



Friday 17th December 2021

Newsletter 344

www.gillespie.islington.sch.uk



@GillespieSchool

Dear Parents/Carers,

A big thank you to all of our staff, pupils and parents who have worked together so brilliantly to bring our school community back together so vibrantly this term! We hope to resume normal service as soon as possible in the Spring term.

Class Christmas Music Performances

Children were wonderful and enthusiastic during the show performances this week which we have filmed and are putting together in to a show to share with you shortly. The video will be made available for you to watch at your leisure – this will be sent to you via text.

Food Bank Aid collection

Thank you to families for so generously donating items for Food Bank Aid, this will make a significant difference to families throughout North London.

Thank you Marianne!

We would like to give huge thanks to parent Marianne Levy who has kindly donated a large number of brand new books to the school library. Donations such as this mean we can keep the library stock topped up with new and interesting titles for children to enjoy.

Ready Set Stage After School Clubs

We are pleased to continue with Ready Set Stage After School Clubs in the Spring term and the new timetable for clubs and bookings are now live. To see all they have to offer and sign children up visit:

www.readysetstage.co.uk.

Be a Wide World Hero this winter – Reading Challenge

It is so important for our children to keep reading this holiday! So join the Wild World Heroes as they embark on an Arctic adventure to find out about the creatures that live there. You will find out about the environmental issues facing this remote place and might even spot a narwhal or two.

To take part all you have to do is read at least three books between Wednesday 1 December 2021 and Sunday 16 January 2022.

Once you've read a book, add it to your [website profile](#) and write a review to let everyone know what you thought. Add 3 books (or more) to complete the Winter Mini Challenge and become a Wild World Hero! There's a brand new certificate AND a limited-edition virtual badge for every Wild World Hero who completes the Mini Challenge.

<https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/news/general/winter-mini-challenge-2021>

Reception Admissions

We remind families with children born between 01/09/2017-31/08/2018 the Reception application deadline of **15 January 2022** is fast approaching! Children attending the Nursery do NOT automatically get a place in Reception class and an application must be completed online.

You can see the Islington Primary Admissions brochure and apply here:

[Apply for a primary school place](#)

Wishing all of our families a wonderful and safe Christmas and Happy, healthy New Year!

We look forward to seeing you all back on Wednesday 5th January 2022.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Owen Headteacher

FoG News

After a very difficult 18 months for everyone, FoG has been getting back up and running again in earnest this term. Parents and school staff have collaborated brilliantly to run a superb Autumn Fayre and spooky outdoor Halloween Disco. Parents and children also raised money by singing festive songs and carols before an Arsenal match last weekend. Although the Christmas Fayre plans were curtailed, the events that have taken place this term plus the kind individual donations from parents have allowed FoG to continue to fund the following activities this term:

- Forest School for Reception and Year 1
- The strings music tutor for Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Subsidised the Celtic Harmony trip for Year 3, and funded History Off the Page to run in-school experiences for Years 1 and 2. (Throughout each year, FoG seeks to fund trips and visits equitably across the year groups)
- A £200 budget for each class teacher to spend at their discretion

We have also started discussions with Mark about fundraising to transform the covered area of the playground into a new interactive play zone. This follows a consultation that Mark and Lyn ran with the children on what they would like to use the area for. This is a really exciting project which will be the focus of fundraising efforts over the next few months.

We are pleased to announce, that parents and other supporters of the school are once again able, should they wish, to make donations (gift aided if appropriate) to fund FoG through [Wonderful](https://wonderful.co.uk/pay?ref=1113369). This follows the closure of Virgin Money Giving, our previous portal. To be clear, there is absolutely no obligation or pressure to donate any money ever but some families like to give separately from the regular fundraising events. The new giving portal is at: <https://wonderful.co.uk/pay?ref=1113369>

Finally - a reminder that FoG (Friends of Gillespie) is all of us. It's the community that binds us together. FoG as a charity exists both to fund-raise on behalf of the school so that our children's school life can be enriched beyond what would otherwise be achievable and to run fun events which bring us closer together as a community. But to do this FoG needs you... FoG IS YOU. Could you run an event, could you coordinate others running events, do you have lots of great ideas? Can you communicate what FoG does to parents?

The more of us involved the more we can do, and the stronger we will be as a community. There is something for everyone - from baking a cake for a bake sale, to being the next chairperson - and everything in between. We'll be having the next termly FoG meeting in January (covid permitting) and I really hope lots of you are able to come along and get stuck in.

A very special visitor confirmed on Thursday afternoon that all Gillespie children have definitely made the nice list!



Daily testing for contacts of COVID-19

From Tuesday 14 December, a new national approach to daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 is being introduced (including until the end of this term). All adults who are fully vaccinated and children aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 – whether Omicron or not – should take a lateral flow device (LFD) test every day for 7 days instead of self-isolating. Daily testing by close contacts will help to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 will help protect education settings by reducing transmission and will also help keep pupils in face-to-face education.

Once notified by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact, all eligible staff, pupils and students should take an LFD each day for 7 days and report the results through the [Online Reporting System](#) and to their setting. If they test negative, they can continue to attend their education setting. Outside of the education setting, they should continue to follow the advice set out in the [Sunday 12 December press release](#). This approach should also be adopted over the winter break and on return in January.

If they test positive, they should self-isolate and [order a PCR test](#) to confirm the result. If the PCR is positive, they must self-isolate for 10 days. If the PCR test is negative, they no longer need to self-isolate but should continue to carry out the remainder of the daily tests, and only need to isolate if it is positive.

Children under five years old do not need to take part in daily testing for contacts of COVID-19 and do not need to isolate.

Anyone over the age of 18 years and 6 months who is not vaccinated, must isolate in line with government guidelines if they are a close contact of a positive case.

Family Learning courses starting January 2022

Introduction to SEND in schools for parents and carers (Online)

This Level 1 non-accredited course will provide you with knowledge and understanding of caring for or working with children with SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities), key legislation, and support given in early years and schools. There will be opportunities to talk to other parents about how to support a child with SEND. This course offers extension or progression to other ACL childcare courses. **Initial assessment needed to start the course.**

Tuesdays, 11 January to 8 February, 1-3pm

Level 1 Preparing to Work with Children in Schools (Online)

Understand the British school system and gain confidence in volunteering in a nursery or primary schools. Develop your skills in listening to children and creating activities to support children's learning. **Initial assessment needed to start the course.**

Tuesdays, 18 January to 29 March, 10am-1pm

Level 1 Supporting Children in Nursery and Reception

Start the journey to gain qualifications for working with children under 5. Discover how children learn through play and take part in practical play activities. **Initial assessment needed to start the course.**

Wednesdays, 19 January to 30 March, 1-3pm,

First Steps Learning Centre, Central Library, 2 Fieldway Crescent, N5 1PF

For more information and to book an initial assessment text Anna on 07769 235 790 or email anna.stec@islington.gov.uk

ACL courses and services are for Islington residents or non-residents whose children attend an Islington school. You must be 19+ and on a low wage or receiving benefits to be eligible for our free courses. Please bring proof of identity and proof of receipts of benefit with you on the day.