



Friday 11th September 2026

Newsletter 518

www.gillespie.islington.sch.uk



Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back and Welcome new families!

I am delighted to see all families back at school and to meet our new early years families as they join the school. We hope families had a joyful summer and that our Year1-6 parents and carers have found our meet the teacher evenings useful this week. We are looking forward to another exciting year for all the Gillespie community!

Here is some important information for new families and reminder for *all* families about procedures at Gillespie including first aid procedures, behaviour and attendance information and our office hours of operation.

Contact

- Please ensure the school office always has the most up to date contact details- you can do this on the Arbor app. Please contact the office if you have not received your email to create an account.
- The school office frequently contacts families via Arbor in-app messages or by email. Please ensure you have downloaded the Arbor app. Without this you will miss important messages including those relating to injuries/first aid.
- Class teachers contact families and send out information by email please check your email address is correct in the Arbor app.

Office hours

In order for the office to run as efficiently as possible we are asking that families wanting to contact the office regarding non-urgent matters do so by email (office@gillespie.islington.sch.uk). If families need to call/visit the office we ask this takes place during the following times: 8:45-9:45am and 2:45-3:45pm.

The office will of course be available between these hours for emergencies or instances where children need to be collected early from school etc. We appreciate your continued support.

First Aid Procedures at Gillespie

Communication regarding minor and more serious first aid incidents that happen during the school day.

- If a child has a serious injury including:
 - Bleeding
 - Head bump where a child complains of feeling dizzy or sick
 - Sprain or suspected broken bone

A first aider will make an initial assessment and we will always contact parents/carers by telephone and ask for the child to be collected – sometimes with a recommendation for further medical advice to be sought e.g.) GP or A&E.

- If a child has an accident that requires no further medical attention such as:
 - Head/face injury
 - Injury that will leave a large mark/graze
 - Nose bleed

We will send an in-app message on Arbor. A slip with accident details and head bump letter where applicable will be sent home with the child. The child will continue to be monitored in the classroom.

- All other minor first aid responses to children falling over or having knocks will be dealt with TLC, sometimes a magic paper towel! and the child will be given a first aid sticker so that you know that it has been dealt with and no further action was required. If you see the sticker, or your child tells you they received one, please do ask them what happened.
- If a child requires medication to be taken during the school day a form must be completed at the school office. Medication should not be kept in children's bags, this must be left with the school office. The school are not able to administer pain relief or medication that may mask a high temperature, this includes paracetamol or ibuprofen.



Attendance and punctuality policy changes

We are very proud to inform parents that Gillespie had the best attendance of any Islington primary school over the last two years! Good attendance at school is the single most important factor in ensuring that children and young people have the best opportunities in adult life. The class with the best weekly attendance will be celebrated in assembly as well as having awards and prizes at the end of the year.

The information below shows how attendance can affect your child's future progression.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year (12 sessions)

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

95%: 10 days absence a year (20 sessions)

These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2 week absence every year can only achieve 95% attendance.

90%: 19 days absence a year (38 sessions)

The Government classes young people in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

Absence from school

Where children have minor coughs and colds, parents are encouraged to bring them to school and will be contacted for pick up where minor conditions develop and worsen. **Families are responsible for notifying the office by call or email before 9am if a child will be absent, including the reason for absence.** The Islington & Whittington booklet on [Minor illness and school attendance: A guide for parents and carers](#) has useful information on childhood illness.

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure appointments are made outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. Parents are encouraged to make appointments during the school day if absolutely necessary, between 9.30 and 1.00 to minimise recorded absences from school.

The school will not authorise leave in term time unless under exceptional circumstances – for which you must apply using an 'application for leave form' obtained from the office in advance.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS



Every school day counts BUT every minute is equally important!

Punctuality

School begins at **8:55am** for Y1-6 at which time the sunflower will be brought out in to the playground. Children should quickly and sensibly make their way to their classroom ready to start their morning learning. Please support your child by ensuring they have all the equipment they need for their day including bag, water bottle, instrument if applicable etc. Children who arrive after 9:05am will need to sign in at the school office.

Health and safety

Could parents please remember that when you are bringing children to school in the morning and collecting after school, that you are responsible for your child's safety when using playground equipment including trim trails. The school is not responsible before 8:55am and after 3:30pm. Thank you.



Annual review of safeguarding policies

This is the time of year when I review all of our safeguarding policies with staff and governors in light of the latest legislation in the DfE document 'keeping children safe in education 2026'. I am currently reviewing the following policies:

- Child protection
- Behaviour
- Anti-bullying
- Online safety
- Medical needs

Additionally, in light of Benedict's Law we will be producing a new and separate policy related to allergies and anaphylaxis which had previously been part of our medical needs policy. These policies will be reviewed in the coming weeks by staff and governors and will be made available to parents. During this period all staff will have had updated training on asthma, allergies and anaphylaxis. Staff have already received updated training on our INSET day on the changes on legislation on keeping children safe in education.

Lunchbox policy

We have updated our [lunchbox policy](#). Parents please take note of two important aspects of this:



- 1) It is essential that children DO NOT bring food which contains nuts in any form. This includes pine kernels and sesame seeds which can be in pesto, hummus and sushi.
- 2) As part of our healthy school status we have a policy expecting children to have a healthy packed lunch. Please read the policy carefully to see what is not allowed as part of a packed lunch.



School PE kit requirements

On P.E. days, children should come to school in their P.E. kit which should be:

- Plain white, black or navy t-shirt (full length not cropped)
- Plain black or navy joggers, shorts or leggings
- Trainers

Children should come to school on their designated PE days in their PE kit. Items do not need a school logo.



Photo sharing expectations

New legislation has tightened up expectations on schools and families in order to keep children safe in preventing inappropriate use of photographs including by AI. For this reason, during school events or assemblies etc we expect that families do not take photos or videos of children to share or for use online.

A brief summary of our behaviour policy

We thought it helpful to remind all parents about our systems that we have in place to promote positive behaviour. Parents can look at our more detailed policies which are available on our website.

At Gillespie, we have a whole school approach in Years 1-6 to managing behaviour. Our learning characters are at the heart of this:

Focused Fox
concentrates by...



- Managing distractions
- Working step by step
- Thinking & planning
- Drawing & making jottings

Don't Give Up Dory
finds success by...



- Working hard and practising
- Persevering
- Trying new strategies
- Asking for help

Cooperative Caterpillar
works with others by...



- Listening carefully
- Being a good talk partner
- Taking turns
- Respecting others' thoughts

Curious Camel
likes...



- Asking 'What if?' questions
- Looking for patterns
- Making connections
- Noticing everything

Have a go Hedgehog
remembers to...



- Take risks
- Learn from mistakes
- Stay positive
- Do the best they can

Imaginative Insect
likes...



- Being creative
- Thinking up new ideas
- Exploring & investigating
- Surprising others

Improving Impala
gets better by...



- Reviewing work often
- Using SC effectively
- Learning from others
- Building on success

Burning for Learning Leopard
enjoys...



- Feeling proud of their work
- Using learning in real life
- Knowing effort = success
- Being engaged & motivated

Children receive merits/dojos for demonstrating these learning behaviours and will be awarded certificates for every 50 merits/dojos that they receive.

At the start of the school year, each class writes their own rules that are displayed in the classroom. If a child does not follow these behaviour expectations, they are verbally warned before their name is placed on a traffic light on the wall:

Red: must stop their negative behaviour

Yellow: move to 'time-out table' for 15 mins (still listening/working)

Green: go to 'buddy class' where they complete a reflection sheet

Nursery and Reception are introduced to aspects of this behaviour policy including the learning behaviours.

Issue with Gmail recipients

We have been made aware that emails being sent to those with Gmail accounts are not receiving emails- this was particularly an issue during the summer but we are aware it is ongoing. Please check any spam/junk folders for our emails and 'report not spam' for any legitimate messages. This feedback helps Gmail recognise that future messages from the domain are legitimate. Unfortunately this is something outside of school control and something Google are aware of.

Class assemblies

Class assemblies will take place in the top hall at 10am on Friday mornings. Parents invited to attend their child's assembly. Please put these dates in your diaries.

16 th October	Year 3
23 rd October	Year 6
6 th November	Year 2
13 th November	Year 5
27 th November	Year 1
4 th December	Year 4

Term dates 2026/27

Autumn Term 2026

26th – 30th October

Friday 18th December

Half Term

Last day of Autumn Term

Spring Term 2027

Monday 4th January

Tuesday 5th January

15th – 19th February

Thursday 25th March

INSET Day

First day of Spring Term for pupils

Half Term

Last day of Spring Term

Summer Term 2027

Monday 12th April

Tuesday 13th April

Monday 3rd May

31st May – 4th June

Tuesday 20th July

Wednesday 21st July

Thursday 22nd July

INSET Day

First day of Summer Term for pupils

Bank Holiday (school closed)

Half Term

Last day of Summer Term

INSET Day

INSET Day

In our second whole school assembly of the year we celebrated the Jewish New Year Rosh Hashanah. We wish all of our Jewish families celebrating a Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,
Mark Owen
Headteacher



Community pages



NATURE CONNECTION

In our busy city, children need access to their local wild spaces to enjoy the outdoors and immerse themselves in nature through free play.

Building dens, making fires and using nature's loose parts to make things, helps children to learn more about the natural world and offers children the time to be awe inspired by nature and supports their creativity and sense of wonder.

At Forest School children observe and interact with our natural environment, stimulating their natural curiosity and enhancing their social and emotional well-being. Playing with others in a natural environment helps children form strong friendships and build empathy and personal resilience.

Join us for our Easter camp on Hampstead Heath and help your child to flourish in the outdoors.

"strong roots produce greater fruits"

BOOKINGS NOW AT:
www.urbanoutdoorslondon.co.uk
info@urbanoutdoorslondon.co.uk

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

WHITTLING & GREEN
WOODWORKING
FIRE LIGHTING & COOKING
TOOL USE
KNOT TYING
WEAVING & FELTING
NATURAL ARTS & CRAFTS
COLLECTIVE GAMES
BUG HOUSES
NATURAL PAINTS & DYES
FOOD FORAGING
MUD KITCHEN
TREE CLIMBING



AFTER SCHOOL FOREST SCHOOL CLUB

FOR BOOKINGS CONTACT ABBY
07950481279



After School Forest School Club
pick up at Gillespie School

Fridays 3.30-5.30pm
visit our website
www.urbanoutdoorslondon.co.uk

Come and join our fun forest school after school club.

Our Spring term Forest School after school club, offers collection from Gillespie School
Weekly on Fridays 3.30PM-5.30PM starting on the 11th September 2026

For bookings visit:

<https://urbanoutdoorslondon.co.uk/events/gillespie-school-forest-school-after-school-club-autumn-2026/#tribe-tickets>

Elizabeth House community groups

The Mum Hub at Elizabeth House

A new weekly group for mums is launching at Elizabeth House Community Centre. Led by Zoe Gardner, The Mum Hub offers a relaxed space to meet other local mums, share experiences, focus on wellbeing and build new connections.

-  Mondays, 1.30pm - 2.30pm
-  Elizabeth House Community Centre, N5 1ED
-  Children aged 1-3 welcome
-  Free trial available

To find out more or book a place, contact Zoe at zoe.gardner@elizabeth-house.org.uk or call 020 7690 1300

THE MUM HUB

movement, wellbeing & peer support for mums

Mondays 1.30-2.30pm
Elizabeth House Community Centre N5 1ED

Starts 7 September ✦
£30/£35 per half term membership ✦
Free trial to start ✦
Children aged 1-3 welcome ✦

Your space to:

- ✦ stretch and relax
- ✦ connect with other mums
- ✦ share experiences
- ✦ focus on wellbeing



BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL
PLEASE CONTACT ZOE ON
OR CALL 02076901300

 **ELIZABETH HOUSE**
Regency 10th Birthday Trust

ZOE.GARDNER@ELIZABETH-HOUSE.ORG.UK



Incredible Years Groups are for parents and carers of children aged 1-10 years. There are three groups depending on your child's age:

Toddler Group: Parents of children aged 1-3

Early Childhood Group: Parents of children aged 3-6

Bright Start Central Toddler 1 - 3 years	Bright Start North Early Childhood 3-6	Bright Futures 5-19 School Age group 6-10
Tuesday mornings from 22nd Sept – 19th January New River Green Children's Centre Fatema Khanom (Family Engagement Worker) fatema.khanom@islington.gov.uk Jill Cheever (CAMHS Clinician) jillian.cheever@nhs.net	Friday mornings from 25th September – 26th January Ambler Children's Centre Melissa Jacques (Family Engagement Worker) melissa.jacques@islington.gov.uk Maria-Clara Vejarano-Brill (CAMHS Clinician) m.vejarano-brill@nhs.net	Thursday mornings from 24th September – 14th January Newington Green Primary School Nilgun Mehmet-Ali (Family Support Practitioner) Nilgun.Mehmet-Ali@islington.gov.uk Anne Marie Reid (CAMHS Clinician) anne-marie.reid3@nhs.net

How can I find out more?

To register your interest, you can talk to a Family Engagement Worker at your local children's centre and state which group you are interested in. The timetable is also on the Family Information Service Website.

For Toddler and Early Childhood groups please scan QR below to register your interest. For School Age group please contact the clinicians directly by email.



A course for parents who want to learn how to get the best behaviour out of their children

The Incredible Years Groups are for parents and carers who want to:

- Improve their child's behaviour
- Learn more about what behaviours are normal for children
- Meet other parents
- Learn parenting skills
- Feel more confident as a parent
- Feel less stressed about parenting

"This course is not a lesson on what as a parent we are doing wrong – more so an

"Oh my! What changes haven't I seen?! It has become a joy to be a parent again and to enjoy my children the best way"

Topics

- Parental attention and child directed play (promoting positive relationships)
- Child-directed coaching
- Social and emotional coaching
- Praise and encouragement
- Rewards & Incentives
- Rules & Routines
- Effective Limit Setting
- Handling misbehaviour