

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well and fully rested after the summer break. I am excited to see our school community come together again. I would like to take this opportunity to share some updates on the Secondary phase and ensure that you and your child are prepared for the start of the new term.

First day back

If your child is in Year 7 or 11, we look forward to welcoming them back on Wednesday 4th September for an 8.25am start. If they are in Years 8, 9 or 10, we look forward to welcoming them back on Thursday 5th September for an 8.25 am start. All students should be at school no later than 8.20 am.

Attendance and Punctuality

We have seen significant improvement across all year groups in tackling poor punctuality and as a result maximising opportunities for learning. Our approach to lateness remains the same this academic year with students making up this time in an after-school detention on a Friday. Thank you for your support with this.

If your child is absent from school due to illness, please notify the school before 8.00 am by using the 'Absence Reporting' link in the EduLink app, by sending an email to absences@gildredgehouse.org.uk or by telephoning 01323 400650. When leaving a message, please remember to include your child's full name, Tutor Group / Class and reason for absence. Please notify the school on each day of absence. For refer details, please refer to the Student Attendance Policy for full details.

Uniform expectations

Wearing our uniform correctly and with pride is an essential part of belonging to Gildredge House. Most of our students have impeccable uniform, however there is still room for improvement. From September incorrect uniform will be addressed each day by the Pastoral Team at the school gates and by Tutors during form time. Students will receive a behaviour point if they are found to have incorrect uniform, for every three points they receive they will have a consequence. On Wednesday 4th September for Year 7 and Thursday 5th September for Year 8-11 all students will have their uniform checked, if any uniform is incorrect and cannot be put right immediately by the student, contact home will be made asking you to support with this and a timeframe given to correct. We want to ensure all students are getting it right from day one. You can find our uniform expectations on our website, but these are the areas we will be challenging and improving this year.

Full school uniform, including the blazer, must be worn to and from school. Blazers must also be worn at the start and end of every lesson and when moving around the building.

Skirts (pleated or pencil, to the knee) Skirts must not be rolled.

white shirt (tucked in with the top button fastened, worn with a tie) Shirts must be always tucked in.

Smart black shoes only, these must be formal, work-style shoes, without branding logos or coloured stitching. This **does not** include black leather trainers. Trainers will always be challenged.

Grey or black tights, and grey or black socks. Students are not permitted to wear white socks. Sports branded or logoed socks are not permitted. They will be asked to remove them.

Hoodies and headphones are not permitted and will be confiscated.

If uniform misdemeanours cannot be rectified, then students will be placed in Reflection until uniform is corrected.

Jewellery and Makeup

The only jewellery permitted is one pair of small (no larger than 5mm in diameter) plain, silver, gold, or pearl ear studs. No other jewellery or body piercings are allowed. Students are not allowed to cover piercings with plasters or use sleepers/retainers.

Any jewellery found will be confiscated and placed in the school office. If it is the first time, they can collect themselves, if jewellery is persistently worn parents/carers will be asked to collect.

If makeup is worn, it must be discreet and natural-looking, with no bright colours, winged eyeliner, false eyelashes, heavy mascara, heavy foundation, or tanning products.

Only clear nail varnish is permitted. No coloured nail varnish, shellac/overlays, false nails, extensions, or nail art. No temporary or permanent tattoos are allowed.

Mobile phones

Students are permitted to bring a mobile phone to school, but it must be turned off and in their bags for the whole school day. If it is seen it will be confiscated and placed in the school office for collection. This policy has had a significant impact on learning and has improved social interactions during break times.

Equipment

Please can I take the opportunity to remind you that it is compulsory for all secondary students to bring a pencil case to school every day. Students having their own set of essential writing tools readily available, empowers them to actively engage in classroom activities and create an optimal learning environment. To assist in ensuring that student pencil cases are well-equipped, compulsory items include blue and/or black ink pens, several pencils, erasers, a ruler, a pencil sharpener, and green and purple pens (for peer and self-assessment). Additional items which are not compulsory, but recommended, include a white board pen, highlighters, coloured pencils, and a glue stick.

For Years 10 and 11, exam-level students, we highly recommend that pencil cases meet the external examination requirements set by the Joint Council for Qualifications which states that all pencil cases must be see-through.

This compulsory requirement greatly benefits students by promoting active participation and a sense of ownership. I appreciate your cooperation in implementing this requirement and supporting students in being well-prepared for their daily school activities. Tutors will be checking equipment daily next week, and sanctions will be applied if students are not equipped.

Secondary Library

We are delighted that our library is now open and available for students to use during both first and second break. Students will also be able to take books out of the library this term. We really do want as many students as possible to make use of this fantastic resource and foster a love for reading for pleasure.

Toilet refurbishment

Over the summer we have refurbished two set of toilets and have cleaned and fixed the others. We recognise that improving this environment for our students is necessary and that we wish for our students to feel safe when using them. Please can I request that all students are reminded not to graffiti these areas, damage the cubicles/locks and to treat the toilets with respect. We will continue to have a toilet pass for students to use if necessary, during lessons, but students

should aim to use the toilet during break times, where students will have members of staff on duty in these areas. Vaping is not tolerated in school and students found or suspected of vaping in out toilets will face a consequence.

Communication

All ASPIRE, behaviour points and detentions will continue to be communicated via EDULINK. Please do make sure you have access to your account. We also have our fortnightly newsletter and Facebook to help you with dates and upcoming events. We are working to ensure that communication is timely and relevant. To clarify, my email address is v.jenkins@gildredgehouse.co.uk as this did cause some confusion last year.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued support with the matters above. It has been a pleasure to meet many of you during my first year at Gildredge House, I have enjoyed getting to know your children and observe the progress they are making. I look forward to meeting more of you over the next year.

If you have any questions or concerns about the start of this term, please do not hesitate to contact your students Form Tutor in the first instance.

Kind regards,



Mrs V Jenkins
Head of Secondary