

Head of School

Friday 5th July 2024

UPDATE

Dear parents/carers and students,

I cannot believe we are already over halfway through our final term of 2023-24.

Over the last few weeks, students have been gripped by 'election fever' as we held a Trust-wide mock General Election to coincide with the actual General Election on 4th July 2024. As part of our PSHE programme, we hold a Parliament Week in November to provide practical understanding of British democracy. This General Election therefore provided the perfect opportunity for students to get a taste of what it is like to vote as many students will be able to vote next time there is a General Election in five years' time.

Just like how the real elections work, we split each school in the Trust and each year group into separate constituencies with 17 areas up for grabs. We gave the opportunity for students to choose to vote from six political parties, which were represented by 19 exceptional students from the SLAT Sixth Form at Bourne Academy to provide a test of their debating and presentation skills. The Sixth Formers were split across the different parties and travelled to all four schools in the Trust to take part in 17 live hustings that were held in front of each year group where they could campaign on various issues and manifesto pledges.

The topics of 'national service for 18-year olds' and 'allowing over 16s to vote' sparked lively discussions among the students and they were keen to find out the financial and green credentials for each party. This encouraged students to discuss the issues that mattered to them and our society. As well as the campaigning done by our Sixth Formers, students cited that that had taken notice of political information from other sources such as social media, YouTube, TikTok, mainstream media, leaflets in the post as well as conversation within their social groups.

It was encouraging to see that students across all years and in all schools had voted for all of the political parties on offer. The overall majority across the Trust was for Reform UK with the Green Party coming a close second place. It was interesting the three main political parties were not the most popular choices amongst under 16s and it shows that these parties have work to do if they want to engage with future young voters.



It has been immensely rewarding to see how students have engaged in the political process by discussing key political issues to helping them understand the complexities and responsibilities that come with participating in a democratic society. The mock election has been invaluable in teaching students about the importance of voting, the electoral process, and the role of political parties in shaping the future of our country. By taking part in the voting process they will be better prepared and informed when it comes to put an X in the box for the very first time.

We would like to especially thank the Sixth Form students who campaigned so admirably and in good spirit over the last few weeks. We may even have encouraged some future political leaders – who knows?

Today we have held our annual Sports Day and what a spectacular event it was. Students were seated in House teams eager to cheer on their fellow House members. All year groups from Years 7 to 10 participated as we continued with our Giles Academy tradition of the tug of war event and other track events. Today highlighted fantastic student conduct, inclusivity and community as our Giles family positively encouraged all participants to finish their race regardless of ability – it definitely is one of my favourite days of the year!

All students have had their year group assemblies this week. At each AOL data point, we reward the students who have excelled themselves in their progress and attitude to learning (ATL). These students are placed in our Super Prize Draw which allows them to win gift vouchers. We also reminded students about being kind towards each other in the school community in our anti bullying themed assembly.



Next week I am really looking forward to Giles Academy's third House Celebration event, on Tuesday evening for students who have excelled across the academic year in their house teams.

And finally, we have informed students this week about the Film Festival event we are holding in the last week of term. The students were informed that they all have access to this reward in school. We felt this was a really important message to give, as our students have worked very hard throughout this academic year. However, we did reinforce that any behaviour which is not acceptable during the last two weeks, will result in them missing out on the treat.

As we approach the final stages of the academic year, we will be reminding students of our expectations ready for the September start.

I hope you have a lovely weekend.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie Belcher', written in a cursive style.

Miss Katie Belcher

Head of School, Giles Academy

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- www.facebook.com/GilesAcademy
- www.twitter.com/GilesSLAT