



# Information Pack

2025 - 2026



# Welcome to Gibside

Welcome to Gibside School

It is a privilege to be the headteacher at Gibside School. Our amazing children and dedicated staff team make Gibside School a truly wonderful place to be. We pride ourselves on creating a nurturing environment where all children feel safe and are well cared for. We have high ambitions for all our children. The staff work extremely hard to provide the best education and pastoral care.

We work in close partnership with our families; joining Gibside School is like becoming part of a large extended family. We offer support and advice when needed and a friendly and welcoming place to meet other parents and carers.

Please get in touch or visit the school website if you would like to know more about our school and what we offer. I look forward to welcoming you to one of our special events very soon.



*Angela Whistler*  
Headteacher



# Our Ethos

- Gibside is an inclusive, happy and nurturing environment with education, equality and understanding at the heart of everything we do.
- Our aim is to provide the highest quality learning opportunities through available resources including hydrotherapy pool, immersive room, food technology, sensory, iMuse and soft play rooms. These spaces provide extended provision for our children, families and our local community.
- At Gibside School everyone is respected and valued for their contribution – pupils, staff, parents/carers and multidisciplinary teams alike.
- As most of our pupils experience communication difficulties, we have an ethos where all forms of communication are valued equally e.g. objects of reference, signing, use of symbols and photographs etc.



# Safeguarding

At Gibside School, we all have a duty of care to our pupils to keep them safe from harm and abuse. Our approach to safeguarding is child-centred where pupils' best interests, welfare and safety are considered at all times.

Everyone in the school has a safeguarding role. All staff, volunteers and governors receive full annual safeguarding training and regular updates throughout the year. Everyone at Gibside School is vigilant to any signs of abuse and maltreatment of pupils and follow the reporting procedures specified in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Our fully trained Safeguarding Team, led by Andrea Timmins (Designated Safeguarding Lead) deal with any reports and concerns, provide training, support and guidance and work in partnership with a range of agencies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all our pupils.



Our core Safeguarding team are also supported by a team of trained deputy safeguarding officers

Andrea Timmins  
DSL

Angela Whistler  
Deputy DSL

Lynsey Lockey  
Deputy DSL

Christine Wood  
Deputy DSL

# Family Support Team

- Provide information about school matters relating to your child
- Help ensure your child has full access to educational opportunities and achieves the most from their time at Gibside School
- Provide information about holiday clubs
- Provide information and signpost parents/carers to local services and activities
- Assist in form filling and benefit advice
- Provide groups, courses and training for parents and family members
- Provide support for you before, during and after meetings e.g. annual reviews or Child in Need meetings
- Friendly non-judgemental advice and support
- An open-door policy
- A chance to talk through any problems or concerns
- Liaison with other service providers and members of staff at Gibside School
- Opportunities to meet other parents/carers on a regular basis
- Support groups
- Work as part of our Safeguarding Team and are committed to the wellbeing and safety of all pupils and their families

*Lynsey Lockey*  
Family Support  
Worker



*Amy Young*  
Family Support  
Worker



*Christine Wood*  
Health Support  
Worker



# Communication between Home and School



- Arbor is our main communication system used in school
- New parents will be sent a link to download the parent portal/ access the app
- All school wide communication is sent from Arbor using email, app messaging or via an SMS
- Parents also pay for school meals, trips and snack/cookery contributions via Arbor
- School meals are currently free to all children in KS1 and cost £3 per day for KS2 children



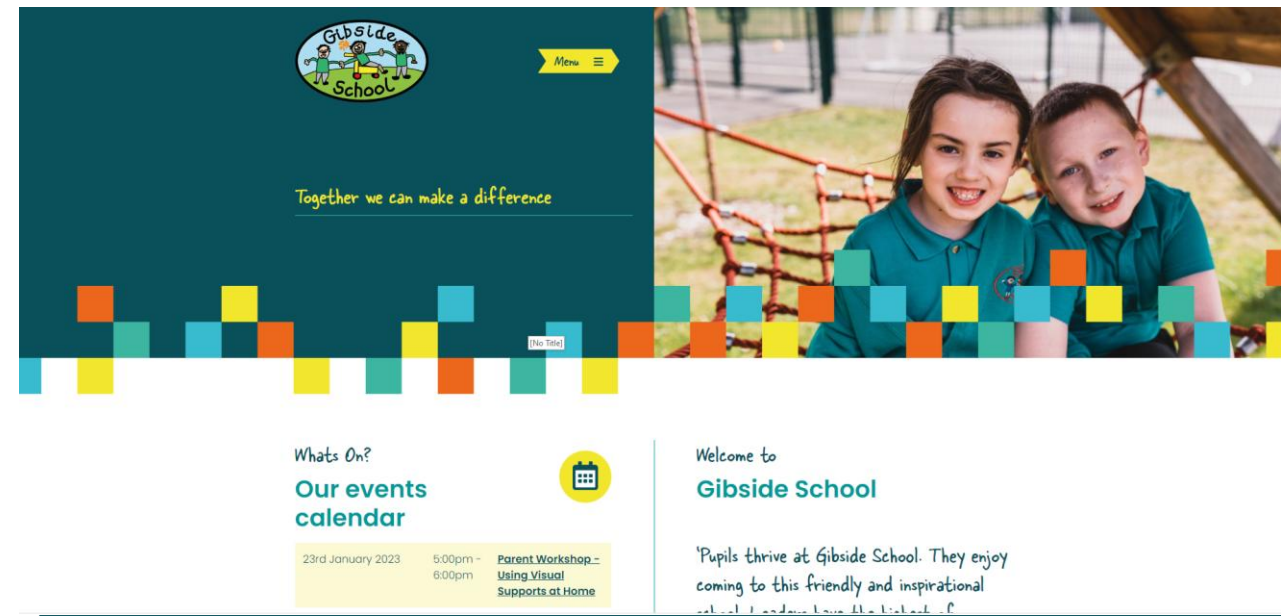
- The My Ed app is used for daily communication between school and home
- Parents can use this to communicate directly with the class team
- Families will receive updates on all of the exciting activities that have been taking place in class

*If you have any questions about either of these systems please phone the school office on 01914336900 or email [admin@gibsidesschool.uk](mailto:admin@gibsidesschool.uk)*

# Website

[www.gibsidesschool.org](http://www.gibsidesschool.org)

- We have a dedicated website for our school which we encourage all parents and carers to access.
- You'll find information about our classes and curriculum, policies, term dates, useful links, copies of parents letters and previous newsletters.
- There is a link to our school Facebook page from the website.
- If you are unable to access any of our policies online and would prefer a printed copy please contact the school office.



# Uniform

We have a school uniform of polo shirt and sweatshirt that carry the school logo.

These give our pupils a sense of belonging and we encourage all children to wear them. We also have school coats, bags and PE kit available to order through our supplier.

The link to our supplier can be found on our school website and at:

<https://www.studentuniform.co.uk/gibsi092/>



# School Dinner

Our friendly kitchen team cook our school dinners on site each day. All children are encouraged to eat school dinner although they can bring packed lunch if required. Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 get free school meals through the government's nationwide scheme. From Year 3 onwards, parents are required to make payment for school dinners unless entitled to free school meals.

Please contact the school office to find out if you are eligible for free school meals. Often pupils who are entitled to free school meals also qualify for additional funding that we can use to provide exciting opportunities such as horse riding or additional classroom resources.



# Therapies

## Hydrotherapy

Our state of the art Hydrotherapy pool supports our children in a variety of different ways.

- We follow the 'Halliwick' concept to develop children's water confidence and early swimming skills in a therapeutic way.
- Children are encouraged to develop their communication through the use of symbols.
- It is an opportunity for some children to work on their physiotherapy targets as the warm water helps them to relax and improve muscle tone.
- When children are ready for more formal swimming lessons they access Gateshead Leisure Centre. This is just across the road from school and swimming is taught by qualified swimming teachers.



# Therapies

## Rebound therapy

Rebound therapy is the therapeutic use of a trampoline to develop and promote motor skills, body awareness, balance, co-ordination and communication.

Rebound Therapy uses vibration techniques to engage children and access their sensory needs. Rebound Therapy is fun and it can be an extremely effective motivator for individuals who seek movement, love energising their bodies and interacting with a surface that they are able to control and understand.

Through Rebound Therapy we can continue to enhance strategies that have been proven successful in the management of people with Autism including, Intensive Interaction, Total Communication Approaches, PECS, TEACCH, Social Cause and Effect and Reciprocity whilst on the trampoline.

Many of our staff have had specialist training to lead Rebound therapy and it is integrated across school.



# Therapies

## Makaton

Makaton uses signs, symbols and speech to help children and adults communicate. It is designed to support spoken language, and the signs and symbols are used with speech in spoken word order. Today, over 100,000 children and adults use Makaton symbols and signs, either as their main method of communication or as a way to support speech.

In school we use Makaton to support communication, it does not replace the spoken word and it is one of many communication support systems we use.



*Sue House*

Makaton Lead  
Regional Trainer

Sue leads all of our dedicated Makaton lessons and sessions



# Therapies

## Climbing

The climbing wall gives our pupils opportunities to develop hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, gross motor skills and also core strength and muscle tone.

It provides opportunities for pupils to challenge themselves and their peers and provides a fun environment where pupils learn key skills such as listening to and following instructions, becoming used to routines and perseverance.



# Therapies

## Speech and Language Therapy

Speech and Language Therapy at Gibside takes many different forms. Some children receive specialist one to one or group therapy sessions in the dedicated therapy room. Rachel also provides classroom support to children and staff to implement environmental strategies to maximise communication.

Training in a range of different communication strategies is also offered regularly to all staff.



**Rachel Gradon**  
Speech and Language Therapist



# Therapies

## Visiting Therapists and Professionals

We have a range of therapists and multi disciplinary teams who regularly visit school including:

- NHS pediatric Physiotherapists
- NHS Occupational therapists
- CYPs (children and young people service)
- Music therapist
- Children's Community Nursing Team
- Pediatric Consultants from both the QE Hospital and RVI
- NHS Specialist Eyecare service
- RVI Ophthalmology team
- Specialist Feeding clinic
- Specialist nurses
- Bladder and Bowel clinic



# Specialist Rooms

## Immersive Room

This amazing interactive space comes to life when the children step inside! Interactive images, sounds and smells envelope the pupils to stimulate all of their senses and the floor, ceiling and walls bring to life what the children are learning about.

We have created a range of immersive experiences linked to the stories and topics we learn about in our curriculum. The immersive room increases awareness and understanding of cause and effect and provides pupils with fun and exciting learning opportunities.



# Specialist Rooms

## Soft Play

We have two soft play rooms which provide space to engage pupils in learning in a creative way.

We work beyond developing social interaction within these spaces and incorporate key objectives from across the curriculum. We develop interaction skills from listening to instructions, following positional language and communicating with peers. The rooms also provides many opportunities for maths and topic learning too and is obviously a fun and popular learning environment for all of our pupils to access.



# Specialist Rooms

## Sensory

In our sensory room, children have an opportunity to develop regulation strategies in a calming and soothing environment.

The room is used as a learning environment to enable children to learn about cause and effect, controlling many elements of interactive equipment. It provides a motivating space to develop peer relationships; engaging, sharing and communicating about experiences and is a fun and exciting place to explore. Classes across school access the sensory room for individual and small group work.



# Outdoor Learning

## Our outdoor environment

We are fortunate to have an extensive outdoor learning environment with dedicated spaces for Early Years, KS1 and KS2 pupils, and a sensory water play area. Each class also has their own outdoor learning area with access from the classroom. We are developing a Forest School area and also have a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), bike track and an outdoor gym. Outdoor Learning is an integral part of our curriculum and children's experience.



# Educational Visits

Educational visits are an integral part of the Gibside School curriculum and offer a multitude of benefits for pupils of all abilities. Educational visits provide our pupils with real-life experiences and help them develop the necessary skills to enable them to lead an independent or semi-independent life in adulthood. At Gibside our children have opportunities to visit parks, shops, museums, churches and other venues to support all areas of the curriculum. In Year 6, children have the opportunity to take part in a three-day residential helping to nurture their own life skills.



# Extra Curricular Activities

The children at Gibside have opportunities to take part in wide ranging extra curricular activities such as horse riding, rock climbing and surfing. We encourage our children to try new activities as it develops so many important skills and confidence, from fine and gross motor skills, balance, co-ordination and a multitude of others. We regularly have sports coaches in school to support sessions of karate, fencing, basketball and rugby.



# Medication in School

If your child requires medication to be administered during the school day please talk to Christine Wood our Health Support Worker. You will need to complete a consent form giving permission for school staff to administer the medication as well as information regarding dosage, timings and possible side effects etc.

Children who have emergency medication such as an Epi pen or epilepsy rescue medication will require a health care plan, again Christine is able to work with parents and professionals to have this set up and to organise specialist training for staff members

Some children require a lot of nursing care during the school day. We are able to manage this effectively and we work with multi-agency professionals to arrange staff training and awareness



**Christine Wood**  
Health Support Worker



# What if my child is ill?

It is inevitable that your child will become ill at some point during their schooling. If they are too unwell and can't come to school please notify school of their absence by phoning the school absence number or messaging via the parent app. Parents and carers must notify school of a child's absence before 9:00 each day. We have a duty of care to ensure the safety of all pupils so if school does not receive notification from parents and carers someone from the safeguarding team will complete a child welfare phonecall, in some instances they may also need to make a visit to the child's home.

If your child experiences sickness and diarrhea they will need to remain at home for 48 hours after the last episode.

If your child has been admitted to hospital or had a procedure under general anaesthetic they must remain at home the day after their discharge for monitoring by parents and carers.



# How to Support Us

## Friends Of Gibside School

FOGS

We have a successful parent group, supported by friends and some members of school staff who lead our fundraising activities. They organise our Christmas and Summer Fayres and the money they raise is spent across school to provide all pupils with an enriched education during their time at Gibside School.

If you would like to be involved with FOGS please contact the school office to ask for further information.

