

Wednesday 2nd September

Welcome Back to Gulval School

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to another school year at Gulval! There is something wonderfully exciting about the beginning of a new school year. New classrooms, new faces, new friendships, new challenges and a whole year of adventures waiting to unfold. We are incredibly excited about what lies ahead and about seeing our children grow, learn, discover and shine.

I believe that school is about the journey, not simply the destination. Learning isn't about getting everything right first time. It is about having a go, being curious, taking risks, getting things wrong, trying again and discovering what we are capable of. Sometimes things will go brilliantly and sometimes they won't. That is part of learning. Our curriculum is deliberately built around experiences. We want children to encounter things that challenge them, excite them, sometimes frustrate them and occasionally push them beyond what they thought they could do. We want them to discover that hard does not mean impossible, that mistakes are part of the learning process and that one difficult day does not define us. The most important lessons aren't always the easiest ones. There are some things we can teach children through words. We can explain kindness, responsibility, perseverance and respect. We can tell children that mistakes are part of learning and that they should never be afraid to ask for help. But some of the most important things children need to learn can only really be learnt through experience.

Patience comes from
sometimes having to wait.

Problem-solving comes from
having the opportunity to work
something out.

Perseverance comes from
sticking with something when it
feels difficult.

Responsibility comes from
having genuine responsibility.

Confidence comes from doing
something hard and
discovering, "I can do this."

Resilience comes from
experiencing disappointment,
recovering from it and realising
that difficult feelings don't last
forever.

And this is where we really value the partnership between school and home.

We don't want to remove every bump from the road. We want to teach children how to navigate it. Sometimes that means allowing them to experience a little frustration rather than immediately removing it. Sometimes it means allowing them to solve a friendship problem themselves, letting a natural consequence happen or resisting the temptation to make something easier because we know they are finding it difficult.

We know that can be hard. When our children struggle, our instinct is often to protect them. That instinct comes from love. But protecting children from every difficulty can unintentionally deprive them of the opportunity to discover that they can cope. Our role is not to leave children to struggle alone. We stand alongside them, listening, encouraging and supporting when help is genuinely needed. But we also believe in their capacity to work things out, recover, repair, try again and grow.

There is a big difference between letting a child struggle and supporting them through struggle. I believe passionately in the latter. And this isn't just about learning in the classroom. Life doesn't always feel comfortable. There will be difficult days, friendship problems, disappointments, frustrations, worries and moments when things don't go as we hoped. Children will sometimes feel angry, sad, anxious, left out or simply fed up. Not every difficult feeling needs to be fixed. Sometimes it needs to be understood. Sometimes it needs a little time. Sometimes it needs a trusted adult alongside them. And sometimes it needs action. I want to help our children to learn the difference. The same is true of behaviour and relationships. We are all human beings, and human beings make mistakes. Children will make mistakes. Adults will make mistakes too. What matters most is always what happens next.

ADVENTURES



Our expectations are high and our boundaries are clear because children need to know what is expected of them. But when things do go wrong, we don't see that as the end of the story. We talk, listen, repair and reflect so that we can learn - and we move forward. Our approach to behaviour is rooted in relationships, respect and learning. A mistake or a poor choice does not define a child. Instead, it gives us an opportunity to help them understand, take responsibility, put things right and learn for next time. At the heart of all of this is kindness.

Gulval is an amazing community, and every person in our community matters. Relationships matter. The way we speak to each other matters. The way we respond when someone gets something wrong matters. We want our children to notice one another, include one another, look after one another and have the courage to stand up for what is right. This is at the very heart of our school vision: **We believe, we matter; we can shine.**

We Believe	We Matter	We Can Shine
We believe in ourselves, in one another and in what is possible, even when something feels difficult.	Every child is known, valued, respected and has an important place within our community.	When children know they matter and believe in themselves, they can discover their strengths, overcome challenges and become their best selves.

There will be times this year when your child comes home having had a fantastic day. There will also be times when they come home disappointed, cross, worried or upset. Perhaps they have struggled with work, had a friendship problem, been reminded about a rule, made a mistake or simply had a difficult day. When those moments happen, perhaps our shared response can be wonderfully simple:

"I know that was hard. I'm here with you. I believe you can get through it. What can we learn from it?"

It is difficult, but I believe we don't need to solve every problem for our children. Sometimes the greatest gift we can give them is the confidence to face problems themselves, knowing that the adults around them believe in them. We don't build confidence simply by telling children they can do something. We build it by giving them the opportunity to do something difficult and allowing them to discover for themselves that they can. That, to me, is adventure. Adventure isn't knowing exactly what will happen; it is stepping forward with enough confidence to find out.

So, as we begin another school year full of 'adventure', let's embrace the successes and setbacks, the laughter and frustrations, and the moments when things go perfectly and when they don't. Let's give our children permission to make mistakes, confidence to try again, resilience to sit with difficulty and kindness to take others with them. Let's not aim for a perfect school year. Let's aim for a year in which our children experience, learn, grow and discover what they are capable of. We are hugely excited about the year ahead and feel incredibly fortunate to be part of such a special community. Here's to another year of learning, friendship, adventure and growth.

I have loved seeing everyone back in school today, so much excitement and happiness to enjoy.

Thank you for your continued support and best wishes to you all 😊.



Mr P Baker
Headteacher

