

# WELCOME TO GILLINGHAM SCHOOL

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS TO POSTS AT  
GILLINGHAM SCHOOL 2023-2024



# CONTENTS

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- 4 *Additional information for posts at Gillingham - Our school*
- 5 *Photo of two Sports Leaders, Max and Freya*
- 6-7 *Town of Gillingham and The Students and School Ethos*
- 8 *Our staff*
- 9 *Curriculum, the Board of Governors and the pastoral system*
- 10 *The future*





# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

*For applicants to posts at Gillingham School 2022*

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## OUR SCHOOL:

Gillingham is a friendly, popular and successful 11-19 comprehensive school. Currently, we have 1,756 students on roll, including a large Sixth Form of 363 students.

The school's good reputation and the town's expansion have meant the school has doubled in size over the last 15 years and we feel confident the school can look forward to the future with confidence and optimism.

Examination results are consistently high: Gillingham is proud of how well our students do both academically and socially.

Our students are supported by a highly professional, dedicated and committed group of colleagues - both teaching and non-teaching. There is a high level of trust amongst colleagues in our school and we work in partnership with our students to provide the best possible opportunities for them. Colleagues at Gillingham value their own professional learning and there is a well established culture of accepting guidance and learning from each other.

Students from Gillingham excel on the sports field and have been representing the school at

regional, county and national levels across a vast array of sports. There is also a strong tradition of performing arts in the school, with a substantial number of our students going onto work in this field.

The school stands on a pleasant, elevated site on the edge of Gillingham, overlooking open countryside.

Since 1987, there has been ongoing development providing new, high quality, purpose-built teaching blocks and refurbishing areas.

The school buildings are surrounded by extensive playing fields, including a full-sized, floodlit, artificial sports pitch.

The latest building to be added was the Sixth Form Learning Centre, which includes 'state of the art' science laboratories. Upstairs in the Centre there are 44 PC's and 5 Apple Macs helping to prioritise independent learning.







# TOWN OF GILLINGHAM

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Gillingham is a friendly town with a population of around 12,000. It is a centre of trade and commerce rather than a typical Dorset tourist town. It has some excellent housing and attractive rural surroundings.

It is growing rapidly as a residential location being well-placed in relation to towns like Salisbury, Southampton, Exeter, Poole, Yeovil, Bristol and Bath which lie an hours journey by road, and London which can be reached in under two hours by train. Its location has been well summarised as being in the middle of nowhere but near to everywhere.

## THE STUDENTS AND SCHOOL ETHOS

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The school draws its students from some three hundred square miles of Dorset and South West Wiltshire. Our students are friendly, hardworking and want to succeed.

We benefit from the development of housing in the area and the popularity of the school and have seen an increase in the numbers of students from Gillingham's neighboring towns and villages, many of whom have high aspirations and are well supported academically at home.

The school seeks to offer a stimulating environment to all our students and a full social and educational experience to enlarge their awareness of life beyond their pleasant rural location. Consequently, there is a traditional staff commitment to extra-curricular activities and to the relaxed and friendly relationships between teachers and their students.

The range of activities is vast and includes exchanges, musical and theatrical productions, field trips, activity weekends, art trips, visits to sporting venues, trips to the Mediterranean and Barcelona and World Challenge expeditions to Kenya, Thailand and Peru.

*“If the school had a mission statement,  
the word ‘enjoyment’ would be in it.”*

# OUR STAFF

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There are 126 teachers and a senior management team of 7, who, in addition to their specific responsibilities, share the leadership of the school with the Headteacher, Paul Nicholson. However, we believe that all staff contribute to the leadership of the school and we prefer to make decisions after formal and informal discussion with all staff involved.

Great emphasis is placed upon professional development in what is a young and vibrant cohort of staff. Opportunities for career growth are excellent, as are opportunities to contribute to the improvement of the school.

There is a large team of support staff, and the school is fortunate to have non-teaching staff of the highest calibre who are dedicated to supporting the work of teachers and school as a whole.

There is a good morale and a genuine sense of camaraderie amongst the staff. There are staff cricket and football games as well as running and organized fitness sessions. Staff can also get involved with the Gillingham School Bake Off and the annual Strictly Come Dancing Sweepstake. There are various trips that staff can chaperone as well as the staff choir and the opportunity to help with school productions.

A number of our staff are actively involved with raising money for charities and get involved inside and outside of school as much as they can.

There are organized evening staff socials in both the Autumn and Summer terms and at the end of every term after the school day has ended.

Staff are also welcomed each year to attend the Year 11 Prom and Sixth Form Ball.

# CURRICULUM

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The school operates a 10 day timetable with 5, 1 hour teaching periods each day, and teaching groups are predominantly mixed attainment. We think and plan in terms of a '5 year curriculum' (with Year 9 being a transition year between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4).

In Years 7 and 8, students study all National Curriculum subjects, whilst in Year 9, students study 5 option subjects alongside their Core subjects and Religious Studies.

The aim is to offer some element of choice whilst maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum for each student, leading to informed choices for Years 10 and 11.

Alongside the core subjects, there are a wide range of traditional GCSE's, and a variety of BTEC qualifications.

We are committed to the principles behind EBacc and when making option choices, most students are expected to choose at least one Modern Foreign Language (French, German or Spanish), as well as Geography or History (or both) unless we feel it is in their best interests not to do so. Application to the Sixth form is open to all students, subject to an interview. Sixth Formers are offered a choice of 33 courses, including A-Levels, BTEC's and an EPQ.



## THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

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As a Voluntary Controlled co-educational comprehensive, Gillingham has four Foundation Governors as well as those normally appointed to governing bodies. In addition to the usual meetings, the governors visit the school throughout the year on both a formal and informal basis and there is a mutually supportive and constructive relationship from which we all benefit.

# THE PASTORAL SYSTEM

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On admission, students are placed into year groups and tutor groups which are arranged on social and personal rather than academic criteria. The pastoral structure rests on the work of the form tutor and all new full-time staff should recognize that this will be a key part of their work. To support the form tutor, each year group is led by a year head and two assistant year heads.

The school firmly believes that a personalised curriculum is a key ingredient in good learning and behaviour. Year 7 students are taught in ten mixed ability groups; as they progress through the school, students are offered increasing choices within the curriculum with greater emphasis placed on independent learning skills.

# THE FUTURE

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The school has a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere but staff work exceptionally hard. We are always looking to improve whilst remembering that tired teachers are not better teachers and unhappy students are not better students.

Ofsted remarked that the school is 'characterised by its humane values' and there is a very positive ethos in the Staff Room. In part, this reflects the extensive investment in our future represented by the new building programmes and by the optimism we share in what appears to be relatively secure future of gradual growth. The school has been here since 1516, and there is every expectation that it will continue to be here for a few more years yet!

Our vision is to make the next few years challenging, interesting and most of all, enjoyable. If you are interested in playing a part in this development, we look forward to receiving an application from you.

Paul Nicholson  
Headteacher

