

The Gilbert School
Parental Information for Academic Year 2026-2027



Brinkley Lane
Colchester
CO4 9PU



Timings of the school day

Correct at the time of printing. However, please note, the timings of the school day are currently under review and subject to change in September.

08:40 – 08:50	Registration/Standards Check
08:50 – 09:50	Period 1
09:50 – 10:50	Period 2
10:50 – 11:10	Break
11:10 – 12:10	Period 3
12:10 – 13:10	Period 4
13:10 – 13:50	Lunch
13:50 – 13:55	Movement time
13:55 – 14:20	Registration/Assembly/Personal Development
14:20 – 15:20	Period 5

School terms and holiday dates Academic Year 2026 – 2027

Non pupil days	Tuesday 1 st September 2026 Wednesday 2 nd September 2026 Wednesday 7 th October 2026 Friday 27 th November 2026 Monday 30 th November 2026 Monday 4 th January 2027 Friday 12 th February 2027 Thursday 1 st July 2027
Autumn term	Tuesday 1 st September 2026 — Friday 18 th December 2026
Half Term	Monday 26 th October 2026 — Friday 30 th October 2026
Christmas holiday	Monday 21 st December 2026 — Friday 1 st January 2027 (School closes at 12.10pm on Friday 18 th December 2026)
Spring term	Monday 4 th January 2027 — Thursday 25 th March 2027
Half term	Monday 15 th February 2027 — Friday 19 th February 2027
Spring holiday	Friday 26 th March 2027 — Friday 9 th April 2027 (School closes as normal at 3.20pm on Thursday 25 th March 2027)
Summer term	Monday 12 th April 2027 — Wednesday 21 st July 2027 (School closes at 12.10pm on Wednesday 21 st July 2027)
May Day Bank Holiday	Monday 3 rd May 2027
Half term	Monday 31 st May 2027 – Friday 4 th June 2027



Holidays and absences

Holidays

Schools are not permitted to routinely authorise holidays. Whilst holiday requests will be considered on an individual basis, holidays during term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances surrounding the request. In addition, it is our expectation that a student's attendance will be at least 97% unless illness has resulted in unavoidable absence (please see the updated Attendance Policy for further guidance).

Agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Pupil Registration Regulations 1995—amended 1997). If the absence is not authorised but the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to our Attendance Officer and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued which will result in a fine of £80 (or £160 if this is not paid within 28 days) **to each** parent/carer who is liable for the student's offence(s), this will usually only be the parent/carer who allowed the absence.

We know that all of our parents/carers want the best for their children and the majority take their responsibility regarding school attendance very seriously. All of the evidence highlights that there is a significant impact on a child's education and examination results if their attendance is not consistently high throughout their schooling. We would therefore ask that all parents/carers support our drive to give all of our students the best possible chance for their future by ensuring that their child attends school on time every day and by not taking leave of absences during term time (please see the updated attendance policy for clear guidelines on student absence).

Absences

If your child is ill, please contact the school office **by telephone on 01206 842 211 (selecting the option 1), leaving a message on the answer machine before 8.15am. Alternatively, you can send a message via e-mail (absence@gilberd.com).** You should contact us on each day of your child's absence. If you do not contact the school, the absence(s) will be recorded as **unauthorised**.

In the event of an unexpected and unexplained absence, the school will send an email to the first contact email address held by the school requesting confirmation that you are aware of the absence. In many cases, a simple reply to **absence@gilberd.com** will suffice but you may follow up the message with a telephone call to the school office if you wish.

Students who are suffering from mild ailments such as common colds should not be absent from school.

Parents/carers are responsible for the administration of medicines to their children. If you wish the school to administer medication to your child, the medicine must be supplied to Student Reception, together with a completed 'Parental Agreement to Administer Medicine' Form. This form is available from Student Reception. Students should not carry supplies of medication on them, these must be held by Student Reception. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to maintain a supply of medication to the school that is within the expiry date. Please note, the school holds a limited emergency supply of paracetamol for unexpected situations where administering a dose may help a student remain in school.

Leave of absence during the school day

Should your child need to leave school during the day for an appointment or any other reason, please inform the school (telephone/letter/email) and provide evidence. In all cases, where possible, there is an expectation that parents/carers make these appointments in holiday time, after school or at weekends.

In the interests of their safety, we do not allow students to leave during the school day without permission from a parent/carer and without the knowledge of a member of staff.



Arriving late for school/unauthorised lateness

If your child arrives at school any time after the close of morning registration, they must report to Student Reception to be signed in, explaining the reason why they are late. Late detentions will be issued on the day, unless there is an exceptional reason. Please note that persistent lateness will also be referred to the Attendance Officer.

General equipment list

Timetable

At The Gilberd School, we follow a ten day or two-week timetable i.e. Week A, Monday to Friday and Week B, Monday to Friday. It is important that students are correctly prepared for each day.

General equipment

Each day, students are expected to bring the books and equipment needed for their timetabled lessons. The timetable should be kept in the plastic A5 wallet issued in September.

The following is a basic list of essential equipment which students are expected to have with them at all times: a suitable school bag (large enough to take A4 folders and a range of books):

- student A5 plastic wallet (provided by the school)
- a pencil case containing black/blue/green pens
- pencils
- eraser
- 30cm ruler
- colouring pencils
- pencil sharpener

Your child may require in-ear headphones for specific, guided computer use but under the guidance of their Computer Studies teacher. It is also expected that students bring a reading book to school every day.

Mathematics

All students require geometric instruments (30cm ruler, 360° angle measurer, compasses) and a calculator of their own. The recommended calculator is the Casio fx-85GT CW. Mathematics equipment may be purchased at a reasonable price direct from the school in September.

Languages

A pocket German dictionary for Year 7 and a pocket (French or German) dictionary for Years 8-11. The dictionary recommended is the 'Oxford School Dictionary'. Highlighter pens are also required.

Art, Design and Technology

All students will need an HB pencil, colouring pencils, a 2B sketching pencil, eraser, pencil sharpener, and a black fine-liner pen.

Science

A set of colouring pencils, protractor, calculator Casio fx-85GT CW.

Dance

Indoor PE kit **or** a plain black t-shirt and plain black tracksuit bottoms. If students wear leggings, these must be Gilberd school logo leggings only (please refer to the School Uniform Policy).



Lockers

The provision of lockers is currently under review. Information will be communicated with parents/carers before the start of term.

Lost property

Students are responsible for personal items brought on to school premises and the school cannot accept liability for any loss; expensive phones or valuable articles are discouraged and are brought into school at students' own risk. Expensive items of designer brand clothing are not permitted under the Uniform Policy and may be confiscated.

No student should be carrying large sums of money in school.

All clothing and other personal possessions must be clearly marked with the student's name as a means of verification (including PE kits). This is the only way lost property can be returned to students. The school cannot be held responsible for lost items, it is the student's responsibility to keep track of their belongings.

Bikes/scooters

The school maintains a cycle shed on site. Students may choose to bring their bicycles/scooters on site and lock them securely in the cycle shed with their own locks and at their own risk. Although the school exercises general security for the area (the cycle shed remains locked between 9.00am and 3.15pm), the school takes no responsibility for items that may be damaged or stolen. Electric scooters are not permitted on site.

Mobile telephones/Smart devices

Mobile telephones may only be brought onto the school site to support students' safety to and from school. They must be switched off and out of sight once on school premises. They are brought into school at the students' own risk. Emergency use of a mobile phone is acceptable, but only when agreed and supervised by a member of staff in the Head of Year office or at Student Reception.

Students who use their mobile phones whilst on school premises will have the device confiscated by members of staff. Confiscated mobile phones will not be returned to the student but must be collected by a parent/carer after 3.30pm. Any subsequent offence may result in the student and parents/carers being required to meet with staff prior to the phone being returned. Please note that it may not be possible to arrange a meeting on the day of confiscation.

The general rule of which all Gilbertdians are aware is: **"If it's out or it's on - it's gone"**.

Please also be aware that data on electronic devices brought onto the school site may be searched by staff if there is reason to believe they are being used to breach the school's Student Code of Conduct.

Smart devices, such as watches, must not be worn during formal exams. It is advisable to leave these at home during these periods, as the school cannot accept responsibility for these getting lost, damaged or stolen.

All smart watches and devices must be placed into 'theatre' or 'flight' mode during the day to avoid disruption.



Cashless payment at The Gilberd School

We have an established system of cashless payment for our catering service and trips. This means that we no longer take cash payments but instead use a secure payment system (ParentPay) that is efficient and easy to use. This removes the need for students to carry money at school.

How it works

You will receive an activation letter which explains how to create an online account. Please note that without this letter you will not be able to activate your account. A link to ParentPay can be found on The Gilberd School website (www.gilberd.com) under the *parents menu – school catering* or directly at www.parentpay.com.

ParentPay is similar to most online shopping web pages except that you do not need to search for goods or services; any amounts that are due for payment will show on your homepage, with the exception of school meals which are automatically set up for all students. To make a payment for school meals, enter the amount you wish to pay (which must be between the minimum and maximum figures displayed) and click 'Add to Basket'.

For other payments (such as trips) the amount due will only appear on ParentPay if your child is eligible or has chosen to go on the trip. For more expensive trips, there are often instalment options which will be displayed when you click on 'Pay for Other Items' and select the trip. Once you have added your items to the basket, click on the basket icon in order to make payment. Please ensure that you use 'Other payment method' when making a card transaction.

Items such as school ties, locker keys and replacement school planners, can all be found within the Gilberd ParentPay shop. These items can be purchased online *without* needing to access your ParentPay account. The ParentPay shop can be found on <https://app.parentpay.com/ParentPayShop/Uniform/Default.aspx?shopid=8267> (this link can also be found on The Gilberd School website under 'parents'). Once purchased, items can be collected via Student Reception.

If you have any queries about ParentPay and/or the ParentPay shop, in the first instance please refer to the 'Help and Support' or 'Help and Guidance' sections on the ParentPay homepage. For all other queries, please contact the Finance Office finance@gilberd.com or by telephoning the school. On request, payments via **Paypoint** can be arranged through the Finance Office.

Free School Meals

Your child may be eligible for free school meals if you are in receipt of 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.
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are 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).

To apply for free school meals, please complete the online application form on the Essex County Council website (www.essex.gov.uk/free-school-meals).

Please note that if you do not receive one of the listed benefits above, your application will be refused. Please consider this before applying. You should make an application for Free School Meals from 1 August, selecting the school your child will be attending. Please do not apply earlier than this date. Your application will be processed within 15 working days, but it can take longer if you apply in September. Please ensure that you apply for Free School Meals in a timely manner or you will need to pay for any meals/food/drink items taken. The Free School Meal allowance is currently £2.61 per day. Any charges over this amount will need to be paid for.



Change of circumstances

If your child changes school or address, you will need to **reapply** for free school meals. The right to Free School Meals **does not** automatically transfer from primary to secondary schools.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

We, The Gilberd School, are the Data Controller for the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018). We collect information about your child from you and may receive information about your child from their previous school. We hold this personal data and use it to:

- Support your child's teaching and learning.
- Monitor and report on your child's progress.
- Provide appropriate pastoral care.
- Assess how well our school is doing.
- Comply with the law regarding data sharing.
- Safeguard pupils.

This information includes your contact details, your child's national curriculum assessment results, attendance information (for pupils of statutory school age) and personal characteristics such as your child's ethnic group, special educational needs and any relevant medical information. If your child is enrolling for Post 14 qualifications, we will be provided with a Unique Learner Number (ULN) by the Learning Records Service and may also obtain from them details of any learning or qualifications your child may have undertaken.

We will not give information about your child to anyone outside the school without your consent unless the law and our rules allow us to do so. We are required by law to pass some of the information to the Local Authority (LA) and the Department for Education (DfE). In some cases, your data will be outsourced to a third-party processor; however, this will only be done with your consent unless the law requires the school to share your data, e.g. Exam boards, NHS England, ParentPay.

You have the right to:

- Be informed about how The Gilberd School uses your personal data.
- Request access to the personal data that The Gilberd School holds (access will be given as soon as possible but can take longer when the school is closed for holidays).
- Request that your personal data is amended if it is inaccurate or incomplete.
- Request that your personal data is erased where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing.
- Request that the processing of your data is restricted.
- Object to your personal data being processed.

If you have a concern about the way The Gilberd School and/or the DfE is collecting or using your personal data, you can raise a concern with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO can be contacted on 0303 123 1113, Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm. Mrs Elliott oversees and monitors the school's data protection procedures, to ensure they are compliant with GDPR regulations and can be contacted on 01206 842 211 or on admin@gilberd.com

Where can you find out more information?

If you would like to find out more information about how we and/or the DfE collect, use and store your personal data, please visit our website (www.gilberd.com) to download our full GDPR Privacy Notice Policy.



Pastoral and academic grouping

All students are placed into a form group. These form groups are mixed ability groups with an equal split between boys and girls where possible.

To help with organisation, the whole year group is divided into two populations of equal ability (called X and Y populations). This means that students in Y population will have a different lesson to those in X population at any given time.

In September, Year 7 students will be placed in ability sets or bands for some subjects based on their Key Stage 2 SATs and their primary school teacher assessment grades in Mathematics and English. These sets are not fixed and will be reviewed throughout the year to ensure that students are in the group which enables them to progress.

Foundation subjects of Art, Dance, Drama, Music, Technology and Personal Development will predominantly remain in mixed ability groups for the whole year. Those students whose admission was gained by selective aptitude testing will be placed into a separate group for music.

Students are also placed into houses which are used for competition purposes. You will be informed of the house your child has been allocated prior to induction. PE socks are determined by house colours and a house badge is worn by all students.

The Curriculum at The Gilberd School

At The Gilberd School we offer a broad and balanced curriculum that goes beyond the fulfilment of statutory obligations. It has been carefully designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed for life in a 21st century, modern and diverse United Kingdom and interconnected world beyond. We have well-qualified, experienced and committed staff who work hard and are dedicated to achieving the highest standards for all children. The latest equipment and ICT tools are used to support a wide range of teaching and learning strategies to stretch and challenge students.

Our curriculum is ambitious, with an emphasis on the Core Subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, as well as Humanities. Students are also given the opportunity to study a Modern Foreign Language. In addition, a wide range of other subjects give students the option to tailor their educational pathway at GCSE level. Students' creativity is developed through a number of artistic and practical courses at Key Stage 3 and 4. Character development is central to the school's culture and ethos. A large range of competitive team sports and outdoor education (including a Combined Cadet Force and Duke of Edinburgh programme) coupled with a diverse programme of co-curricular activities and a hugely successful student leadership programme have been developed to compliment the curriculum and give each Gilberdian a sense of ambition, pride and self-confidence.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Citizenship and British values, and Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) are provided through our highly effective Personal Development programme. This is delivered by form tutors and, where necessary, by external providers.

Literacy is supported through reading, writing, oracy and numeracy. A number of interventions are in place to swiftly identify students who need additional support with all strands and apply this promptly. Interventions are backed up with frequent opportunities for extra-curricular activities and competitions covering Maths, English and the art of public speaking and debate. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) is heavily promoted at The Gilberd School, with all students at KS3 studying Computing and Technology.

Resilience is encouraged in lessons, with students expected to respond to their assessed work by making improvements as directed by their teacher, their peers or from self-assessment. They are also encouraged to problem solve, think independently, and learn from mistakes and misconceptions whilst supporting the learning of others. Our



students are encouraged to show the highest level of commitment and ambition and as such, challenging, aspirational academic targets are set for all students to support this.

Within the classroom, there is a culture of ambition and resilience. Students are encouraged to act with integrity and to work collaboratively with others whose experiences and situations may differ to their own, in order to broaden the understanding of all students. British values of tolerance and respect for diversity is threaded throughout our curriculum and classroom practice.

Our curriculum is reviewed annually to ensure that it meets the needs of all our students (regardless of their academic starting points) and remains relevant in an ever-changing world.

The creation of a climate of success and a positive learning environment is at the heart of our culture. We seek opportunities to celebrate student achievement and create a sense of pride in our students' learning and co-curricular achievements. This gives a feeling of well-being and confidence which we hope extends well beyond our students' time at school.

Homework

We believe that homework supports the work carried out in class and helps to develop good study habits and self-discipline. We provide a club where students can complete homework after school in the library. Homework is set via the online platform Go4Schools. Parents/carers and students will receive activation details for their Go4Schools account in September.

Assessment

All students are encouraged to aim for the highest possible examination grade success. Regular assessments help our students to realise their potential. Parents receive reports which are designed to provide a snapshot of a student's progress. In addition, they receive a short written report from their form tutor once a year. Each year group also has a parents' consultation evening. Parents are welcome to make additional appointments to talk to staff at any time.

Careers education

Through Personal Development, students follow a programme of CEIAG—Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance. We hold formal mock interviews for Year 10 students. These help them with their work experience and college applications. All students also experience meaningful encounters with the world of work. This includes 'Future Friday' sessions hosted by various employers/professionals.

Sport and Physical Education

Students at The Gilberd School have the opportunity to experience an extremely wide range of physical activities from competitive team sports such as netball, football, basketball and rugby to individual activities such as mountain biking, table tennis and fitness training over two hours of PE each week. Students can also take part in the Gilberd Sports Leader Award. Participation and effort are two key elements of PE at The Gilberd School. Our sporting success owes much to the vast range of free extra-curricular activities which are a feature of school life that all students are encouraged to become a part of.

We have excellent sporting facilities, including three large sports halls, an extensive playing field, tennis courts, a floodlit multi-use games area and a fitness suite. We are fortunate to also have a climbing wall facility.



The Arts

The Arts curriculum at The Gilberd School is broad, allowing all students the opportunity of acquiring high levels of skill and self-expression. All students in Key Stage 3 follow courses in Dance, Drama, Music and Art. Numerous extra-curricular activities allow students to enrich the life of the school and contribute to the local community. We have purpose built dance studios and a theatre for the teaching of Dance and Drama, an investment to recognise the importance of the arts in the life of the school. A wide range of experiences are provided including theatre trips, visits from theatre groups, performances, ensemble groups, choirs, orchestra, bi-annual concerts and school productions.

Religious Education

All students study Religious Education. The Religious Education course will include moral issues as well as a study of different faiths. Parents have a right to withdraw their children from this subject and supervise them for that lesson, after consultation with the Headteacher.

Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)

Relationships, Sex and Health Education is delivered as part of the PSHE programme within our Personal Development lessons and within RE and Science lessons at KS3 and KS4. The Science lessons are more concerned with the physical aspects of development and reproduction. The importance of healthy relationships are central to our provision. Students are also taught about the safe use of computer technology in Computing lessons, as well as through assemblies.

Where appropriate, visitors such as the school nurse or other outside providers may be involved in the delivery of RSHE. A more detailed breakdown of the delivery of RSHE can be found in the appendix of the Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy, which is available on the school's website.



Music tuition at The Gilberd School

Instrumental tuition

For students interested in learning to play an instrument or being taught to sing, or for those who have had lessons in primary school and wish to continue at The Gilberd School, tuition can be arranged. Please sign up with our external music tuition provider Essex Music Services by registering on their website:
<https://ukessex.speedadmin.dk/registration#/>

There are weekly lessons for voice, piano, keyboard, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, drums, violin, viola, woodwind (flute, clarinet, oboe, saxophone) and brass (trumpet, trombone, horn, tuba). The school owns a wide variety of instruments which can be loaned to students taking up lessons at no cost (with the exception of guitar, piano and/or drums). If you are interested in borrowing one of our available instruments, please email musiclessons@gilberd.com where we can arrange a temporary loan. We strongly encourage students to buy or hire their own instruments. Essex Music Services offer instrumental hire schemes.

Tuition

The tuition is organised into individual sessions of 15 or 30 minutes per week with our peripatetic instrumental tutors. The lessons will be on rotational times within the hours of 8.30am - 4.00pm.

Practice

Regular and frequent practice is vital to the achievement of a satisfactory level of proficiency for any instrument. The school has various ensemble groups and choirs which are an invaluable aid to personal musical development as well as providing great enjoyment. It is expected that students who receive tuition, or are admitted via our selective aptitude tests, will participate in one of these activities.

Fees and payment

Lessons are 15 or 30 minutes long and are charged at £97.50 or £195.00 per term respectively. *Please note this is the cost at the time of printing.* There are 10 lessons per term.

Essex Music Services will send you an invoice for each term. Please be aware that both you and the school enter into a financial commitment and employs the peripatetic tutors a term in advance for the forthcoming term. Should your child be offered a place, you will be liable for the full tuition fee. If your child wishes to stop instrumental lessons during a term, you will not be entitled to a refund of any fees paid. Lessons missed due to school exams, illness or a trip, cannot be made up as a matter of course. However, we will try to reschedule lessons wherever possible, provided enough notice is given. If you wish to make a change to your lessons or stop lessons, please contact Essex Music Services directly and inform the peripatetic tutor.

Instrumental tuition places are limited, so it is advisable to get your request in early. Students who cannot be placed immediately will be put on to a waiting list and will be contacted about lessons once a place becomes available.

Please make your online application for music tuition by **Friday 19th June 2026**.



The Gilberd School uses Go4Schools to share important information with parents/carers and students throughout the year.

The Go4Schools platform gives parents/carers access to:

- timetables
- attendance data
- positive reward points/behaviour record
- homework details
- reports

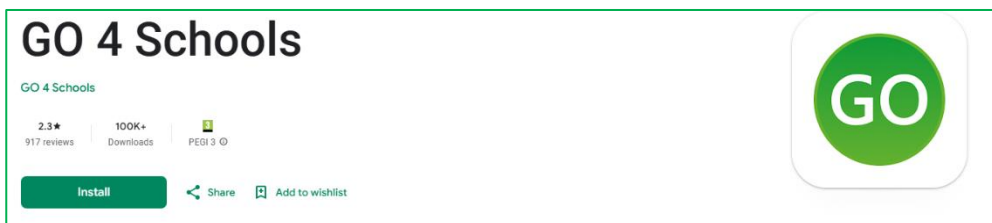
Go4 Schools can be used through a web browser or App; however, the web browser version offers more detailed functionality and a fuller range of features.

Who can use the App?

Parents/carers who have children at schools with active Go4Schools subscriptions that include the App. All parents/carers have access to GO4Schools as long as we have an up-to-date email address.

How to get the App

The app is free to download from the app store and is compatible with both Android and Apple systems.



For more information, please visit <https://www.go4schools.com/mobileappparentguide>



The Gilbert School

ENGAGE, ENDEAVOUR, EXCEL.

IMPLICICO, CONATUS, EXCELLIERE