



**Gildredge
House**

Inclusion Newsletter - Spring Term

Summer Camp 2025

Teamwork, foundations, friendships and a warm welcome - Summer Camp success for over 100 students.

This year's Gildredge House Summer Camp was a fantastic opportunity for students to enjoy their first taste of secondary school life. Over 100 students were warmly welcomed into the school, where they took part in a range of engaging team building and transition activities. The programme helped them to get to know the school environment, meet their new peers and build positive relationships with staff. It was a great success and provided an excellent foundation as students prepare for the exciting journey ahead.

Mr Young (Summer Camp Coordinator)

Forest School Programme

At the end of the academic year we had the final Forest School groups, Years 1&2 and Years 7&8 participating in the programme. Forest School has been a huge success this year and has really had a positive impact on the self-confidence and emotional wellbeing of our students.

Below is a blog post, written by Jade M (Y8), regarding her experience of Forest School at Gildredge House: -

Picture this: you're not trapped in a classroom all day but out in the open, with trees looming above you and the smell of damp earth in the air. No whiteboard, no rows of seating—just open space, fresh air, and the opportunity to learn in a whole different way. That's Forest School, and if you haven't had the opportunity yet, you're missing out.

I've been going to Forest School since last June, and it's become a highlight of my week. It doesn't feel like regular school. There are no lesson timetables or exams. What you do instead is learn by doing—whether that's creating a fire from scratch, cooking over an open flame, whittling wood, or even creating your own swings and shelters. You don't just read about survival skills; you try them out.

One of the first things I learned was the safe use of a knife for whittling. It was awkward at first, and I was sure that I was doing it wrong. But after a few attempts (and lots of concentration), I was actually carving something decent. Carving objects from wood is second nature now, and I have even made my own tools. We once built a shelter using nothing but logs, rope, and teamwork. It was supposed to be a simple lean-to, but we got wild and ended up with what looked like a miniature cabin. We sat inside it, laughing and talking, feeling like we'd built our own secret retreat.





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Cooking is also part of what makes Forest School feel magical. There's something special about cooking outside. Maybe it's the fresh air, or maybe it's because you're cooking on a fire, but everything tastes better. I remember one session where we cooked pancakes, flipping them in a pan on the fire and hoping they wouldn't burn. They weren't professional, but they were ours, and that made them amazing.

Of course, not everything always goes according to plan. I've had my share of failed projects—like the time I tried to build a rope swing, only to have it self-destruct the minute I sat on it (and yes, I did land flat in the dirt). But that's just all part of it. You try, you fail, you learn, and you try again. And eventually, you get it right.

The best aspect of Forest School, however, is not necessarily the skills you learn—it's the people. There is nobody in our group who doesn't want to be there. There's no stress, no pressure, just a bunch of us figuring things out together, whether we're making something useful or just messing around in the woods. We've made fire, cooked, crafted weapons, explored new territory, and even done random challenges for the sake of it. It's not just learning—it's an adventure.

If you've ever felt like you wanted to get out of routine, or just do something different, Forest School is for you. It's freedom, creativity, and hands-on learning all rolled into one. Whether you want to learn real survival skills, make something awesome, or just get outside, there's something for everyone.

Jade M (Year 8)



SEND Taster Day- Year 6 into 7

On 27 June 2025 was our Year 6 SEND Transition afternoon. This was for all students who have been identified as having an additional need(s) by their current primary school or where a parent has requested extra support around transition.

This was a chance for them to meet peers and address any worries they may have more informally. Students spent time with the Secondary SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator), Assistant SENDCo and Teaching Assistants in addition to meeting their Head of Year and Head of School. During the session, children had the chance to familiarise themselves with Gildredge House and ask any questions about the upcoming transition. They also spent time with their Peer Mentor and got to know them.

The SEND team at Gildredge House are looking forward to working alongside all our new Year 7 students and supporting students, parents and carers across the secondary phase.



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SEND Parent Partnership

Primary

This term's focus for the Primary SEND Coffee Morning was transition. We spoke about the transition support that school offers to children moving up a year group, as well as the additional support in place for those moving into the Secondary Phase.

The East Sussex Parent and Carer Forum were also in attendance and shared their lived experience regarding the day-to-day challenges associated with transition. This was particularly valuable, as the successes and challenges came from people who have experienced them first-hand and found ways to support their child through them.

SEND Coffee Mornings will continue in the new academic year and will continue to look at areas our SEND parent/carers community suggested that they would find helpful to learn more about.

Secondary

On 20 June 2025, all parents of secondary phase students who are on the SEND register were invited to attend an online Student Support Profile (SSP) Consultation. This was in preparation for the next academic year and gave families the chance to review their child's Student Support Profile (SSP). These documents are created for all students with an assessed need and on the SEND register.

Each SSP includes the following information:

- 3 x strategies for teachers to use in lessons to support each student.
- 3 x ways each student might support themselves.
- Information that the student would like staff to know.

This event was well attended and is something that we have added to the calendar in terms 2 & 6 of the next academic year. We hope our families found reviewing the Student Support Profile (SSP) to be a useful tool in supporting their child and thank parents/carers for their support with this process.

Adaptive Teaching CPD

This term, our Special Educational Needs Coordinators in Primary (Mr Stephens) and Secondary (Mrs O'Driscoll) concluded their professional development sessions to staff in their respective phases on adaptive teaching.

The focus of each session has been targeted and relevant to the needs of each phase of the school. Our Empowering Every Learner adaptive teaching framework and Student Support Profiles continue to underpin all the work being done to support students that may require additional support in the classroom.

Staff were involved in discussing current practice and potential opportunities when looking ahead to the changing landscape of inclusion.

Below are some of the visual displays of the current practice being implemented in the Secondary phase of the school, which is fantastic to see.



Exam Access Arrangements

Our Year 11 students completed their GCSE examinations, and our Year 10 cohort completed their mock examinations in the summer term.

Our SEND team and Exams Officer continue to work tirelessly to ensure students receive the arrangements they are entitled to, in order to give them the chance to achieve the best possible grade they can in each subject exam.



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The Scholars Programme

Following the successful completion of The Scholars Programme, our Year 8 students attended a graduation event at Goldsmiths University, London, to celebrate their success.

The day involved students receiving certificates of graduation, a tour of the campus and an opportunity to listen to current students at the university about their experiences and ask questions they may have about university life.

Currently, our Year 6 students also completed their version of The Scholars programme, with many students receiving impressive scores from the final assignment they were required to produce.



EAL Support

For those new to English or in the early acquisition stages of English, EALS intervention support has continued. The focus of these interventions varies from improving students' fluency and comprehension in speaking, writing and/or listening skills.

A huge thank you must go to Linda Deon (EALS Specialist) who has gone above and beyond for the school this academic year.



Empathy Action

To continue our work on the value of Empathy with our students, Empathy Action were invited in to run a "Poverty Trap" immersive experience with some of our Secondary students.



The Poverty Trap is an immersive activity that allows participants to experience, albeit symbolically, in a very small way, what it must feel like to live in extreme poverty.

Interventions

Our interventions to support those students that require additional support with areas such as numeracy, literacy, emotional wellbeing and regulation continued in the summer term.

The impact data from these interventions has been excellent to see. Students are becoming more able to cope with the demands associated with English and Maths, as well as supporting them with their emotional regulation and ability to build and maintain positive relationships with their peers.

Inclusion Careers

Youth Employability Resilience Workshops for Year 11 students

The Youth Employability Service visited Gildredge House and delivered workshops to a selection of Year 11 students. The workshops covered topics such as career planning and post-16 options. They also covered key strategies to help students to remain positive, resilient and to prepare them for their GCSE examinations. Over 30 students participated in the workshops and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with students reporting that they felt more confident, determined, and optimistic about their future.



Delivery of the 'Vulnerable Learners protocol' Additional one to one Careers interviews for Year 11 students

Lynsey Cameron from CXK visited Gildredge House in April and met with a selected group of Year 11 students. Lynsey offered additional one to one career guidance interviews, and these students got to create additional careers plans and receive additional support with completing their post-16 applications. These one-to-one meetings meant that every student, no matter their ability or background had opportunities to gain additional careers support from an external careers' adviser. Students who have English as an additional language had opportunities to bring in families and translators, students with SEND received additional transition support and advice, and students with barriers to engagement had an opportunity to receive further support from the Youth Employability Service. All our students will have support over the summer so that after GCSE results are published on 21 August, all students have realistic post-16 course offers.



Year 10 students with SEND begin their transition to post-16

In May, all Year 10 students began their cycle of receiving their one-to-one careers interviews. Students with SEND began the process of transition by having their careers interviews first and in doing so have been given a full year to begin their transition to post-16. Our next steps with these students will be making school led trips to colleges and sixth forms in the new academic year.

[Post16 Parent Carer Booklet](#)



East Sussex County Council uses our students to write a brand-new School to Adulthood Guide

Eight SEND Year 11 students were invited by ESCC to help in the making of this brand-new guide for students called 'School to Adulthood'. Made by SEND students for students, we are proud of all our students, who offered valuable contributions to the making of this guide.

If you are preparing for your next steps after school, then this is an important read. Thank you to all our students who contributed.

School to Adulthood - Transition Guide

Year 10 Steps to Success Programme

‘Our Steps to Success Programme’ continued this term with our ongoing involvement with this brand-new pilot. Our Year 10 students will be moving on to Year 11 in September and we can already see the benefits.

Students are reporting that they are motivated and reassured to have this additional mentoring support. If you are on the pilot programme and need additional support during the summer holidays, please do email Lilly Knight, who will be around over the summer to support all our students involved on this pilot programme.

Thank you to everything that Lilly and her team are doing to support our vulnerable students.

Eastbourne College inspire our Year 10 High Prior Attainers

Oliver Marlow from Eastbourne College visited our Year 10 students recently and focussed on aspiration and scholarships. He discussed what makes an aspirational student and allowed the students to generate their own ideas of how their future education should look.



We also caught up on some of our former Gildredge House scholarship students and we were inspired by their journey into Higher Education at some of the most prestigious universities in the world. Students learnt that aspiration isn't just about being academic, it's about immersing oneself in learning to fulfil a career ambition. Students were very inspired, and we, the staff, are looking forward to writing references for these students to support their future scholarship applications.

Gildredge House Visits University of Sussex

A selected group of our Year 10 students went on a visit in June to the University of Sussex. Students had an opportunity to tour around the campus, browse through the library and look at the hundreds of thousands of online books, talk to students about their experiences and even get an idea of what it is like to live on a university campus.



They were invited to have lunch in the university canteen and students were impressed by the variety of food on offer, as well as the campus shops.

The University of Sussex are very keen to work with all students, including those who may not think that university is for them.

As for our students who joined us on the trip, they are all keen to consider university and are looking forward to working hard to achieve their entry grades in their GCSES.

If you have any questions regarding going to university, please pop into the career's library.

For more information on widening participation to Sussex University, visit Sussex [Improving access to higher education : About us : University of Sussex](#)

Mrs Bray (Careers Advisor)

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA)

Our ELSA programmes in Primary and Secondary concluded in the summer term.

ELSA is an initiative developed and supported by educational psychologists, that recognises that children learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are also addressed.



The aim is to provide students who may need emotional support, with strategies to help them cope better.

Gildredge House hosted an ELSA supervision event, which involved practitioners from other schools visiting the site to discuss the work being done across the area and the impact of this work.

Mrs Groves and Mrs Baker (ELSA Practitioners)

Young Carers

Our Young Carer Champion, Oliver D, went to Westminster to meet with Sir Martyn Oliver, Chief Inspector at Ofsted, along with the Director of Policy at The Carers Trust, the Head of Young Carers National Voice and a small number of other young carers.

Oliver works with these charities regularly on raising awareness of the challenges that Young Carers face, and in particular how this affects them in education.

He helped Young Carers National Voice put together a list of the actions that Ofsted could do to support Young Carers, and they discussed these with Ofsted.

The young people shared their stories about being a Young Carer and Oliver also spoke about Gildredge House and how important it is to have a culture of support at a school as well as clear policies and supportive action.

He spoke about how well Gildredge House do both these things and what a difference this makes to his daily life and his education.

This meeting came about after Oliver and 4 other young carers wrote a personal letter to Sir Martyn Oliver and then hand delivered to him in March on Young Carers





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Action Day, where Oliver also met with MP's in Parliament to encourage them to sign the Young Carers Covenant, which is a commitment to Young Carers describing the 10 outcomes that can improve young carers lives.

In the afternoon Oliver attended a focus group with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, helping write the Youth Strategy for the current government ensuring what young carers need is included.

I'm sure you will all agree, Oliver is an impressive young man, and we are extremely proud to have him as a student at Gildredge House.