

Starting Year 7



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR ADMISSIONS TO
GILLINGHAM SCHOOL 2025-2026



Gillingham School Values:

*We take pride in our school
and our learning is never
disrupted.*

*We treat everyone with
kindness and dignity.*

*We have the right to feel safe
and happy.*

Welcome to Gillingham School

*This booklet is designed for the families of students going into their
first year of secondary school.*

*“There is a shared and clear moral
purpose to provide every pupil
with the best opportunities in life’*

Ofsted report 2023

Welcome to Gillingham School in North Dorset, set in the heart of the beautiful Blackmore Vale.

Founded by benefactors in 1516, Gillingham School is proud and privileged to offer a high quality and enjoyable educational experience to young people from the town of Gillingham, its surrounding villages and, indeed, to students further afield in Dorset, Wiltshire and Somerset.

At Gillingham School, we recognise that children have a variety of abilities, talents and personalities. Knowing that each student is different and that they learn in many ways, we aim to develop their abilities; raise their expectations and provide the support that is necessary for success. By offering a wide range of experiences to our students, both in and out of the classroom, students will receive a broad spectrum of learning.

'Docendo Discimus,' our school motto, means 'through teaching, we learn' and this recognises that learning is a shared, life-long process. The partnerships between students, teachers and parents are vitally important in ensuring that all students aspire to achieve the best possible chances for their future.

Gillingham School, furthermore, is a friendly, welcoming and inspiring school. Characterised by good behaviour, respect towards one another and enthusiasm for new experiences, the positive ethos of Gillingham School has been a feature here for many years and we remain committed to sustaining this into the future.

It is our privilege as teachers to welcome children into our school and to encourage them to learn, grow, develop and mature into young adults who will eventually leave us and thrive in the 21st century world. It is a delight when we meet former students some years later and hear how they have progressed and how Gillingham School helped them to achieve their goals.



I was delighted to have been appointed as Headteacher in September 2017.

The unique and incredibly special ethos immediately resonated with me and I am thrilled to have become a part of the school.

Above all else, Gillingham is a very happy school and we expect our children to feel safe, secure and confident.

Partnerships are very important to us: Gillingham School has a history of working closely with parents/carers and with all members of our local and wider community in order to provide the best possible education for our students. This is something we pride ourselves on.

I look forward to welcoming you to our school.

Paul Nicholson, Headteacher

Shark Night



My favourite part of Shark Night was being able to see all the animals up close. We were also able to find out facts about each of them, for example, what species they were as well as their name and birthday! If you are lucky, you might also see some animals that would not normally be out in the open.

The following day, you visit Paignton Zoo, which is amazing! My favourite animal there was the blue newt, but he can be difficult to find. We also had lunch at the café before heading back home.

“ I would definitely recommend Shark Night as it is a great trip with lots to offer! - Mia, Year 7 ”

Joining Secondary School

Making Friends

The transition from primary to secondary school is one of the most significant changes that both students and their parents will make. Whilst the experience is exciting, students may need some reassurance about joining.

New Year 7s may feel nervous about making new friends when joining secondary school, especially as there are more students in year 7 than in year 6 or possibly your entire primary school! However, while all these new faces may seem daunting, it is an opportunity to add to existing circles of friends as well as retain the friendships already formed.

There will be lots of guidance from different teachers. Your tutor will see you at the beginning of the day and will help you with any concerns you have. The Head of Year 7 and Assistant Year Heads will also be available. There will also be clubs, activities and trips to help you make new friends.

Organisation

Students will be put in a teaching group when joining Year 7 and will have a different teacher for each subject and therefore, separate exercise books for each lesson. Space for these will be needed to keep them at home. It is a good idea for pupils to pack/unpack their bags every evening when arriving home, complete homework and then re-pack their bag ready for the next day.

Pupils will receive a timetable on their first day which will explain where each lesson is located. Parents/Carers will also be sent a copy of the timetable. Try to display it in a visible place. School homework diaries/planners will help organise their day. All of this information can also be accessed via the Edulink app.

School Homework Diary /Planner

Although we have largely moved to digital platforms for home learning (Microsoft Teams) and parental communication (Edulink), Year 7s will still be issued with a physical homework diary/planner. This will be used to support our new students to:

- Record important information about activities and events
- Record homework set by teachers and due dates
- Write in notes and personal reminders

Tutors will monitor it once a week, sign it and countersign positive notes or notes of concern.

Parents need to:

- Monitor it for positive notes and notes of concern written by teachers. We request that parents initial to show they have seen them.
- Sign it once a week, preferably at the weekend
- Use it to help students organise themselves
- Use it to communicate with teachers



School Uniform

At Gillingham School, uniform is designed to encourage a smart and business like style appropriate to an effective learning environment. The school's dress code is intended to provide the opportunity for collective pride in our school whilst providing a clear structure for students and parents/carers to follow. The overriding principle to the dress code is that uniform should be worn smartly at all times.

Our local suppliers are the South West Schoolwear, Wine Street in Yeovil and Squires of Shaftesbury. However, as most items are of standard colour, they are all available from a variety of other retailers, e.g. ASDA. Ties and badges for blazers bought from a departmental store, can also be purchased from the school office.

Uniform can also be obtained from Earth Uniform. Parents and Carers can find information via the 'Find my school' section on their website or by following this QR code:



All students must have:

- School tie
- Blue formal shirt with collar
- Navy blue jumper or cardigan with the embroidered school crest
- Black tailored school trousers or navy-blue pleated skirt worn knee-length*
- Dark charcoal or black socks or tights
- Plain black footwear with no logos

*In periods of particularly hot weather, tailored black shorts will be permitted, decided by the school based on the weather conditions with parents notified.

Optional from September 2025:

- Navy blue blazer for any year group



Exclusions to the uniform policy:

- Jeans, chinos, cargo, cropped skinny-fit trousers, leggings, tracksuit bottoms
- Mini or tight fitting skirts
- Hoodies or hooded garments
- Canvas, open-toed, high or wedged heel shoes
- Trainers
- Socks white or coloured

Jewellery/Earrings:

- Students can wear **one** single small stud earring **only**, one in each earlobe. However this must be removed for PE lessons.
- **No** facial jewellery is allowed e.g. Nose studs, eyebrow piercings, tongue piercings etc.
- **No** rings or bracelets
- Hair colour should be within the natural range
- Excessive makeup, false eyelashes and the wearing of fake nails and nail varnish is **not** acceptable.

This uniform policy applies to all students until they reach Sixth Form, which has its own professional expectations for dress.

PE Kit

It is essential that all students wear the correct kit for the activity they are taking part in. The following is a guide for the kit your child may need.

Whilst additional kit is optional, we recommend the following as basic kit:

Compulsory Kit

- **Boots** – for rugby / football but can also be used for cross country (due to facilities girls will be taught football and rugby on the Astro so boots will not be required)
- **Shinpads/gum shield***
- **Plain red sweatshirt or hoodie or reversible rugby top**
- **Plain navy tracksuit bottoms/plain navy leggings**
- **Trainers**
- **White polo or T shirt**
- **Plain navy shorts/skort**
- **Long red socks**
- **Short white socks**

Optional Kit

- **Hat and gloves for cold weather**
- **Base layers**

No large logos or stripes please as we want to reduce the pressure and indeed cost of wearing expensive branded garments.

Exclusions to PE uniform

Kit is to be plain in colour as stated, and have no logos, stripes or branding. We want to reduce the pressure and cost of wearing branded garments.

Health & Safety in PE

Students should wear appropriate attire, remove jewellery, tie back long hair, and ensure footwear provides adequate support.

*Governing bodies in rugby, football and hockey strongly recommend that shinpads and mouthguards are worn at all levels of participation in schools.

Note: Kit

A reminder that if you are excused from PE, it is expected that you bring a note from a parent or guardian and bring kit (wrapping up warm in cold weather) as we feel you can still participate as an umpire or coach and we do not want your uniform getting wet and muddy.



Kit with skort/shorts



Kit with white polo/t-shirt



Kit with reversible rugby shirt

General Information

Lockers

Arrangements are made for every new Year 7 student to have a locker, if they would like one. A deposit of £5.00 is payable and will be returned when the key is handed in at the end of Year 11. The deposit is paid via the schools online payment system and an invitation to request a locker will be sent in September. The keys are then issued to the student with the locker location by their tutor.

We aim for students to have access to lockers within their first few weeks of being at school after their initial settling in period.

If students lose their key, there will be a £3.00 charge to have it replaced.

Please note that personal items are left in lockers at a student's own risk.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact **Fatmata Young** at fyoung@gillingham-dorset.co.uk

Printing and Purchasing Food

Students are able to print using their login details on each printer.

Students will have the choice of either cash or biometrics (fingerprint recognition technology) to buy food from the School Canteen.

Free school meals are available to children whose parents or carers receive financial support.

If you have joined Gillingham School from another county, please re-apply for the Free School Meals to Dorset County Council using the application at this link: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/at-school/free-school-meals.aspx>

If your child already receives free school meals, please make sure that we know so this can be continued. *When a student receives Free School Meals, their allowance is topped up daily for use in the canteen.*

Forgotten Items and Lost Property

Please ensure that your child's name is written on all equipment and items of clothing. If students lose something, staff will encourage them to look for it. The Lost Property Office is open during lunchtime in between M11/M12.

The School Office receives an enormous amount of forgotten PE kit, lunches, design folders, money etc throughout the course of the school day. Pupils should be fully prepared and we would appreciate parents helping to encourage this.



Essential Equipment

- A set of mathematical equipment (protractor, compass)
- A scientific calculator (we recommend Casio FX Model FZ-83GT+)
- Wired headphones (wireless ones will not connect to our PCs)
- English Dictionary
- Pencils
- Colouring pencils
- Rubber
- Ruler
- Pens
- Purple Ballpoint Pen
- Glue sticks
- School ties and blazer badges

All of these items
can be bought from
the School Library
throughout the year.

Website and Email:

The school's website and our social media pages (Instagram and Facebook) are good ways to access the latest information about the school, such as recent events, snow closures and term dates:

<https://www.gillingham-dorset.co.uk>

Instagram: [@gillinghamschool](https://www.instagram.com/gillinghamschool)

Facebook:

For school celebrations and events: **Gillingham School**

For general information: **Updates & Events for Gillingham School Students, Parents & Guardians**

If you need to contact the school office the email address is: office@gillingham-dorset.co.uk

The first point of contact for pastoral issues will be your child's tutor whose email address will be supplied to your child when they join the school.

Any safeguarding concerns should be sent to: safeguarding@gillingham-dorset.co.uk



General Information for Parents/Carers

Our Ambition for your Child

Our commitment to all our students will be to set high quality Home Learning tasks that give students the opportunity to practise what they have learnt in school, extend their knowledge and broaden their horizons. We will plan and model home learning tasks with students in class so that they are clear on what success looks like and we will recognise their achievements through, for example, issuing Learning Awards via Edulink. Home Learning is most successful when teachers are able to set work at the most appropriate point in the curriculum. For this reason, there is no rigid Home Learning timetable. To help students and parents organise their time effectively Home Learning tasks and deadlines are published on Edulink and can be viewed under the Home Learning tab.

Additional Home Learning Guidance

- Students are advised to regularly revise the content from their lessons to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Teachers will test whether they have been effectively reviewing their work, and committing classroom learning to memory through regular low stakes tests and quizzes in class.
- In many subjects, students will be set home learning around identified key assignments that will enable them to develop and embed key skills.
- Students should be reading for pleasure outside of school to develop their range of vocabulary and encourage a love of learning. They should be encouraged to read around the topics being covered in the lessons to broaden their knowledge and understanding.
- We would encourage a breadth of home learning which might include visits to museums, galleries, concerts, theatrical performances, representation in local sports teams, trips away from home and other valuable educational opportunities.
- Students should also spend time each day listening to and reading the news to make links with lessons in school.
- They should also start to be inquisitive about future careers progression pathways by exploring the UNIFrog website: <https://www.unifrog.org>.
- There are a range of excellent resources available to assist students with their home learning. These include: GCSEPod (<https://www.gcsepod.com>), BBC Newsround (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround>), memorise, GCSE Bitesize (<https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/levels/z98jmp3>), Sparx Maths (<https://sparxmaths.com/>), our school website (<https://www.gillingham-dorset.co.uk/>)



Transport

School transport is provided and run by County Councils. If you have any queries about the provision or transport or the day-to-day running of the buses, please contact your County Council department.

Dorset: 01305 224537 (Option 1)

Wiltshire: 01225 712852

South West Coaches: 01935475872

If you live in Wincanton, Templecombe, Horsington, Lydlinch, Stalbridge, Bruton, Bayford or Henstridge, please contact Mrs Dimmock on 01747 822222 or email ldimmock@gillingham-dorset.co.uk

Important Reminder

Please be aware that the school buses provided by the County Council are only available for the students who live within the catchment area of the school or by special agreement with the County Council. Children who attend Gillingham School from outside the catchment area are not guaranteed a place on a bus or a free bus pass. Parents are advised to make their own arrangements for transport into and out of school unless they fall into the above categories.

Any children who go home for tea or sleepovers with friends are not allowed to travel with their friends on school transport. We are not permitted to give out temporary bus passes without direct agreement from the County. The school buses are only insured and allowed to transport those children who are eligible and have been issued with passes allowing them to travel on specific routes.

South Western Railway Scholars Educational Season Tickets

If you would like to know about the scheme for Educational Season tickets for the train, please email Mrs Pont on mpont@gillingham-dorset.co.uk for details.

Edulink

Our main method for communication with parents is via Edulink, a paperless way of sending information home, such as school newsletters, student reports and letters. Edulink is also used to book appointments for Parents' Evenings. Information about how to register your new Edulink account will follow in late summer. In the unlikely event that parents are not able to access Edulink, paper copies can be sent home.

There is also a smartphone App for Edulink, which is a convenient way to pick up important messages and make payments for trips, dinner money etc. This is done on Ipayimpact via Edulink.

If you do not wish to make payments online, you can of course continue to make cash and cheque payments. Please note, your bank statement will display either the school name or VMS Ipayimpact, depending on your payment method. If you need any additional information or assistance, please contact the School Finance Office at financeoffice@gillingham-dorset.co.uk

Picking Up and Dropping Off Students

For safety reasons, parents who bring their children to school by car are requested **NOT TO USE** the Hardings Lane approach to school. With 15 coaches coming and going and usually several parked cars, Hardings Lane is potentially dangerous and we wish to keep the road as clear as possible for the prompt and safe movement of the coaches. We would be very grateful if parents would drop off and pick up at the School Lane entrance and not on the school site as there is a large number of pedestrians and vehicles using the school drive at these times.

Students who arrive on the school site by bus are not then permitted to leave the site during the school day.

Absences

We kindly request that parents leave a short message on our absence voicemail line 01747 822222 and press 1 on the first day of their child's absence. You can also report student absences via the Edulink app. Similarly, you can email studentabsences@gillingham-dorset.co.uk.

Only allow days at home for a genuine illness and try to avoid absences in school time.

Please do NOT take your child on holiday during school time. We are working under very strict guidelines over this matter and can only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. The cost of holidays and booking holidays without checking term dates are not exceptional circumstances and leave of absence will not be given.

We thank parents for their support in this very important area.

Medical Conditions

Should any medical conditions arise or change for your child/children, please could you notify the school office as soon as possible so that records can be updated.



Gillingham Dorset Secondary School



Headteacher:

Paul Nicholson (BEd)

Deputy Headteachers:

Mark Lavis (MEd)

Sarah Turnbull (MA)

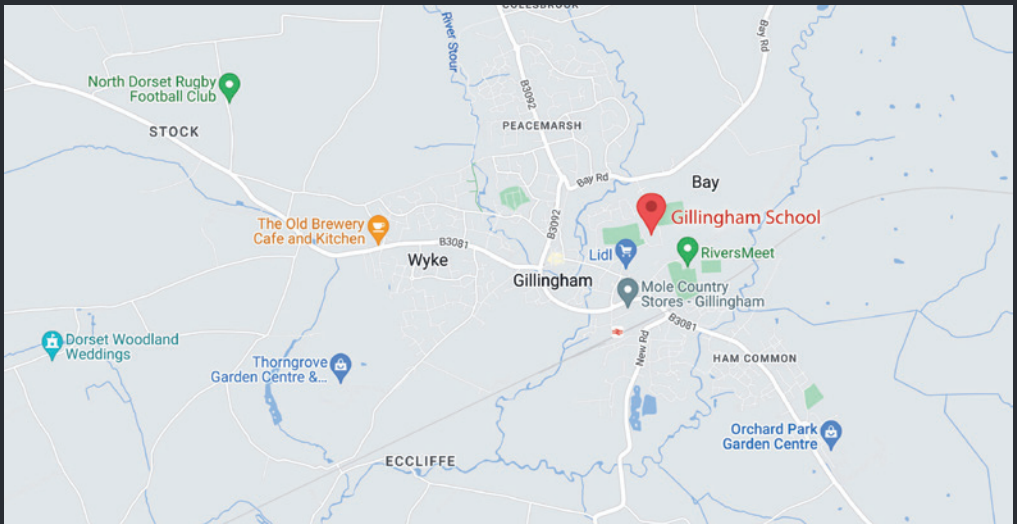
Assistant Headteachers:

Colin Gordon (BA)

Mel Marshall (BA)

Pete Alborough (BA)

Natalie Cross (BA)



GILLINGHAM SCHOOL, HARDINGS LANE
GILLINGHAM DORSET
SP8 4QP

01747 822222