

Monday 27th April 2026

St Giles-on-the-Heath Primary School

Aim High; Be Resilient; Take Care of Each Other

Newsletter No. 23 Summer Term

Dear Families,

It has been wonderful to welcome the children back for the Summer Term and they have certainly brought the sunshine with them!

As you will have seen in the letter sent to you before the Easter holidays, St Giles-on-the-Heath School is now part of The Carey Federation and I am now your substantive headteacher. It is an honour and a privilege to be at the helm and to finally, be able to move forward positively with school development that gives the children the learning, play and wider opportunities they deserve. As you are aware, we have worked with the school on and off over the last year, in a caretaking capacity, while the future of St Giles was being determined, tackling only the most essential issues, but we are now at the start of a new era. I can promise you, that I will 'Aim High' to do the very best I can for the children.

You will hear the term '**Aim High**' very often. It is the first phrase of our Federation motto and is at the core of everything we do. We will always strive to do the very best for the children. This means being reflective, looking at what more we can do, what needs to be developed and what might need to change. Please be assured that we will never make changes for the sake of change. We will always think carefully about all potential challenges that a change could result in and will do only what we genuinely believe is in the best interests of the children.

When things change, it can make us feel uneasy and uncertain. This is where the second part of our motto comes in '**Be Resilient**'. It is an easy phrase to say but sometimes hard to feel. To help children's resilience with any changes, we will always talk and guide the children through changes. '**Taking Care of Each Other**' is the final phrase of the motto. This is fundamental. It is only when a child feels cared for that they can develop resilience.

On the last day of term, we had an assembly where the children of Halwill and Ashwater joined St Giles' children via Teams. We explained to the children that they would now all be part of one Federation and helped them to understand what this would mean for them. Children from all 3 schools had the opportunity to ask any questions. It really was a special assembly because the feeling of warmth and belonging from the children at all 3 schools was palpable. The Halwill and Ashwater children taught the St Giles children the motto, including actions. The St Giles children have really enjoyed learning the motto and since we have returned to school we have been discussing the meaning with them and encouraging the children to:

Aim High – always aim to do the very best you can in whatever challenges you face and believe you can succeed.

Be Resilient – you cannot succeed without failing so never give up.

Take Care of Each Other – always be kind and thoughtful to your friends, classmates, younger children and adults.

THE CAREY FEDERATION



Upcoming Events

April 27 & 28

Sunset Club – Board Games

April 29 & 30

Sunset Club – Creative Club

May 4

Bank Holiday

May 11

SATS Week

May 14

Class 1 Viking Day

May 15

FPTA Bingo

May 25

Half Term

June 1

Swimming Lessons Yr3, Yr4, Yr5

June 2

Yr 6 Leavers photos

June 8

Swimming Lessons Yr3, Yr4, Yr5

June 15

Swimming Lessons Yr3, Yr4, Yr5

June 16

Sports Day Timings to be confirmed

June 17

Class 3 residential to Bideford

June 22

Swimming Lessons Yr3, Yr4, Yr5

June 29

Swimming Lessons Yr3, Yr4, Yr5

June 30

Reserve Sports Day

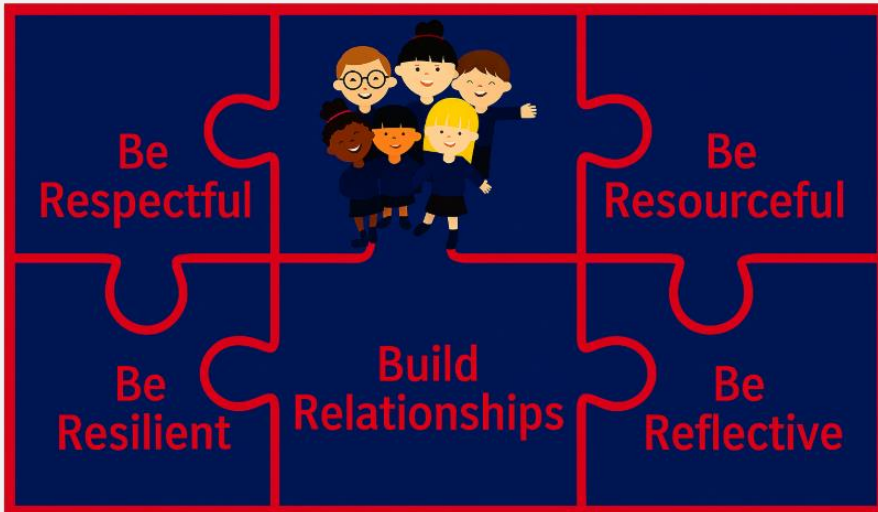
July 6

Swimming Lessons Yr3, Yr4, Yr5

July 13

Swimming Lessons Yr3, Yr4, Yr5

Underpinning the motto are The Carey Qualities:



These also have actions to help children have a deeper understanding of each one. We have started to discuss these with the children. We feel strongly that our motto and The Carey Qualities are not something just for a letter head or display, they are to be deeply embedded in the fabric and culture of our school. To help this, all our assemblies will have a link to one or more aspects. In Celebration Assemblies, children will receive a certificate for working towards one aspect of The Carey Qualities or the motto. In class, staff will refer to these when encouraging children e.g. well done for Aiming High and doing your best handwriting, you were really kind – thank you for Taking Care of Each Other. In our experience, this approach really helps to embed the values into the culture of the school. Please do talk to your child about the motto and The Carey Qualities and encourage this language in activities you undertake at home.

New Website, Logo and Newsletter Format

We were busy over the Easter holidays incorporating St Giles into the Federation website. It is very important that St Giles feels part of the Federation, whilst retaining its own identity. There is still a little work to be done on it and the old website will cease shortly. Here is a link, I do hope you like it: [St Giles On The Heath Primary School – Halwill and Ashwater Primary Schools](http://www.stgiles-on-the-heath-primary-schools.co.uk)

As you can see, the Federation logo has been updated to include St Giles; again it was important that the logo represents St Giles being embraced into the Federation. We have a new format for the newsletter. I hope you find it clear and easier to quickly check key dates.

Lunch Procedures

Last term we observed children to be very calm and happy during lesson times, but a number of children were finding the noise and busyness of the dining hall overwhelming. In addition, the number of children on the playground were having frequent accidents and head bumps and there were a number of behaviour issues, resulting from children being in confined play area. Therefore, we needed to reflect and put in a calmer more orderly system, something that would help all our children to have a happier lunchtime.

We have staggered the lunchtime to reduce the numbers in the hall and on the playground. Children come straight from the lessons to the dining hall now.

Previously, they would go out to play and wait for their turn to be called in. We noticed that children were quite fractious as really needing to refuel before playing. Pre-school and Reception come into the hall first and have a calm and positive environment to enjoy their lunch, before the other children.

Useful Links

School Contact

Details

Tel: 01566 772191

Email: admin@st-giles-heath-primary.devon.sch.uk

Website: [St Giles On The Heath Primary School – Halwill and Ashwater Primary Schools](http://www.stgiles-on-the-heath-primary-schools.co.uk)

Safeguarding: If you have any concerns about a child, please speak to one of the safeguarding team or email safeguarding@halwill.devon.sch.uk

Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Ruh Alford

Deputy Safeguarding Leads

Mrs Nicola Taylor

Mrs Jeanette Neale

Miss Jayne Miners

Mrs Rosie Cawsey

Term Dates

These are on our website:

The children are called out a few at a time to come and get their lunch, this reduces the snake of children lining up and restlessness as they go up. To help make the service smoother and more orderly, children who are having something other than the main meal are given a small visual picture card of their option e.g a picture of a jacket potato. When they are at the front they give this to the cook. Many children are really enjoying having this little visual cue.

Last Tuesday morning, I went through the changes very carefully with the children during assembly and children have been guided and we support the children through the processes.

We have seen a dramatic difference in the calmness in the dining hall. The children can talk and socialise with their friends, without having to shout over each other and a number of children have said they prefer it. We will continue to monitor and reflect and make any tweaks if necessary.

A huge thank you to Kate Pullen, our cook for aiming high and being resilient with these changes as well as to the Meal Time Assistants and teachers who have supported the children.

Head Lice and Nits

As head lice are caught by head to head contact they spread easily amongst young children and are very common in primary schools. To help prevent the spread of head lice, we ask that long hair is tied up and that hair is regularly checked at home. Wet combing regularly using a detection comb can help catch head lice early. Please see more information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice-and-nits/>

Packed Lunches

As a Healthy School we do encourage healthy packed lunches. Please see some ideas and inspiration here: <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

Class 1 Viking Day

On the 14th May, Class 1 will be having a Viking Day.

Your child is welcome to come into school dressed as a Viking for the day. Please do not feel you need to buy anything or make anything elaborate – simple costumes are perfect. It is all about having fun and being immersed in the day.

Some easy costume ideas include:

- A plain long-sleeved top and trousers with a belt (a piece of string or fabric works well)
- A grey, brown or neutral-coloured outfit
- A piece of fabric or tea towel worn as a cape

Please note: horned helmets are a myth and were not worn by Vikings, so we kindly ask that these are not included.

We are looking forward to a fun and engaging day of Viking activities.

Mrs Ruh Alford
Executive Headteacher

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANNING

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION

ST GILES ON THE HEATH VILLAGE HALL, PL15 9SA

TUESDAY 28TH APRIL

TIME 6.30 - 8.30PM



A WORKSHOP TO EXPLORE COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- Do you know what to do in an emergency?
- What happens when the emergency services are delayed?
- Could you help your community?
- Could you be a community emergency volunteer?
- Could you help make a Community Emergency Plan?



For more information contact: rod.birtles@devoncommunities.org.uk
or register [here](#) or via the QR code above



Devon
County Council





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Unauthorised Holiday/Leave Request

As you will be aware, Government Guidance advises that schools should not authorise requests for term time absence unless the school has received suitable evidence of exceptional circumstances. The Government does not consider a family holiday to be an exceptional circumstance.

In the absence of suitable evidence of exceptional circumstances, on this occasion the school cannot authorise your request for a Term Time Absence. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement, and full attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career.

I must take this opportunity to remind you, that should you still choose to take your child out of school unauthorised, then the school must refer the absence to the Local Authority for the consideration of initiating Parental Responsibility Measures. If you have Parental Responsibility, this could mean receiving any of the following.

- A Penalty Notice. Should a Penalty Notice be issued, one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for £160, which is reduced to £80 if paid within the first 21 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then court proceedings will be initiated. If a previous Penalty Notice has been issued within the past 2 years, then the Local Authority will proceed straight to Court.
- A Magistrates Summons that could lead to a criminal record, a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

We understand the disappointment that a refusal may cause, but as you can appreciate, this policy represents the school's responsibility and commitment towards ensuring your child's full and efficient education.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Ruh Alford

Executive Headteacher



FREE SCHOOL MEALS – Are you entitled to apply?

Even though your child is entitled to universal infant free school meals in reception, year 1 and year 2, if you are eligible for free school meals it is important that you register as soon as possible as this attracts income for the school and will also allow you to benefit from:-

- **A full set of school uniform**
- **Free attendance at Breakfast and After School Clubs**
- **2/3 reduction in residential fees**

CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get free school meals.

Your child may also get free school meals if you get any of these benefits and your child is both:

To apply please use the following link

https://oneonline.devon.gov.uk/CCSCitizenPortal_LIVE/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2fCCSCitizenPortal_live

If you require any assistance, then please do not hesitate to contact the school offices.