



William Gilbert Endowed

(Church of England)

Primary School & Nursery

Vicarage Lane, Duffield, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 4EB

Telephone & Fax: 01332 840395

E-mail: enquiries@williamgilbertend.derbyshire.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs E H Britten



NEWSLETTER

3rd September 2024

No. 612

Dear Parents/Carers

I do hope this letter finds you all safe and well having enjoyed the summer vacation from school. School has opened to staff today for essential safeguarding training and preparation for the new term. We are all looking forward to welcoming children and parents back to school on Thursday 5th September. Ahead of the new school term for pupils I would like to share some essential information to ensure a smooth return to the academic year.

At the start of the academic year there is always a large volume of information that we need to communicate with parents and carers. We will aim to stagger this communication over the coming days and weeks to hopefully avoid you feeling overwhelmed. I would greatly appreciate you taking the time to read all the information that is sent to you and if you have any questions please do not hesitate in contacting the school office enquiries@williamgilbertend.derbyshire.sch.uk or speak to one of the parent liaison officers at the school gates each morning.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

On return to school on 5th September pupils may still wear the summer uniform up until October half term. For girls this is a blue gingham dress with plain white ankle or knee high socks (please note that tights must not be worn with the school summer gingham dresses), and school shirts should be standard shirts, not puffed sleeved or frilly edged blouses. Boys can also continue to wear grey school shorts until October half term. For full and detailed information about the school uniform expectations please refer to the uniform information held on the school website.

For all pupils to see the 'equity' of our uniform it is necessary for me to insist that parents/carers abide by the written details. Ties, book bags or school issue rucksacks, sweaters/cardigans can be ordered online or directly from the school office. The school blazer is an **optional** item on our school uniform list and badges are available from the office for you to sew onto a purchased blazer.

Nearly new uniform can be accessed throughout the year via the PTA to reduce the financial burden of purchasing new uniform. Please contact the school office for contact details of Mrs Hannah Ruggins who kindly manages the nearly new uniform sales.

I hope the weekend ahead provides an opportunity for any families that have discovered feet have grown and no longer fit the school shoes. When purchasing shoes, please remember they should be black school shoes and not boots.

PE KIT

During the summer term we allowed pupils to wear their PE uniform to school on PE days. This proved to be beneficial to the children in several ways. It maximizes the time spent in PE lessons, as no time is lost changing clothes, which is particularly helpful for our youngest children who can otherwise spend most of their PE lesson getting changed. For our older pupils, it eliminates the need for separate boys' and girls' changing spaces, which can sometimes be challenging to manage.

We understand that opinions on this matter are mixed, as noted in verbal feedback and the annual parent questionnaire. While some parents appreciate the convenience, others find it challenging, especially when there are last-minute changes to PE days.

Due to the benefits we have seen for the pupils and the impact on their physical education lessons we will continue this pilot until October half term. At the end of September, we will gather feedback through a short consultation survey with pupils, parents, and staff to determine if this approach should be continued.

For those that have found this arrangement difficult, I hope you can be patient and allow us time to iron out the difficulties that have emerged for some of you. Moving forward, staff have been instructed to avoid timetable changes wherever possible to ensure a smoother experience for everyone. Please be mindful that there may be unavoidable or unexpected events that very occasionally happen in school that may mean a PE slot is missed. Ultimately, I urge you to share your views through the consultation at the end of the month.

Please see the uniform list for detailed PE uniform information. Pupils may wear their plain navy joggers and navy school fleece on their PE days as wherever possible pupils will have lessons outside.

Please see the list below for the days when PE kit must be worn to school. PE lessons will begin week commencing 9th September, until October half term

Reception – Tuesday & Thursday

Year 1 – Monday & Thursday

Year 2 – Tuesday & Friday

Year 3 – Monday & Tuesday

Year 4 – Monday & Wednesday

Year 5 – Tuesday & Thursday

Year 6 – Monday & Tuesday

Please note we have secured a full day of skipping fun with ‘Dan the Skipping Man’ for the whole school on Wednesday 11th September. On this day all year groups to come to school in PE kit.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION -WEDUC

Every year we request the views and opinions of parents and pupils through the ‘annual parent/pupil questionnaire’. Your feedback helps to shape changes we make in school for the benefit of all. As a result of your feedback, we streamlined our communication channels so that information came through one channel. In the past we would share information via text messages, emails and letters (in hard copy). Parents found that with multiple channels to monitor essential information was missed. During the last academic year, we have used the WeDuc platform as the sole source of communication. As part of this year’s annual questionnaire to parents I requested feedback on the WeDuc platform, asking *The WeDuc communication app for parents has effectively kept me informed about school events and key information.* We received 35 responses to the questionnaire. So not hugely representative of the views of the whole parental body. The results were as follows; 14 strongly agreed (40%), 10 agreed (20%), 8 disagreed (23%) and 3 strongly disagreed (9%).

For those parents that did respond and are unhappy with how WeDuc currently is used I would like to reassure you we will be reviewing all comments and suggestions made and taking swift and appropriate action. Our aim is always to communicate information as swiftly and efficiently as possible. It is with this in mind that WeDuc representatives will be meeting with myself and the office team to address comments raised to see if improvements can be made.

WeDuc will continue to be the platform we use to communicate all information. If you are not actively using the WeDuc app and require support, please do not hesitate in visiting the school office and they will endeavour to support you.

SCHOOL TIMES

May I remind parents that pupils may arrive at school from 8.40 am, and need to be in school ready to start their day at the following times:-

Reception – 8.50 am

Year 1 & 2 – 8.55 am

Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 – 8.55am

Equally important is the end of the day. Pupils are easily deflated, worried or upset if whoever they are expecting to meet them is not outside on time. Once again, unavoidable circumstances may cause you to be delayed and if that is the case please try and phone school with alternative arrangements, so we can inform your child and keep them safe. We will also play our part and try to be out on time, but we can only get one class through the door at a time.

Home-times are:-

Reception – 3.20 pm

Year 1 & 2 – 3.25 pm

Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 – 3.30 pm

All pupils know if there is no one to collect them they should come back into school to their teacher and that they must not go home with anyone else's parent or minder without permission from their own parent.

INFANT & JUNIOR GATES

The member of staff on duty will lock the gates at 8.55am. If you are late arriving, it will be necessary to enter school through the main entrance and complete the late book. Please press the call button and the office team, once your identity and purpose has been confirmed, will be buzzed in to allow you to bring your child into school and sign them in.

ATTENDANCE

Our vision for attendance - At William Gilbert School, we envision a community where every child's attendance is celebrated as a milestone towards their success. We strive to create an environment where each pupil feels valued, supported, and eager to attend school every day. Through engaging and enriching learning experiences, we aim to ignite a passion for knowledge and discovery that makes attendance not just a duty, but an opportunity for growth. Together, we believe that regular attendance lays the foundation for a lifetime of learning, friendship, and achievement, empowering our pupils to reach their full potential.

Our aim is always to support families maintain excellent levels of attendance. If barriers to attendance begin to emerge, we are here to support you and your child. Please speak to us as soon as you are aware of an issue so we can work together to overcome any barrier.

If your child is absent due to illness, please can you phone the school office on the 1st day of absence and leave a voice mail, which should be followed by a letter upon return. You will be contacted by the office if you have not contacted the school to inform them of the reason for absence, or if we require further information about the reasons for the absence.

Please note that for sickness/diarrhoea illness, children need to be clear of any symptoms for **48 hours** before returning to school.

ROAD SAFETY UPDATES

Thank you to the vast majority of parents who are supporting the school in helping make the arrival and departure of school safer. I am reassured by the number of families who are walking/scooting or cycling to school or parking away from Vicarage Lane and St Alkmunds Close and walking the remaining distance to school.

I will be writing again with further information around the School Streets initiative and parking in the coming days.

Coming soon – Dates for the diary

- A successful bid has been granted by Duffield Parish Council to allow us to purchase an extension for our scooter pod on the KS2 playground. This will enable more pupils to safely store their scooter following an active journey to school.
- **Travel Wise Week – Monday 16th – Friday 20th September 2024** This is a world-wide, week-long travel challenge. We will be promoting active travel with a series of active and sustainable travel activities throughout the week. Further information to follow.
- **World Car Free Day Sunday 22nd September 2024** – We will be marking this event on Friday 20th September as part of the Travel Wise Week. We would like to encourage as many families as possible to leave the car at home and walk, scoot or ride to school on this day. For those families who live outside of the village, if you can, please park away from Vicarage Lane and St Alkmunds close on this day and walk the remaining distance. Further information to follow.

Please remember:~

- To be polite, respectful and calm to all pedestrians, residents and other road users – your children are potentially the drivers of the future, and you are their primary role model.
- Under no circumstances should anyone stop on the zig zag lines outside the school gate.

- **Cars should not park within 10 metres of the junction of St Alkmunds Close and Vicarage Lane, King Street or Castle Hill** - The Highway Code advises drivers not to stop or park opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space. This allows motorists emerging from, or turning into, the junction a clear view of the road they are joining, enabling them to see hazards such as pedestrians or cyclists.
- Under no circumstances should cars be using the school drive as a turning point.
- Not every disability is visible and those with parking exemptions should be treated respectfully.

Please support the welfare of all our children and park your car away from the school site so as not to endanger pupils, parents and staff who are walking to and from the junior and infant gates.

May I take the opportunity to reaffirm to all parents, new and established, that all the staff and I care that your child feels happy and safe at school, and we are keen to ensure that each child achieves their full potential. Please do not be afraid to approach me if you have any concerns or queries.

Many of the staff are readily available at the end of the day to discuss any issues as they bring the children out to you.

If you have a particular concern one morning, seek initial advice from the liaison officer on the gate and an appointment to see a particular member of staff can be made via the school office.

Yours sincerely

E H Britten
Headteacher