

Remembering John Gilbert:

A True Force for Positive Change



The community of Enfield, along with countless pupils, colleagues, families, and friends,

mourn the loss of John Gilbert—a remarkable teacher, colleague, father, grandfather, and tireless advocate for young voices. Though he has passed, his legacy shines more brightly than ever.

John Gilbert was more than an educator—he was an experience. A vibrant, passionate presence, he could transform the quietest classroom into a place of possibility, purpose, and joy. Known for his booming enthusiasm, infectious energy, and his trademark colourful bow ties, he left an indelible mark on every school he served. He inspired generations to speak up, stand tall, and know that their voices mattered.

A lifelong lover of newspapers, John believed deeply in the power of free expression. He encouraged pupils to “Find the colour in your voice” and to stand by their beliefs. For him, the printed page was more than ink on paper—it was a tool for empowerment. Across Enfield, he ran newspaper clubs

in most schools, championing student journalism and inspiring young people to question, challenge, and communicate with honesty and courage.

Those who knew John remember the warmth of his presence. He valued connection—always making eye contact, always ensuring that everyone felt seen, heard, and important. Whether addressing a class of thirty or comforting a single nervous student, John gave his full heart.

Beyond the classroom, John was a devoted father and grandfather, whose pride in his family was matched only by their pride in him. To friends and colleagues, he was a constant source of support: kind, humorous, and endlessly generous with his time and spirit.

John never hesitated to step beyond his comfort zone for causes he believed in. He famously spent a night outdoors to raise awareness for homelessness, and he brought laughter to children as a



penguin-masked reader at Enfield Heights Academy.

John's playful spirit and love of fun made learning an adventure.

John also held a deep love for the natural world. His much-loved phrase, "Holding Mother Nature's hand," reflected his commitment to care, stewardship, and connectedness. With the children at Enfield Heights Academy, he transformed a concrete area into Flight Path a flourishing meadow now home to plants, flowers, and insects—a lasting testament to his vision.



To many, John was more than a teacher—he was a mentor, a guide, a friend, a hero. His optimism, bold spirit, and unwavering belief in the potential of others made him a true legend in education and a powerful force for positive change.

His impact cannot be measured in lessons alone, but in lives touched, confidence nurtured, and voices discovered.

Justyna Powrie, Headteacher of Enfield Heights Academy added: 'I have so many fond memories of John; many weird and wonderful ones. I shall always miss his newspaper sessions - the joy he had when reading newspapers with our children. I will always remember his incredibly firm handshake and looking me straight into my eyes saying few words in Polish; John loved practising his already excellent Polish with me.'

Mrs Powrie also tearfully added: 'I am forever grateful to him for inspiring our Flight Path and EHA meadow. I shall 'hold mother Nature's hand' as a memory to his great teaching and love for better world for everyone.'

John Gilbert will be profoundly missed - but never forgotten. His work lives on in every young person who dares to speak up, every teacher inspired to go further, and every community strengthened by kindness.

Our hero. Our legend. Our force for positive change.

May we honour him not with silence, but with the courage, colour, and compassion he taught us to carry in our hearts.

Rest in power, John Gilbert. You will be dearly missed...

Written and Edited by Miss Michael and the children of Enfield Heights Academy.