



Parents' Newsletter

Dear parents

There has been a lot to celebrate and be thankful for at Gillotts this term. Whilst COVID is still definitely with us, it's no longer impacting so markedly on our day to day lives. The old 'normal' is back as 'normal' now and it's got to the stage where it's hard to believe that we managed so many new challenges for so long.

Although it seems like a long time ago now, it was a pleasure to celebrate the GCSE results of last year's Year 11 with them on results day at the end of August - the first set of GCSE exams to be taken since 2019. And there was such a lot to celebrate. Our Progress 8 score, which is the key measure Ofsted use, was +0.73 - the best ever for the school. This means that on average students achieved almost three quarters of a grade better in each of their GCSEs than would be expected based on their prior attainment. Last week the Times put us in the top ten 11-16 schools in the country, based on the proportions of grades 7, 8 and 9 awarded. We are so proud of the success of our students, especially when you consider that the pandemic impacted on them in Years 9, 10 and 11. They have shown incredible resilience. At the other end of the age range, it has been good to see the new Year 7 settle in so well, better prepared of course by being able to have a live Pioneer experience in the summer.

Thanks are due to the Parents' Association who held the first quiz night since 2019 in November. You may be reassured that the staff and governor team secured victory – although whether 'pub quiz' knowledge is exactly what students need for GCSE may be questionable! I would also like to express my thanks to the many parents who are so generously giving to our School Fund. We have been very touched by the gifts and the supportive messages that so often come with them. I continue to work with Headteachers across the country to achieve fairer funding for education.



After the usual exceptionally busy term, it has been good over the last week or so to feel that Christmas is in sight. As I write, we still have The Carol Service at St Mary's to look forward to on Wednesday and, with ever growing popularity of music at Gillotts, I know it will be better than ever. The whole school will then get an opportunity to hear some of the highlights in final assembly on Friday – always a lovely way to end the term.

I do hope that the holidays will allow for some precious time with family and friends and some much needed rest and relaxation. See you all again in 2023!

Catharine Darnton
Headteacher, Gillotts

Parent View

Parent View is an online questionnaire for parents and carers to feed back to Ofsted on their child's school. It is now the main mechanism that Ofsted use to gather parents' views at the time of an inspection. There are just 12 questions to answer. The questions look at the key areas such as happiness, safety, progress, quality of teaching, behaviour and school leadership. The final question asks if you would recommend the school to another parent. Everyone's responses are put together and are available to view on the Parent View website. In order to minimise the risk of abuse, you are required to register and create a password. We would be very pleased to have your ongoing feedback of what you think of the school – please visit <http://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>

School Fund

Our School Fund is an opportunity for parents to support the quality of education for their children through making regular voluntary contributions to be used directly to provide resources for use in the classroom and at home.



Why do we need your support?

Unlike many schools, Gillotts has not had a tradition of regular individual donations to support the school. However, as you will have seen from media coverage, the financial climate for all schools has become increasingly difficult in recent years. School funding is still below 2010 levels in real terms - in spite of steadily rising costs - so in real terms, our income is falling. This is making it harder for the school to deliver the excellent teaching and learning we aspire to.

How much would we like you to contribute?

There is no obligation or pressure to donate but, if you would like to, we will be grateful for whatever you can afford. Suggestions donations are below.

If you give £10 per month, this would give us £120 per year – with Gift Aid, that is £150!

If you give £1 per day, this would give us £365 per year – with Gift Aid, that's over £450 per year!

How does this work with the support provided by the Parents' Association?

The Parents' Association has provided invaluable support to Gillotts for many years. The Association fully endorses this request for individual regular contributions. However payments will be through the school, to preserve parents' anonymity.

“The PA fully supports the school in striving to maintain a high standard of education for our children in the face of reduced income. Donating to the School Fund will be a way of trying to ensure that our children continue to receive the excellent standard of education that Gillotts at present provides. The School Fund is also a way for parents/ carers who do not have time to help with the PA to be involved with the school.”

What will we spend the funds on?

We will spend the funds on ensuring all curriculum subjects are well resourced, including with the additional new online resources that we know students and their parents value so much. This will enable us to support students to continue to make the outstanding progress that has become the norm in recent years.

Please give whatever you can – fill in and return the form attached – thank you for your support.

Nomad Food Bank Appeal

Once again, we were overwhelmed and delighted with the generosity of our school and wider community when requesting donations for the Nomad Food Bank. At the end of the collection period, we delivered the donations to Nomad in Henley, with our Head Students dropping off the items. Such was the generosity shown, it actually took two trips in the minibus to transport all the items down there!

As usual, we also ran this as a House competition to see which house could donate the largest collection, and which tutor group could make the best decorated box.

The largest collection came from Pankhurst, and the best decorated box came from Year 7PFLP! Well done!



Darwin News

Tutee of the Term

DROM/HJR: Frances Sadler

DLLF: Zack Ackerman

DAPM: Erin Dixon

DSUS: Ella-Louise Bricknell

DPJY: Amy Chaimbault

DFMW: Eleanor Costa

DHK: Josh Nicholson

DJLG: Owen Howard

DADT: Fearne Read

DDI: Billy Mullaniff

DRD/NFD: Harry Blacklock

DCHA/CJW: Ben Roberts

DGS: Lara Wood



Orwell News

Tutee of the Term



OGMO: Kiki Okonkwo

OJJ: Swarup Joshi

OJSK: Grace Vickers

OHRW: Brigette Mogrovejo-Enriquez

OJKL: Charlotte Window

OTWN/CST: Eliana Atherton

OACM: Lily McKechnie

OGDL: Claudia Hernandez

OAD/AB: Erin Bond

OBJB/ELD: Arnav Sharma

OCG: Alexandre Khoury

OPCM/TL: Flo Wakely

OHJS/SEL: Charlie Hughes

Pankhurst News

Tutee of the Term

PFLP: Ben Lawrence

PJDS: Emma Jean-Jean

PLS/LJA: Leo Van Helsdingen

PSJW: Mariella Davis-Wall

PNJK: Danny Massey

PESS: Mia Witkowska-Betts

PWJH: Lucy Jean-Jean

PKLO/NM: Penny Brewster

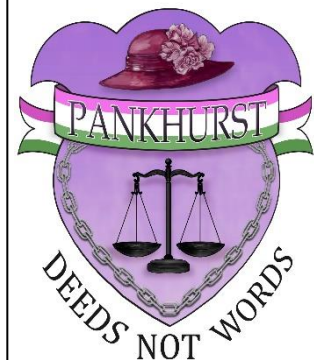
PJTP/CEC: Alistair Macdonald

PGDM: Millie Goodhall

PSMS/HLM: Lydia Singer

PHMJ/JJB: Kits Tanner

PTAG: Gaby Norris



Eco Committee

The committee chose the entry by William Sadler as the winner of the bug house competition for the habitat he made in his garden. Other entries for the competition are now dotted around the grounds encouraging wildlife and hopefully increasing the biodiversity of our wonderful site even more.

The committee has been working on the action plan in order to apply for the Eco school's Green flag award after Easter. Actions this year includes maintaining the Gateway kitchen garden and bird feeders, planting more hedging and encouraging students to recycle as much waste as possible. More news on this in the new term.

Helpfully, some students have been volunteering for tasks on the action plan for their Duke of Edinburgh award volunteering section.

We will be recruiting year 7 students to the committee in the new term so look out for details of how to apply if you are interested in making a difference to the sustainability of the school.

William Sadler's winning Bug house competition entry:



Some of the other entries:



Duke of Edinburgh Award

Congratulations to the 39 students who were given their Bronze award certificates in house assemblies recently and to students who completed their Silver expeditions over the half term. There are many students who are very near to completing, please encourage these students to get assessor reports submitted so they too can get their certificate. Remember, it is never too late to work on sections. If anyone thinks they have completed but this is not showing in their account, needs ideas for what to do for sections or needs help with their eDofE account, they can come to the drop-in session

each Tuesday break time in S3 or email DofE@gillotts.org.uk for help and the [Gillotts DofE website](#) has information, advice and useful links.

This year 18 students have gone on to Silver award and over 80 year 9 students have enrolled on Bronze award to begin their DofE journey. They have been submitting a variety of activities to improve their skills, physical fitness and supporting local charities, sports and youth clubs. We wish them all every success.



Festive eats by Matilda and Verity, Year 9 D of E students as part of their skills section

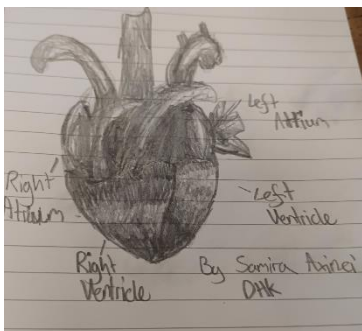
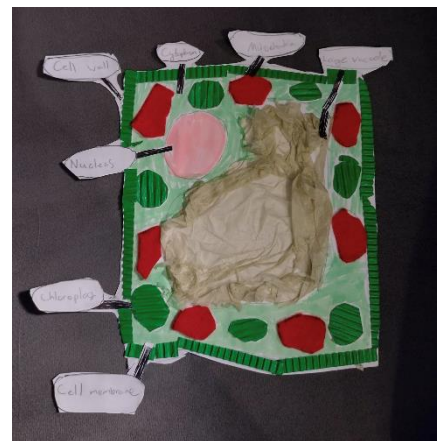
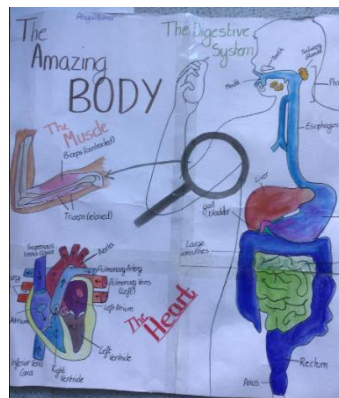
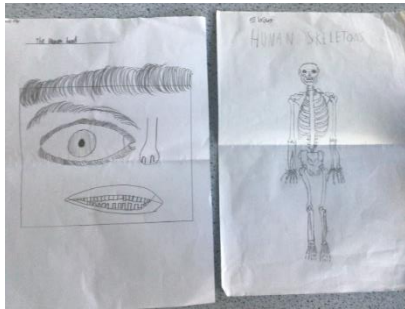
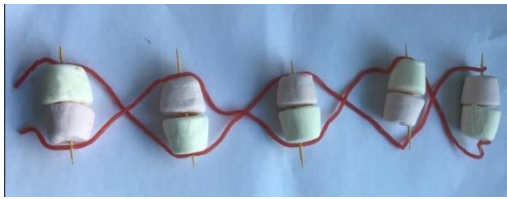
KS3 Science Club

This term we have been changing the colour of the flame, making slime, testing the pH of substances, carrying out the egg drop challenge and making Christmas candles. Every week involves a new STEM activity; developing scientific skills and building on the inquisitiveness of our students.



BioArt Competition

Gillotts students have submitted some fantastic models for the national BioArt competition. The entries are below; well done to all involved and fingers crossed to making it through to the next round.



News from the PE Department

This year we have again been involved in the South Oxfordshire league for both Hockey and Rugby. We have had many schools pull out of the Rugby games which has been disappointing - however all of our students have continued to be really committed to practices and matches.

In the **area hockey tournaments and fixtures** the results are as follows:

Year group	Won	Drew	Lost	Cancelled	Any other additional comments
7A	5	0	0	0	The A team are unbeaten and also won the area tournament
7B	4	0	1	0	
8A	5	0	0	2	The A team are unbeaten and also won the area tournament
9	3	0	1	1	2rd in the area tournament
10	4	0	0	1	
11	4	1	0	1	

In **rugby** results are as follows:

Year group	Won	Drew	Lost	Cancelled	Any other additional comments
7	6	0	0	0	They are unbeaten and also won the area tournament
8	2	0	0	2	Unbeaten
9	4	0	0	1	Unbeaten
10	5	0	0	0	Unbeaten
11	2	0	0	2	Unbeaten

Duathlon

We also did really well in the Duathlon (consisting of a 2k ergo row and a 2k run) held at Chiltern Edge School at the beginning of November

U14 Girls - 3rd

U14 Boys - 3rd

U16 Girls - 3rd

U16 Boys - 3rd

We took 2 individual bronze medals - David Stobie and Jemima Butterworth. This was a consistent set of results for Gillotts - hopefully we will do well in the indoor rowing competition as well, which is on Tuesday 29th November at Icknield School.

Cross Country

In the South Oxfordshire Cross country, which was held at Gillotts the following week, we had a mixed set of results:

Year 7 Girls - 1st (all 6 girls coming in the top 10)

Year 7 Boys - 6th

Year 8/9 Girls - 2nd

Year 8/9 Boys - 4th

Year 10/11 Girls - 2nd

Year 10/11 Boys - 2nd

We had some exceptional individual performances - Isabella Stobie was 1st in the Year 7 girls, Josh Hatt was 1st in the Year 9 Boys and Jemima Butterworth was 2nd in Year 10/11 girls.

They all did so well – as ever their behaviour and attitude was excellent – we are always so proud of our Gillotts' students in that way.

So overall a successful season so far and we are looking forward to Netball and Football starting in January.

Hayley Rogers
Head of PE

Library News

Eco Club and Committee

In September we took part in Great Big Green Week in Henley with a stall showcasing all the important work that our members do to promote greener living and encourage recycling. Mrs Seddon and Mrs Michael were on the stall all day and Eco members came along to talk to the public and demonstrate various green projects. We made bunting out of old clothes, decorations from old books and plant pots for seedlings from books and newspapers. We had also made some food wrappers from cotton fabric and beeswax pellets. We had photos on display of our work in the Gateway Garden and the new hedge that we helped to plant. There was lots of interest in our stall and we were able to talk to local people including the Mayor, Michelle Thomas, who was really interested in the work that Gillotts does. Many thanks are due to all the students who came along:

Joe, Mathilde, Harry, Isaac, Lara, Tom and Holly

We were featured in the Henley Herald and the Henley Standard.



Re-building our Library Catalogue

Following the cyber attack in August we had the huge task of re-building the library catalogue from scratch. On a positive note, the new version looks brighter and is more accurate. Students have the link access the catalogue from their own devices in school and from home. They can check which books are available, reserve books, write reviews for other students to see and make suggestions for new books. Some of the DoFE volunteers have helped to take books off the shelves which need more attention and extra details adding. Owen and William have done some really brilliant work to help Mrs Seddon. This was following on from the amazing work done by some staff who worked a few days over the October half-term to scan books and make everything speedier for my cataloguing task in November.

Duke of Edinburgh and other library Volunteers

This year's volunteers in Year 9 include:
Owen, William, Matilda, Freya, Daisy, Isabelle and Amelia
From Year 7 I have had lots of help from:
Mya, Leah and Lucy

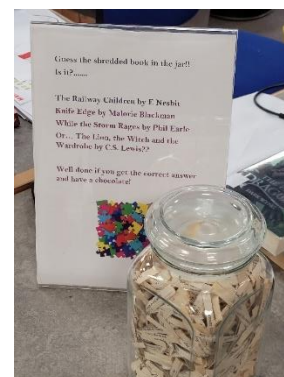
Volunteers help to put up displays and decorate our themed blackboards as well as tidying and shelving books. Leah and Lucy have enjoyed finding out how to make Christmas decorations by recycling old books and built a wonderful book tree, which you can see in one of the pictures below.

Reading Groups and New Books

Students in Years 7 and 8 have had the chance to take part in small group reading sessions as part of their library lessons. They have been assessing new books on the basis of cover, blurb and first few pages. They then get the chance to take a new book home and write a short review. As a school we take part in the National Children's Book Award and the Berkshire Book Award. These are both awards with books entirely nominated by young people.

Quizzes and Competitions

As part of Banned Book Week in October, we had a display of books which have been banned in numerous countries throughout modern history. As part of this, we had a 'Guess the shredded banned book in the jar' competition. The book was not banned at Gillotts and was shredded purely because it was in a poor physical state. This has become a regular competition with our books which are tatty and need to be replaced with a new copy.



We have had a 12 days of Christmas guess the book character competition running for the last two weeks of term.

Christmas Displays

Our blackboards are adorned with positive messages for the festive season and acrostic poems. There are book reviews written by Years 7 and 8 using a festive sock, cracker or snowman design. Our Eco Tree is decorated with decorations made from old books, as well as the clues to the 12 Days of Christmas competition.



Book Recommendations

A reminder of some of the ways students can find ideas of books to read:

<https://uk.accessit.online/g1100> This is the link to the school library catalogue

<https://www.lovereadng4kids.co.uk/> Lots of themed lists available

<https://www.childrensbooksequels.co.uk/> Ideal for finding the correct order of a series of books

<https://www.whonextguide.com/access/Gillotts> This is the guide for finding out some ideas about which author to read next and search by genre

News from the Food Department



Year 7 – Jam Tarts
Shortening – Fats Practical



Year 7 – 'All Things Egg' Homework



Year 7 – Breadmaking



Year 7 – Xmas Biscuit Making



Year 8 – Bolognese



Year 8 – Victoria Sponge
Homework



Year 8
Burgers, Toad in the Hole
and freshly made
tagliatelle



Year 9 – Calzone



Year 9 – Tuna Pasta Bake



Year 10 – Flatbreads



Year 10 – Coloured Pasta Making



Year 10 – Apple Pie Shortcrust Pastry



Y10 – Chicken Kiev, Stuffed Chicken Breast, Fried Chicken Legs and Chicken Jointing



News from the Art Department

This term, Year 11 Art students have been treated to an after-school workshop with local ceramic artist Sue Mundy. They attended three two-hour sessions during which they learnt how to hand build pots and decorate them with coloured slips. The sessions were funded by a generous donation from the Henley Arts Trust.



Year 8 students have been making sculptures from recycled materials in this term's House Art competition. Well done to Ayah and Bisan for the joint effort on the underwater scene.



Year 7 have also taken part in a House Art competition to design a Christmas card in the style of the cut paper collages of Henri Matisse. Well done to Thomas for his winning entry.



Term dates for 2022 - 2023

The dates set out below are the confirmed school term and holiday dates from September 2022.

Term	Dates	Number of days
Autumn Term	02 September - 21 October	35
October half term	24 October - 28 October	
Autumn Term	31 October - 20 December	37
Christmas holiday	21 December - 03 January	
Spring Term	04 January - 10 February	28
Spring half term	13 February - 17 February	
Spring Term	20 February - 31 March	30
Easter Holiday	3 April - 14 April	
Summer Term	17 April - 26 May	28
Late Spring half term	29 May - 02 June	
Summer Term	05 June - 21 July	35
Total		193

INSET days

The school will be closed to students on:

Friday 2 September 2022

Monday 5 September 2022

Friday 30 September 2022

Monday 19 December 2022

Tuesday 20 December 2022

Note that only Year 7 and Year 10 (and Year 11 Leaders) are required to attend on Tuesday 6 September 2022. The remainder of the school returns on Wednesday 7 September 2022.

Monday 19 September 2022 is the bank holiday for the state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II.

Monday 1 May 2023 is the May Day bank holiday.

Monday 8 May 2023 is the bank holiday for the coronation of King Charles III.

Early closures (12.30pm)

Thursday 29 September 2022

Friday 16 December 2022

Friday 21 July 2023

Staff and students preparation for Open Evening

Term dates for 2023 - 2024

The dates set out below are the confirmed school term and holiday dates from September 2023.

Term	Dates	Number of days
Autumn Term	04 September - 20 October	35
October half term	23 October - 27 October	
Autumn Term	30 October - 21 December	39
Christmas holiday	22 December - 05 January	
Spring Term	08 January - 9 February	25
Spring half term	12 February - 16 February	
Spring Term	19 February - 28 March	29
Easter Holiday	29 March - 12 April	
Summer Term	15 April - 24 May	29
Late Spring half term	27 May - 31 May	
Summer Term	03 June - 24 July	38
Total		195

INSET days

The school will be closed to students on:

Monday 4 September 2023

Friday 29 September 2023

Monday 22 July 2024

Tuesday 23 July 2024

Wednesday 24 July 2024

Note that only Year 7 and Year 10 (and Year 11 Leaders) are required to attend on Tuesday 5 September 2023. The remainder of the school returns on Wednesday 6 September 2023.

Monday 6 May 2024 is the May Day bank holiday.

Early closures (12.30pm)

Thursday 28 September 2023

Staff and students preparation for Open Evening

Thursday 21 December 2023

Friday 19 July 2024

Please note these date differ slightly from OCC dates – in particular, Thursday 21 December is in term time.