

Friday 29 April 2022

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**EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL
ANNOUNCES DIVERSE & DYNAMIC FREE SCHOOLS
PROGRAMME FOR 2022**

The Edinburgh International Book Festival today announced a free and fully hybrid line up of events for primary and secondary school pupils this summer. The Baillie Gifford Schools Programme runs from 22 – 30 August and comprises a diverse mix of daily talks, readings and interactive sessions curated for pupils in P1 – S6. Those unable to attend in person can access the full programme online and free learning resources accompany each event. To top it off, every child who attends an event will receive a free book thanks to Lead Sponsor Baillie Gifford, and the hugely popular Baillie Gifford Gala Day rounds things off with a special climate change edition.

For the first time since the pandemic every author and chair will take to the stage in person at the festival's current home at the University of Edinburgh's College of Art. After two years of limited access to live events, the Book Festival is excited to welcome pupils and authors back with a programme that reflects the increasingly diverse, complex and occasionally comic world we live in. With events catering to those with learning disabilities, as well as a to schools and pupils forced to engage remotely, accessibility has again been kept front of mind.

Rachel Fox, Children & Schools Programme Director at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, said: "We are over the moon to be bringing a fully live line-up of events back to the Edinburgh International Book Festival this August, while also making sure we facilitate access for those who are unable to attend in person. Live events are so important when it comes to inspiring, engaging and supporting our young people which is why we couldn't be happier with our line-up and the wide range of themes and topics tackled by some of the very best from the world of children and young adult writing."

Every weekday morning from Monday 22 to Monday 29 August the Book Festival presents a series of 45-minute events covering a diverse and dynamic range of topics; from super-secret missions led by Blue Peter Award-winning author Pamela Butchart, to an event exploring class, the justice system and...knitting (!) from two megastars of Young Adult literature, there is something for all ages. New York Times bestselling author Jason Reynolds introduces his heartfelt urban coming-of-age novel, *When I Was the Greatest* as he's joined on stage by award-winning writer Patrice Lawrence whose latest teen drama *Needle* sheds a light on the criminal justice system for young people (S2 – S6). International poetry sensation Nikita Gill presents her essential and empowering YA collection *These Are the Words* as she shares all the hard-won wisdom, advice, and validation you need to heal from your first breakup; get through conversations with racist relatives; celebrate true friendship; express your anger and joy; understand the pressures of society; and help you break a few rules to be your true self (S1 – S6).

Also tackling some tough topics, Dean Atta (named one of the most influential LGBT people in the UK by the Independent on Sunday) jumps headfirst into his must-read queer love story, *Only on the Weekends* at an event tackling themes of gender, identity, race, sexuality and growing up (S1 – S6) and award-winning podcaster and author Alexis Caught talks about his debut book *Queer Up: An Uplifting Guide to LGBTQ+ Love, Life and Mental Health* at an event perfect for young people who are queer or questioning – and their allies looking to better support them (S3 – S6).

On 30 August Baillie Gifford Gala Day presents seven 45-minute events for Primary pupils hosted by a range of award-winning novelists, writers and illustrators. Dedicated to pupils from P1 – P7 and themed around climate change, onsite excitement this year includes festival team members, as well as pupils, dressed as their favourite animal; a chance to get up close and personal with some real-life critters and creepy crawlies; protest placard making sessions using recycled materials; and an Eco Marketplace where schools and pupils can chat to organisations fighting to protect our planet and find out how they can help.

Climate change, conservation and the environment remain centre stage as author Polly Ho-Yen explores her beautiful and mesmerising story *The Boy Who Grew a Tree*, which follows nature-loving Timi on his quest to save the magic tree growing in his soon-to-be-closed local library (P1 – P3) and Kelpies Prize-winner Lindsay Littleton's talks rewilding in Scotland at

an event that delves deep into her latest action packed environmental adventure *The Rewilders* (P4 – P7).

Aspiring writers and creators need look no further than an interactive session from the brains behind Beano, the world's longest running comic. Craig Graham and Mike Stirling share the secrets behind characters such as Dennis the Menace and the Bash Street Kids before helping pupils create their own brilliantly funny story as they experience the creative process live (P2 – P4).

Michelle McLeod, Sponsorship Manager at Baillie Gifford, said: "The Schools Programme is a brilliant way to engage young people in books and develop their love for reading. The festival team have worked incredibly hard to develop a wholly hybrid programme this year, making it easy for any primary or secondary school to take part, whether they attend in person or join online. The collaborative approach to our sponsorship allows us to support the festival's ambitions, helping to remove barriers for schools and pupils so they can fully enjoy the magic that the festival brings".

The Edinburgh International Book Festival's Baillie Gifford Schools Programme runs from Monday 22 August – Tuesday 30 August and all events will take place in person, as well as being made accessible online, both live and on catch up. Support towards travel costs for schools attending in person continues to be available through the Baillie Gifford Transport Fund. Registration is open from Tuesday 3 May but full details of the Baillie Gifford Schools Programme, and guidance for registration and booking for teachers can be found online now at learning.edbookfest.co.uk.

The Edinburgh International Book Festival public programme runs from Saturday 13 – 29 August 2022. Audiences can enjoy live events in person, or online, and chat with fellow audience members on site at the Book Festival's home at the University of Edinburgh's College of Art on Lauriston Place. The full public programme is announced in early June.

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