people to be my friend, how to stay calm in annoying situations and how to take time to forgive people, rather than ending a friendship'

This term, Gildredge House hosted an ELSA supervision event, which involved practitioners from other schools visiting the site to discuss the work being done across the area and the impact of this work.

We look forward to continuing to work with our students in the summer term.
Mrs Groves and Mrs Baker (ELSA Practitioners)

Young Carers

In the Spring term, we dedicated a week of assemblies in the secondary phase of the school to Young Carers. The assemblies were delivered by Mr Addems and Oliver, one of our Young Carers, and aimed to provide students with information about what a Young Carer is and the strengths and challenges associated with being a Young Carer.

It was also an opportunity to provide students with information regarding what to do if they believed they might be a Young Carer, or if they thought one of their peers may be.

Oliver shared his experiences of being a Young Carer, talking about the struggles associated with this, but also about the many skills he has learnt as a result.

Students listened intently and were extremely receptive to the presentation delivered.

