

‘Achieving Excellence through Leadership’

GILES JUNIOR SCHOOL

Telephone: 01438 353374 email: admin@gilesjm.herts.sch.uk Website: www.gilesjm.herts.sch.uk



Headteacher: Miss. L. Whitby

"Excellence in Leadership"

Tuesday, 26 August 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are very much looking forward to welcoming the children back to school on **Thursday 5th September 2025**.

Six weeks can feel like a long time, and for those who are new to Giles Junior School, we have included some reminders and useful information below. This is intended to be a quick re-cap of previously sent information as well as updated on building works and changes to the school which have taken place over the summer holidays.

School Improvements

Additional Classroom Space

As many of you will know, the demand for SEND provision has increased significantly across the country. While many children await specialist school places, we continue to adapt our mainstream provision to meet a wide range of needs.

To support this, we have created an additional teaching space. A temporary classroom, named *Jamaica*, has been installed at the end of the old building. This will allow us to continue providing high-quality teaching for all pupils while accommodating the growing number of children with SEND without overcrowding them in an unsuitable space.

Removal of Shrubbery

Bushes outside classrooms facing the playground have been removed. They had become a hiding place for insects some of whom have killed the foliage (and the occasional child searching for a lost ball!). This work has created more playground space and a tidier, more welcoming environment.

New Chromebooks for Year 6

The original Year 6 set of Chromebooks, purchased in 2016, had served us well but were no longer reliable. Thanks to fundraising, Year 6 pupils will now benefit from 33 brand-new Chromebooks, which will support learning across the curriculum.



Arbor Shop

(Please note: this will not show for Year 3 pupils until the first day of term.)

Thank you to parents for their patience while we transitioned from SIMS to Arbor. We are pleased to confirm that parents can now save card details for future purchases.

The Arbor app includes:

- Attendance information
 - Upcoming trips (including payments and permission)
 - After School and Breakfast Clubs (Smiles@Giles)
 - After school clubs
 - The School Shop (pre-loved uniform, stationery, pencil cases, etc.)
 - Extra tickets and donations for events such as discos and fundraisers
-

School Readiness

Last term, we asked families who are able to provide a pencil case with basic stationery to do so. Items are also available in the school shop, including ready-made pencil cases. Purchased items will be given directly to your child. **This is voluntary – pens and pencils will always be available for children who need them.**

School uniform

We would like to thank all parents and carers who support our school by ensuring children follow the uniform policy. While we are always willing to make reasonable adaptations where there is an agreed need, in consultation with our SENCO, we believe it is important that pupils take pride in belonging to Giles Junior School and feel proud to wear our school logo. To help families, we also sell good quality second-hand items of donated uniform through our School Shop on Arbor, which is a great option for picking up a few spare items.

Attendance

We continue to follow national attendance requirements set by the Department for Education. Since September 2025, family holidays during term time have not been authorised. The DfE makes clear that holidays or other leisure-related absences are not considered “exceptional circumstances.”

While we know not all schools apply this consistently, Giles Junior does. Our INSET days are published well in advance and can be used to help plan holidays. Please note: if an absence of four days or fewer is taken during a week that includes an INSET day or a partial week at the start or end of term, we are not required to refer this to Hertfordshire County Council so may be worth considering when booking holidays. All other holidays which span 5 days or longer will be referred to HCC for a potential fine.

Current term dates (including a PDF for 2025–26) can be found [\[here\]](#).

Tuesday, 26 August 2025

Lockdown and Emergency Drills

Some social media posts have suggested that schools must now carry out lockdown drills. We have received no such direction from the Department for Education.

Like all schools, we do have an Emergency Plan to cover a range of scenarios, such as extreme weather or chemical hazards. Fire drills, for example, are a legal requirement each term.

In the summer term, we shared our procedure for a “lock in,” which simply means children remain indoors if there is a potential outside risk. This information is attached again for new families. Staff are fully trained and, should we ever need to implement the plan, they will guide children appropriately in an age-sensitive way.

Medication

All medication was sent home with children at the end of the school year. Please note that we are only able to administer **prescribed medication** during the school day. Any medication must be **signed in via the school office** with the appropriate form completed, and supplied in its original box with the directions and the child’s name clearly visible. While we can administer short-term pain relief (e.g. Calpol), this must also be signed in at the office. We kindly ask parents to check that all medication, particularly items such as **EpiPens and asthma inhalers**, is **in date** before bringing it into school. On the first day back, a member of staff will be available at the office to sign in medication. Please ensure all medicines are handed to the office rather than given directly to class teachers.

Communication

At Giles Junior School we strive to be approachable and solutions-focused whenever any issues are brought to our attention. To ensure that queries are addressed promptly and effectively, it is important that clarification is sought from the right person. In most instances, this will be your child’s class teacher.

We kindly request that longer conversations are not held at drop-off or collection times, as teachers and teaching assistants are focused on welcoming children in or seeing them out

safely, and it can be distracting to try to hold detailed discussions during these busy moments. Instead, please contact the school office via **admin@gilesjm.herts.sch.uk** or by phone, and the team will be happy to arrange a suitable time for a meeting or call back.

Parents will be aware that Miss Khan, Deputy Headteacher, is now on maternity leave. During this time, her duties have been temporarily distributed among our Year Group Leaders: **Year 3 – Mrs Aylott, Year 4 – Mrs Masvimbo, Year 5 – Miss Ajazi, Year 6 – Mr Bailey**. Any queries that may not be appropriate for the class teacher to resolve might also be referred to these staff members.

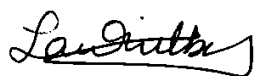
We are also fortunate to have **Mrs Smith, our Family Support Worker**, who offers a wealth of support for families. She is always happy to arrange a call or meeting to see how she can help, whether that be signposting to services, offering financial advice, supporting with mental health concerns, or accessing wider services to benefit your child.

Staff Changes

- **Mr Kotecha** has left Giles to pursue another career. We are pleased to have been part of his journey and wish him success in his next steps.
- **Mrs Cross** will be leaving at the end of this half term. Since joining us in 2019, she has been an excellent Teaching Assistant, always eager to expand her skills and strategies. She will be greatly missed, and we look forward to giving her a proper send-off. Recruitment for her role will begin shortly.

We hope you have found this information useful and we look forward to another successful year ahead.

Kind Regards,



Miss Louise Whitby
Headteacher