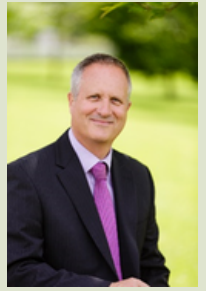


DOWNLANDS NEWS



25th October 2024

Dear Parents, Carers, and Students,

I hope this message finds you well and that this half-term has been a positive and successful one. Over the past few weeks, we have been conducting school tours for Year 6 students and their parent/carers. It has been an absolute pleasure to showcase the school and its facilities. We have also been delighted to see how hard our students are working in class.

It has been fantastic to restart many of the clubs and activities that greatly enrich our curriculum. We also enjoyed the following wonderful events, and I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone involved in organising them:

- Forest School Week
- Rocks Reward Trip to Chessington
- Battle of Hastings History Trip
- Year 7 to 11 Information Evenings

It was a pleasure to meet so many of you at our Information Evenings for Years 7 to 10, as well as at the Year 11 'Find Your Path' Evening. We hope you found these evenings informative and helpful.

A big thank you to everyone who wore yellow on World Mental Health Day to show young people that they're not alone. We raised £1,187 which will go directly to the Young Minds charity, which provides support for young people's mental health.

Please follow this link to view our school development plan – [downlands-school-development-plan](#)
We work hard every day to achieve this, and our governors hold us accountable for achieving it.

Downlands Community School is extremely proud to announce that it has once again achieved exceptional exam results. The Department for Education has released schools progress 8 scores for the 2024 summer exam series and Downlands students achieved a Progress 8 score of + 0.54. This means that all Downlands' students on average achieved half a grade better than students nationally in every subject, for the third year in a row. 33% of our grades are grade 7 and above and 19% of grades are grade 8 and above. This is amazing, but I am most proud of the fact that all ability groups achieved excellent progress.

Our youngsters are achieving really great outcomes which means they are able to successfully make their next steps in life.

We are also pleased to announce an increase in the amount of ROCKS points awarded. In year 2023-24 123,000 points were given out to students compared to 70,000 in 2022-23. This is a ratio of 5 reward points to 1 behaviour point, which shows that we are celebrating more character points and success.

We're all looking forward to seeing the students again after half term and hope you all have a restful week.

Many thanks for your continued support,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Wignall'.

Mark Wignall
Headteacher

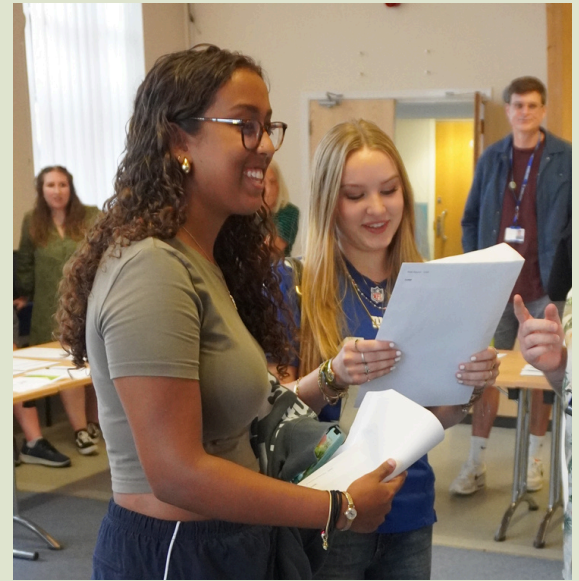
GCSE SUCCESS - RESULTS DAY 2024

We are delighted to share another incredibly successful year for our learners! Thank you to our school community for supporting our young people in achieving outstanding outcomes that will help them transition to further education and apprenticeships.

Results day was filled with pride, with 33% of grades at grade 7 and above, and 19% at grade 8 and above.

All groups of pupils have exceeded national progress levels across all subjects, highlighting our commitment to holistic success.

We wish all our pupils the best as they continue their educational journeys, and may the values they've shown guide them toward a fulfilling future!



EQUALITIES AWARD

We are thrilled to announce that we've received the prestigious Silver Equalities Award from EqualiTeach! This achievement highlights our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion across the school. Congratulations to the entire school community, especially our dedicated staff and student leaders, whose hard work has made this possible. Let's keep striving for an even more inclusive environment together!



Downlands Student Leaders

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

INSET DAYS

- Friday 6th December 2024
- Monday 6th January 2025
- Wednesday 25th June 2025
- Monday 21st July 2025
- Tuesday 22nd July 2025

EARLY CLOSURES

- **Monday, 4th November 2024**
- Tuesday, 14th January 2025
- Thursday, 5th June 2025
- Wednesday, 11th June 2025

On these days, school will close at 2pm for staff training. Transport will be arranged and we are able to supervise students who can't leave early.

TIMINGS OF THE SCHOOL DAY

- 8.35am First (warning) bell
- 8.40am Registration
- 9.00am Lesson 1
- 10.00am Lesson 2
- 11.00am Break
- 11.20am Lesson 3
- 12.20pm Lesson 4
- 1.20pm Lunch
- 1.55pm End of lunch
- 1.55pm Lesson 5 (including 10 minutes DEAR Time ** for Key Stage 3)
- 3.05pm End of school day

**** DEAR time – Drop Everything And Read – all Key Stage 3 students are required to bring a reading book.**

The school site is open to students from 8.20am, students will not be able to enter the school building until 8.35am (unless the weather is inclement).

Years 8 to 11 will assemble on the playground, Year 7 at the amphitheatre. The gates will be locked at 8.39am and the students will be marked 'late' after this.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION



REPORTING ABSENCE - STUDYBUGS

If you haven't already, please download the free Studybugs app, or register on the Studybugs website, and use it to tell us whenever your child is ill and unable to attend school. You can still call us to leave a message to report an absence, however Studybugs is our preference for absence reporting as it feeds directly in to our registers.

Get the app or register now <https://studybugs.com/register>
<https://studybugs.com/about/parents>

Studybugs is quick and easy to register and use, and automatically reminds you to keep us posted. Using the Studybugs app or website, you can report your child's absence due to illness any time from 6pm the day before.

You are required to report absence a day at a time – it's not possible to 'block book' absence. Studybugs automatically email parents a reminder at around 8am the next morning if it's a school day. As an extra safeguard, Studybugs is set to automatically send parents a confirmation email after they report absence via the Studybugs app

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Please remember to leave a message for attendance (ext 228) before 8.30am to advise if your child will be late due to medical or illness. Likewise, a child will not be released from school without prior notice (before 8.30am) of an appointment.

NUT FREE SCHOOL

Please can we take this opportunity to remind everyone that students are not to bring bags of nuts, or food containing nuts, into school.

LOST PROPERTY

Please ensure you name all items belonging to your child. All items found around the school are handed in to lost property. Children can look for items at break and lunch time from the Attendance Officer. During the term we give named items to your child's tutor or PSO to return to them, if your child hasn't claimed them. Due to the amount of unclaimed unnamed items, we donate these items to charity at the end of every term. We cannot be responsible for lost items not handed in to lost property.

HOT WATER BOTTLES

There has been a lot of talk in the press about the dangers of hot water bottles. Please follow the link for more information on hot water bottle safety:

<https://capt.org.uk/hot-water-bottle-safety/>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WINTER UNIFORM - PE

As the weather starts to get colder, we want students to continue to enjoy their PE lessons and being warm and comfortable plays a big part in that so a warmer under layer is permitted in the winter months. Typically, this is a base layer or jumper (requested to not be brightly coloured) and the main specification is that this is worn under the Downlands PE polo shirt. Students are not permitted to wear hoodies as they can be dangerous whilst playing sport.

PARKING IN DALE AVENUE

Polite reminder to all parents/carers:

Please avoid parking across residents' driveways when dropping off or collecting your child. Please be mindful of our neighbours. Thank you for your cooperation.

ORDERING SCHOOL SUPPLIES VIA SCOPAY

Please be aware that after ordering supplies on SCOPAY from the Library, Maths or PE department, pupils will need to go to the respective department offices and collect their items. Each department will have a list of students who purchased items.

MCAS - PHOTO PERMISSIONS

We enjoy sharing photos of the students participating on trips, sports and clubs, on our newsletter and on social media.

If you are happy for your child to be included in these photos please ensure that you have given consent by ticking the following on MCAS – Photo Online/Photo and name in Press/Photo Print use externally.

MCAS - PARENTAL CONSENT



MyChildAtSchool
Bromcom Parent Portal

Please take a few minutes to ensure that all parental consents are up to date

Click on Data Collection Form to give consent for antihistamine or paracetamol to be given as needed at school.
Please tick EpiPen if your child uses an EpiPen.
Please look at the whole page and complete as needed. Remember to press Submit changes and Save.

Please also look the Parental Consents Page to update your information and remember to press save.

Data Collection Form

Gender

Country Of Birth

Language

Religious Affiliation

Ethnicity

Nationality

Service Child

Other Details

Antihistamine Permission*

EpiPen - uses

Paracetamol Permission*

Parental Consent

Biometric Consent
I consent to fingertip biometric scan for the purpose of making payment for canteen food only. Our canteen operates a cashless system. This scan is held until the student leaves or ceases to use the system. If you wish to withdraw your consent, this must be done so in writing to the school Finance Office

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE MEDICAL ROOM

- Please make sure that you are aware of the current Covid guidance, which can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#children-and-young-people-aged-18-years-and-under-who-have-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19>
- Please remember to keep the medical room updated of any changes in your child's medical conditions. Your child's welfare whilst in school depends on this information being up-to-date.
- Please ensure that your emergency contact details are current. If you move home, get a new mobile number or your work number changes please remember to let us know; we need to be able to contact you in an emergency or if your child is unwell.
- Please do not send your child into school if they have sickness or diarrhoea. You should keep your child at home for 48 hours after their last episode of sickness or diarrhoea.
- Hay fever – the school does not administer antihistamine for the symptoms of hay fever. We ask that this be administered at home before the start of the school day.
- Finally, please be aware that any prescribed medicines to be administered during the school day must be provided to us in the original pharmacist's container. We would ask that where possible you ask your GP to administer a three-dose medication to avoid the impact on the school day. A 'Request for School to Administer Medicine' form must accompany it. Under exceptional circumstances, where it is deemed that their administration is required to allow the student to remain in school, the school will administer non-prescription medication for a maximum period of 48 hours. Any non-prescription medication administered in school must have been administered in the past without adverse effect. Again, a 'Request for School to Administer Medicine' form must accompany it. **Students must not carry their medication in school, apart from asthma inhalers and Anaphylaxis Auto Injectors, all other medication must be stored securely in the medical room.**

Medical Officer



YEAR 7 TRIP



BATTLE OF HASTINGS RE-ENACTMENT



Year 7 students recently embarked on an exciting trip to witness the re-enactment of the famous Battle of Hastings, a key part of their history curriculum. This immersive experience brought history to life, allowing them to engage with one of England's most pivotal moments.



Set on the very battlefield where the conflict took place, students watched actors portray the dramatic clash between the Anglo-Saxons and Normans. They witnessed the thundering knights, the flight of arrows, and King Harold's final stand, culminating in William the Conqueror's victory.

Beyond the battle, students explored Anglo-Saxon and Norman camps, trying on medieval armour, handling weapons, and learning about the daily lives of both sides.

English Heritage presented a fascinating demonstration on medieval infantry, cavalry tactics, and how soldiers fought during that era.



HISTORY

YEAR 7 TRIP



BATTLE OF HASTINGS RE-ENACTMENT

Another highlight was sampling medieval food and discovering how peasants and farmers sustained their families. Students also learned about falconry and the important role of animals in hunting. In addition to battle-related topics, students explored medieval leisure activities



Students enjoyed archery displays, traditional music, and dance, gaining insights into how people of the time relaxed and celebrated their culture.



This trip gave students an unforgettable understanding of the events of 1066 and life in medieval England. We hope it sparked a lasting curiosity and appreciation for history among our young learners.



Year 11 GCSE Geography Fieldwork in Lewes Town Centre



This half term our Year 11 Geography students have been completing their fieldwork studies, which included a trip to Lewes town centre to investigate pedestrian flows and assess the town's sustainability.

Students spent the day observing pedestrian flows and how they vary by retail type, interviewing locals, and analysing how sustainable the town's infrastructure is. The trip was a hands-on opportunity to bring classroom theories to life, and contributes towards their GCSE paper 3 worth 30%.

Despite their enthusiasm, the unpredictable British weather provided an extra challenge—torrential downpours! As one member of staff stated "you can always tell when the geography fieldwork week is, as the weather turns from glorious sunshine to rain." Students were fantastic at practising their fieldwork skills whilst dodging puddles and putting their resilience (ROCKS) to the test!



ECO CLUB UPDATE

This term Eco Club have been filling up the planters in the library courtyard with herbs, winter bedding and bulbs for springtime. Two of the planters filled were installed and built by the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, so we would like to extend a big thank you to Rachel and Alistair. The planters are Rainbox planters and so are cleverly installed to connect to the water pipes and encourage infiltration, preventing flooding and surface water in the area



We would also like to say a huge thank-you to Rushfields Garden Centre, who donated plants to fill the majority of our planters and bedding outside Reception – so colourful and sensory!

We hope to tend to these over the winter months and in spring when the bulbs emerge!



We welcomed teachers from our partner school in India (Ellen Sharma) who brought over some incredible artwork that students had created, of different trees around their school grounds. These will be displayed in outdoor frames to bring colour to the brickwork and celebrate our partnership with such a wonderful school.

DOWNLANDS PUBLIC SPEAKING CLUB



Led by Ms. Kashmiri the Public Speaking Club meets every Friday lunchtime and is open to all students eager to hone their debating and speaking skills.

The club offers a blend of hard work and fun, where students begin by crafting well-reasoned arguments, which are developed into written speeches. Once the content is solid, the focus shifts to the art of performance.

FOYLE YOUNG POETS OF THE YEAR AWARD 2024



Downlands student, Ernest is a fifteen-year-old poet who writes about flowers, tangerines and the weather. His favourite poets are D. H. Lawrence and Sylvia Plath.

Quote from Ernest on winning and his poem
“Winning the FYP Award has really given me confidence in my writing and I’m really pleased that the work I’ve put into my writing has paid off. I’m also looking forward to meeting other young poets and I hope I’ll carry on developing my writing into the future.

My poem was inspired by seeing tulips on a grey day. There was something captivating about them and the pathos they had, in contrast with the overcast sky. I wanted to capture the tulips in a unique way, but in a way where they were still beautiful.”

Tulips

Your numb, dry tongues,
pressed, hung in the air,
dull butter knives,
rubber eggs.
Thick-walled veins
suckle slow
in grey.
You're flattened,
empty like peeled oranges
and lying on the wind
thin and dumb as anything.

PE & DANCE

Well done to all the students who have attended PE & Dance extra-curricular clubs this half term. We have had on average 150-200 students attending clubs every day, which is fantastic. There has also been a huge range of sporting fixtures including local district, county and national competitions. We are already looking forward to the next half term and working with so many amazing students.

We have had an amazing group of Sports Leaders who have started their duties this year in supporting the PE department with their clubs/fixtures and leading sessions when needed whether that's to officiate or organise tournaments. All of the students are a pleasure to work with and have shown extreme levels of maturity for this role, we are super proud to be working with them and seeing their skills progress over this year in the role.

YEAR 10 SPORTS LEADERS



YEAR 8 BOYS FOOTBALL

Year 8 Boys Football team have started the year in fantastic fashion. Having played all of the district league games in the group stages they have managed to progress to the district semi-final, which will take place after half term. The team are still going strong in both the Cups, reaching the second round in the County Cup and the third round in the National Cup. The transition from 9 a-side to 11 a-side Football has been a smooth one and they are playing excellent football.

Well done to the team for their amazing start to the year.



TEAM GB GYM

Our very own student, Charlie, represented Team GB at the TeamGym European Championships in Baku! Everyone at Downlands is immensely proud of Charlie's phenomenal achievement.

After an intense final, Charlie and the Junior Men's team secured an impressive 5th place amidst an extremely competitive field.

Well done, Charlie! You have made us all incredibly proud!



DANCE

Dance is thriving at Downlands! We have had more than 50 dancers attend Downlands Dance Company and over 80 dancers attend Junior Dance. Along with our Gifted and Talented Dance scheme, Two Step Dance and Boys Dance. Ceyda Tanc Dance Company is currently creating a piece on our older dancers, which we look forward to showing in this year's Dance Show.

PE & DANCE

U14 NETBALL

The U14 netball team gave up a Saturday to compete in the Sussex round of National Schools. Downlands won 4/5 of our group games, against many local private schools and played extremely well to move the ball down the court to shoot with continuous success. Unfortunately, we lost in the quarter-finals of the day; there was some brilliant competitive netball on display.



YEAR 8 NETBALL

To start the season, both A and B teams were entered into the versatility tournament where they were required to play various positions across the games. The B team worked well together and developed game upon game to increasingly become more successful. They finished 5th out of 9 teams!

The A team displayed their skills and versatile nature throughout every game, winning all of their games and being crowned winners of the tournament.



U13 GIRLS CRICKET



As winners of the group in the summer outdoor league, the U13 Girls cricket team progressed to the finals which took place in early September. There was an amazing display of cricket, both with the bat and ball. The team finished level with Warden Park in the final, but despite a strong performance, Warden Park won based on the number of wickets taken. It was a great effort by all involved! This team are second in the Girls State School League and should be incredibly proud of their achievement.

PE & DANCE

YEAR 7 GIRLS FOOTBALL

The girls have had a great start to their football at Downlands, we have only had one fixture in the County Cup where we played Varndean at home. Unfortunately we lost to an extremely talented team 6-2 but the girls can take so many positives from that performance. We've started off our league campaign with a 2-0 win v St Pauls, goals from Maya and Sophie.

Five of the squad have also represented the U13 squad, playing 1 year up, where they have qualified for the second round of the National Cup beating Longhill in the first round 5-0. In the second round we beat De Stafford 14-5! A crazy game but with so much quality from Downlands.

It's been fantastic to see so many girls play in these fixtures, we have 20 different players within this age group which is fantastic to see and a pleasure to work with. We hope to see the girls continue to improve game by game and this group have had a fabulous start.



YEARS 7 & 8 GIRLS FOOTBALL



This a new squad, we have added it into our department for this season, we have entered just the National Cup at this age band as it's a unique age group, unfortunately there isn't scope for a league for U13 girls as there aren't enough schools with the want. However, we are extremely lucky at Downlands to have students playing football at probably every age band for the girls, which is fantastic to see.

The girls have qualified for the second round of the National Cup after beating Longhill in the first round 5-0. Some of the team played out of position but still showed great determination, team-work and quality in the game to beat a side who didn't lose a game last year.

In round two we beat De Stafford 15-4! A remarkable scoreline given the quality in the opposing team, but the girls were ruthless in front of goal. We await the results to see who our next opponents will be with another home game in the pipeline.

NEW YORK DANCE TRIP

40 of our Year 10 and 11 students went to New York in October, where they took part in dance classes at Alvin Ailey Studios. They had a fantastic time watching *Wicked* on Broadway and visited the Statue of Liberty and Empire State Building.



YEAR 7 CAMP JULY 2024

Year 7 Camp 2024: A Memorable Adventure at YMCA Fairthorne Manor

In July, our Year 7 students embarked on an unforgettable adventure at YMCA Fairthorne Manor, located just outside Southampton. Over the course of five action-packed nights, 240 eager campers braved the elements and discovered the true meaning of teamwork, resilience, and friendship.

The week kicked off with a downpour, as heavy rain greeted our students upon arrival. However, the weather did little to dampen their spirits. Armed with enthusiasm and a positive mindset, students quickly adapted to the rainy conditions.

As the clouds began to clear and the sun shone brightly during the latter half of the camp, spirits soared even higher. One of the week's highlights was an epic water fight involving the students and our very own Head of Year, Mr. Hunnable. Laughter echoed through the grounds as students engaged in friendly splashing and playful antics, creating cherished memories that will last a lifetime.

Throughout the camp, students participated in a diverse range of activities designed to challenge them physically and mentally. From kayaking on the serene waters to honing their aim in archery, each student had the opportunity to push their limits. They built fires, learnt essential survival skills whilst enjoying toasted marshmallows, and took on the climbing wall, where many discovered new heights—both literally and figuratively. The low-ropes course encouraged collaboration, as students worked together to navigate challenges and support each other through obstacles.



YEAR 7 CAMP JULY 2024

What truly stood out during the camp was the exemplary resilience demonstrated by our Year 7 students. Each challenge was met with determination, and students quickly learned the value of teamwork. Whether helping a friend conquer a fear of heights or encouraging each other during the kayaking sessions, the camaraderie that blossomed was heart warming to witness.

Feedback from both students and staff has been overwhelmingly positive. Many students expressed how the experience helped them form closer bonds with their classmates, and several reported newfound confidence in their abilities. The skills learnt during camp—problem-solving, communication, and cooperation—are invaluable and will serve them well throughout their school journey and beyond.

As the week came to a close, students returned home with more than just stories to tell; they left with lifelong friendships, a greater sense of independence, and a treasure trove of memories. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the staff, volunteers, and YMCA Fairthorne Manor for making this experience possible. Their dedication and support ensured that our Year 7 camp was not only fun but also a safe and enriching experience for all.

In conclusion, Year 7 Camp 2024 was a resounding success. As we reflect on this adventure, we look forward to the continued growth and development of our students, who are now better equipped to face the challenges ahead—together. Here's to many more adventures in the years to come!



CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Curriculum Enrichment Activities: A Summer of Adventure and Learning

In July, our Year 8 and Year 9 students experienced an exciting two days of Curriculum Enrichment Activities (CEA), designed to broaden their horizons and allow them to explore a variety of interests outside the traditional classroom setting. This year, students had the opportunity to choose from an impressive lineup of engaging activities, each tailored to inspire creativity, teamwork, and personal growth.

The array of options was truly remarkable, catering to diverse interests and passions. Students who were fans of the magical world of Harry Potter took a trip to the Harry Potter Studios, where they explored the enchanting sets, costumes, and props that brought the beloved series to life. This immersive experience allowed them to appreciate the artistry and creativity behind filmmaking.



For those seeking adventure on the water, the watersports session at Ardingly Reservoir was a thrilling option. Students engaged in kayaking and paddleboarding, learning valuable skills while enjoying the beauty of nature. The camaraderie formed on the water was palpable, with students cheering each other on as they navigated the waves.



Thrill-seekers had the chance to visit Thorpe Park, where they braved exhilarating rides and roller coasters. The adrenaline rush of the park provided a perfect backdrop for bonding with classmates, as they shared screams and laughter throughout the day.

CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Creative minds flocked to the Pottery Painting Cafe in Brighton, where students painted their own mugs. This hands-on activity allowed them to express their artistic flair while creating unique pieces to take home as mementos of the day.



For those looking to conquer new heights, the climbing session at Hi-Sport in Withdean was a fantastic opportunity. Students pushed themselves physically and mentally as they tackled various climbing challenges, building confidence and teamwork skills along the way.

Beach enthusiasts enjoyed volleyball at Yellow Wave, where they embraced the sun and sand whilst learning the fundamentals of the sport. The friendly competition fostered teamwork and sportsmanship, as students worked together to score points and have fun.



Go-karting offered a thrilling experience for speed enthusiasts, with students racing against each other on the track, honing their driving skills and enjoying some friendly competition. Similarly, the escape rooms challenged students' problem-solving abilities, as they collaborated to solve puzzles and complete tasks within a time limit.

For those looking for a more relaxed yet exciting outing, mini-golf and laser tag in Brighton provided a perfect mix of fun and friendly rivalry. Students had a blast navigating the mini-golf course and strategising their way to victory in laser tag, creating lasting memories in the process.

As we reflect on these enriching experiences, it is clear that the CEA days were not just about having fun; they also promoted personal growth, teamwork, and creativity. Students returned to school with new skills, strengthened friendships, and a wealth of experiences that will enhance their learning journey.

As we look ahead, we are excited to continue offering opportunities like these that inspire our students to explore their interests, embrace new challenges, and make the most of their time at school. Here's to many more adventures in the future!

TEACHERS FROM CHENNAI VISIT DOWNLANDS

In October, Downlands Community School had the pleasure of welcoming three teachers from our partner school, Ellen Sharma School in Chennai, India. Our partnership, which has flourished over the past 12 years, continues to foster cultural exchange and collaboration between our schools.

During their stay, the visiting teachers immersed themselves in our school community by observing a variety of lessons, including food technology, geography, computing, and music. This opportunity allowed them to gain insights into our educational practices while sharing their expertise and experiences.

One of the highlights of the visit was a special lesson taught by our guests to a group of Year 8 students on the topic of medicinal plants in India. This interactive session enriched our students' understanding of traditional Indian medicine and sparked interest in global perspectives on health and wellness.

Outside the classroom, the teachers enjoyed weekends exploring iconic locations such as London, Brighton, and Wakehurst Place, experiencing the beauty and culture of our region.

The visit concluded with a delightful afternoon tea attended by staff and students preparing for the upcoming trip to Chennai in July 2025. This gathering provided a valuable opportunity for questions and insights about our partnership and the experiences to come.

A heartfelt thank you goes to Miss Lambert for graciously hosting two of the teachers in her home, and to Mrs. Dudley-Thorne, Mrs. Middleditch, Miss Ventura, Mr. Cole, and Mrs. Korniotis for dedicating their weekends to accompany visits and make this exchange memorable.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with Ellen Sharma School and deepening the bonds of friendship and learning between our communities!



CULTURAL EXCHANGE - JAPAN

In an exciting cultural exchange, Downlands Community School recently hosted nine students from Ashikita, Japan. During their stay, these enthusiastic guests experienced life in Hassocks by staying with local families, fostering meaningful connections and friendships.

One of the highlights of their visit was a morning spent at Downlands, where the Japanese students shadowed their hosts and participated in a variety of lessons. This experience allowed them to immerse themselves in our school environment and learn about the British education system firsthand.

The Japanese students also delivered an engaging presentation to a group of our students, sharing insights into their rich culture. They introduced some basic Japanese language skills and showcased a fascinating martial arts demonstration, which captivated everyone in attendance. The interactive session not only educated our students about Japanese traditions but also sparked enthusiasm for cultural exchange and language learning.

This visit has strengthened our school's commitment to global citizenship and understanding. We look forward to nurturing these international connections and hope to welcome our friends from Ashikita again in the future!



THAI TEACHERS' VISIT

Welcoming Our Thai Teachers: A Step Towards Cultural Exchange



In October, Downlands Community School had the pleasure of hosting six teachers from Thailand as part of our ongoing commitment to international collaboration. Their visit served as a precursor to the arrival of Thai students who will be staying with us in March 2025.

The visiting teachers enjoyed a comprehensive tour of our school, where they were warmly welcomed by both staff and students. They had the opportunity to observe various classes, gaining insights into our educational practices and engaging with our vibrant school community.

A highlight of their visit was a presentation by Mr. Wignall, who shared valuable information about our curriculum and the enriching experiences visiting students can expect during their upcoming stay. This exchange of ideas and cultural insights laid the groundwork for a fruitful partnership.

As we prepare for the Thai students' visit in March 2025, we are excited to announce that Downlands families will have the opportunity to host these students during their stay. More information will be provided soon, and we encourage families to consider participating in this unique cultural exchange.

We look forward to strengthening our ties with Thailand and fostering lasting friendships between our communities!



MUSIC TUITION



ADDITIONAL MUSIC LESSONS AT DOWNLANDS



Downlands has a strong tradition of music making and this is in part due to the music tuition provided by our team of visiting music teachers. Organising lessons for your young person is straight forward and done directly with the teacher. If you would like to enquire about additional music lessons with one of our Visiting Music Teachers (VMTs) their contact details, along with the discipline they teach, are listed here:

Brass instrument (Trumpet, Trombone, Horn)	Mr Roff	Nroffbrass@gmail.com
Cello, Double Bass	Mr Merrick	ethanmerrick@msn.com
Drum kit	Mr Hodgson	tom@studiomuso.co.uk
Guitar, Bass Guitar	Mr Paton	Ferguspatonguitarschool@gmail.com
Keyboard	Mr Bedford	Hu.bedford@gmail.com
Piano	Mr Kew	charlie.kew@westsussexmusic.co.uk
Singing	Ms Hawes	Laurahawesmusic@gmail.com
Violin, Viola	Miss Wardrobe	blwardrobe@hotmail.co.uk
Clarinet	Ms Dudding	Annduddingmusic@gmail.com
Flute	Ms Van der Klugt	Vanderklugte@gmail.com
Saxophone	Ms Van den Ouweland	www.westsussexmusic.co.uk
Steel Pan	Mr Nelson	bangadrum.nelson@gmail.com



YEAR 11 GCSE INFO

YR11 MOCK EXAMS WILL BE HELD 5TH-15TH NOV EXAM TIME TABLES CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEBSITE:

[HTTPS://WWW.DOWNLANDS.W-SUSSEX.SCH.UK/NEWS-EVENTS/GCSE-INFO](https://www.downlands.w-sussex.sch.uk/news-events/gcse-info)

Exam Day – Check list

Before sitting your exams, ensure you know:

- ☐ the date, time and location of each of your exams. You might find it helpful to write this information in a calendar or planner.
- ☐ who to contact at school or college in case there's an emergency that makes you late or unable to sit your exam.

What you cannot take into exams:

- ☐ any type of phone
- ☐ revision notes
- ☐ any type of watch (this includes analogue, digital and smart watches)



What you will need:

- ☐ a clear pencil case
- ☐ at least two black ink pens – blue pens are **not acceptable**
- ☐ an approved calculator for relevant exams
- ☐ appropriate apparatus such as a ruler or protractor for relevant exams
- ☐ a clear water bottle if you wish to take one in – it **must not** have a label



Other important information:

- ☐ Listen carefully to the invigilator's instructions which will be specific to your exam. If you are unsure of anything, please raise your hand and wait for the invigilator to respond.
- ☐ Fill in your details on the front of your answer booklet.
- ☐ If you need additional answer sheets, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator who will provide you with one. Remember to add your details to this booklet.
- ☐ If you need to use the toilet or feel unwell, raise your hand and wait for an invigilator who will escort you from the exam room.
- ☐ Remember to stay silent – talking to a fellow candidate could result in disqualification from all your exams.

DOWNLANDS SCHOOL ASSOCIATION



Downlands School Association (DSA) is the PTA that fundraises for our amazing school!

Dining Pods, IT equipment, a replacement minibus, the amphitheatre and dance studio and the ROCKS Character Days have all been funded by the DSA!

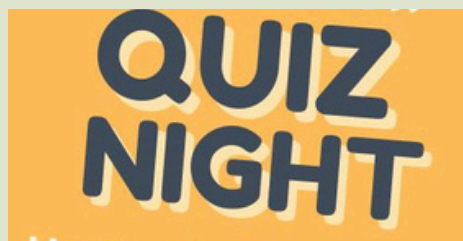
We provide refreshments for school events and hold Second-Hand Uniform sales with other fun and inclusive events, such as Quiz & Comedy nights!

The PTA are always looking for new members to help raise funds for the school – this can be as little as helping for an hour at an event to being more involved with the organising of events. It's a great way to get to know the school and staff.

If you're interested in joining or helping out at events, please contact us at dsa@downlands.org.

This year we are raising money for new audio/visual equipment for our school stage productions.

Our aim is to replace all our outdated audio-visual equipment on the stage, and we are excited to share the first phase of this initiative. Our goal is to raise £15,000 this year, with plans to complete the project by next year.



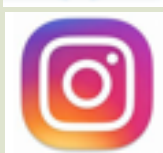
Our fundraising starts with the Quiz Night on Friday 8th November and the Christmas Market is planned for 30th November, 11:00 – 2pm.

We will also be launching the Christmas prize draw after half term. Keep an eye out for all the details—we can't wait to share these fantastic prizes with you!

You can keep up to date with all DSA events through our Social Media



Downlands School Association



@Downlands_School_Association

DATES FOR DIARY NOVEMBER & DECEMBER



SECOND HAND UNIFORM

Parents and Carers we are looking for your help. We need supplies of second-hand uniform. If you have any old school uniform that you no longer need please consider donating it to the school.

Donations can be placed in the collection bin at Reception, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Monday to Friday.



**OUR NEXT SECOND HAND UNIFORM SALE WILL
BE AT THE DOWNLANDS CHRISTMAS MARKET
ON SATURDAY 30th November 11-2pm**

SCHOOL FUNDRAISING



DOWNLANDS COMMUNITY SCHOOL are now registered with **easyfundraising**, which means you can raise **FREE** donations for us every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use **easyfundraising** to shop with them – at no extra cost to you.

These donations really mount up and make a **BIG** difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely **FREE** and only takes you a moment.

Turn your daily shopping into everyday magic for us with **easyfundraising**

You shop, brands donate to us. It won't cost you any extra!



 **easyfundraising**

Help us make a difference when you shop.
Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk



- 1 Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk
- 2 Sign up and search for us
- 3 Your favourite brands donate to us whenever you shop with them

Shop with 7,500+ brands including:

 Booking.com

 ebay

 M&S

 Groupon

 Argos

 TUI

 JOHN LEWIS



 Viking

 ASOS

 BT

 Uber Eats



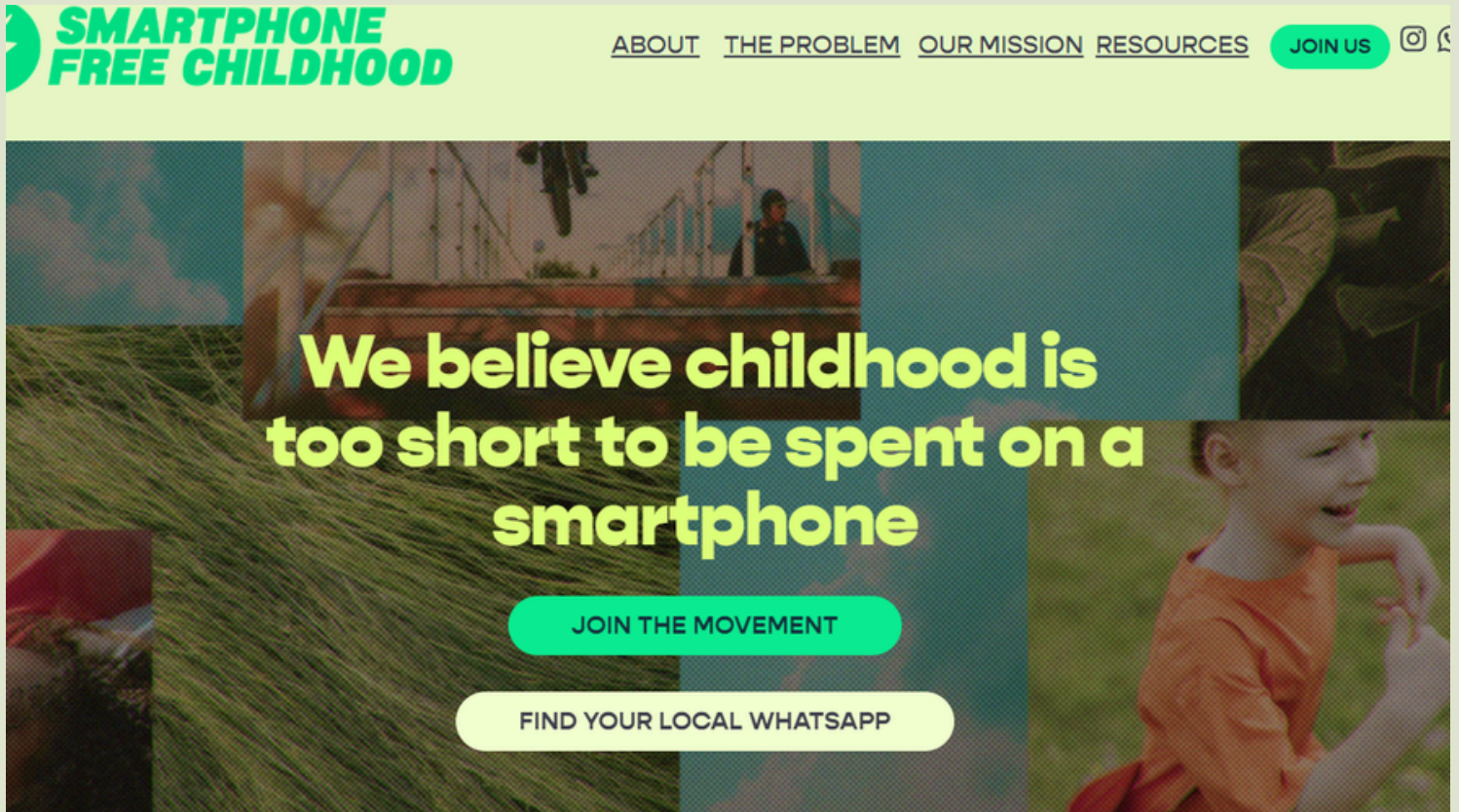
Thank you to all our family and friends that are supporting our School Lottery. We are delighted with the support it has received and the money raised will go towards more facilities for the students.

The lottery draw takes place every Saturday evening. Tickets can be purchased by clicking the link below:

<https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/lottery/school/downlands-community-school>

Tickets are £1 and can be purchased individually or you can set up a standing order for weekly tickets. There are weekly prizes and national prizes to be won. It's easy to take part and makes a big difference to our school and students.

SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD



Smartphone Free Childhood (SFC)

Did you know? The average British 12-year-old now spends 29 hours a week – equivalent to a part-time job – on devices, leaving little time for real-world activities and connections. Time spent on a device is time not spent with others: playing, exploring, interacting and developing vital life skills. A national movement, led by parents aims to challenge the new 'norm' of children owning and using smartphones. There are 35 parent groups in WestSussex alone. A group of 60 Downlands parents have come together as a community and engaged with the school, to discuss the issues, experiences, and practical solutions in a non judgemental way, to limit the harmful effects of smartphones on our children.

Below is a link to the SFC Downlands What's App group should you be interested in joining:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/DzofBQzR5pf72j5rVrwHBj>

USEFUL INFORMATION

**Free
School
Meals**

Are you entitled?

Downlands receives extra funding for all students eligible for free school meals, called the Pupil Premium. This funding is extremely valuable to us as it enables us to support our students to be happy, confident learners and make the best possible progress.

For more information please visit :

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/free-school-meals/#how-to-apply>.

Those children and families that are not eligible for FSM will be able to access urgent support for food via the WSCC Community Hub. The Community Hub can be contacted on 0330 222 7980 and is open 9:00 – 17:00 seven days a week. Further information can be found via the [West Sussex County Council website](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk)

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD (HAF) FOR CHILDREN

Children and young people aged 4 to 16 who are eligible* for benefits related free school meals can take part in free clubs during the Easter, Summer and Winter holidays. A free nutritious meal is provided as part of the scheme. Visit our website to find activities near you and book your place.

*Check eligibility on the webpage and find information about further support and activities available. Places are limited. Paid-for places may be available, contact individual clubs for availability.

SCAN ME



 west
sussex
county
council

www.westsussex.gov.uk/HAF

USEFUL INFORMATION

aspens.org.uk
charity no: 1171446



aspens

Empowering people on the
autism spectrum and with
learning disabilities.

Girls Group Mid Sussex



St Andrews Hall, Burgess Hill,
RH15 0LG



Mondays fortnightly
(term-time only)



5pm-7pm

Group B will be young people age 12-14. Group A will be young people age 14-18. These groups will alternate on Monday evenings term-time only. The group ages may alter slightly. Please note we are not currently advertising for Group A!

The cost is £6 per session for each young person.



These sessions are for girls who are awaiting an assessment or on the neurodevelopmental pathway (including but not exclusive to SEMH, ASC, ADHD). They must be aged 12-14 years old (Group B).

These are a wonderful opportunity for girls to meet others who may have similar experiences and carry out fun and enjoyable activities. These environments are relaxed and engaging. Places will be on a first-come first-served basis.

Please email childrenreferrals@aspens.org.uk to book



Sussex Community
NHS Foundation Trust

HEALTH^{FOR}TEENS

GET HELP WITH ALL KINDS OF THINGS LIKE...

HEALTHY EATING RELATIONSHIPS SMOKING
EMOTIONAL HEALTH BULLYING SELF HARM
ALCOHOL & DRUGS ANXIETY SLEEP PUBERTY

VISIT:

WWW.HEALTHFORTEENS.CO.UK



SEE VIDEOS, FIND HEALTH INFORMATION, TAKE QUIZZES,
AND FIND OUT THE TRUTH BEHIND THE RUMOURS

TEXT YOUR SCHOOL NURSE FOR

CONFIDENTIAL HEALTH ADVICE AND SUPPORT:

07480 635424



COMMUNITY NEWS - DANCE & DRAMA

DANCE TROUPE AUDITIONS 7th Nov 5:30-7pm: Dancers with at least one years experience are invited to audition for our Dance Troupe 2025. Last year we performed in London, at a festival and as part of our summer dance showcase. Open to boys and girls who want to be challenged and work as a youth dance company.

SCRIPT TO STAGE are sessions for 11-16 year olds interested in the creative process of developing scripts and taking them from the page to the stage, led by a professional actor/director/writer.

RAMBERT GRADES GRADE 2 for dancers who'd like to take contemporary dance exams

For more info, to register interest or to book a place/trial, go to www.createpacestudios.com



CREATE SPACE STUDIOS

Script to Stage

1st Trial
Free

Script Writing
Rehearse
Direct
Perform

Wednesdays
Hurstpierpoint
www.createpacestudios.com

Ages 9-11 3.30pm - 4.45pm
Ages 11+ 4.45pm - 6.25pm



AUDITIONS

07/11/2024 5:30pm - 7:00pm

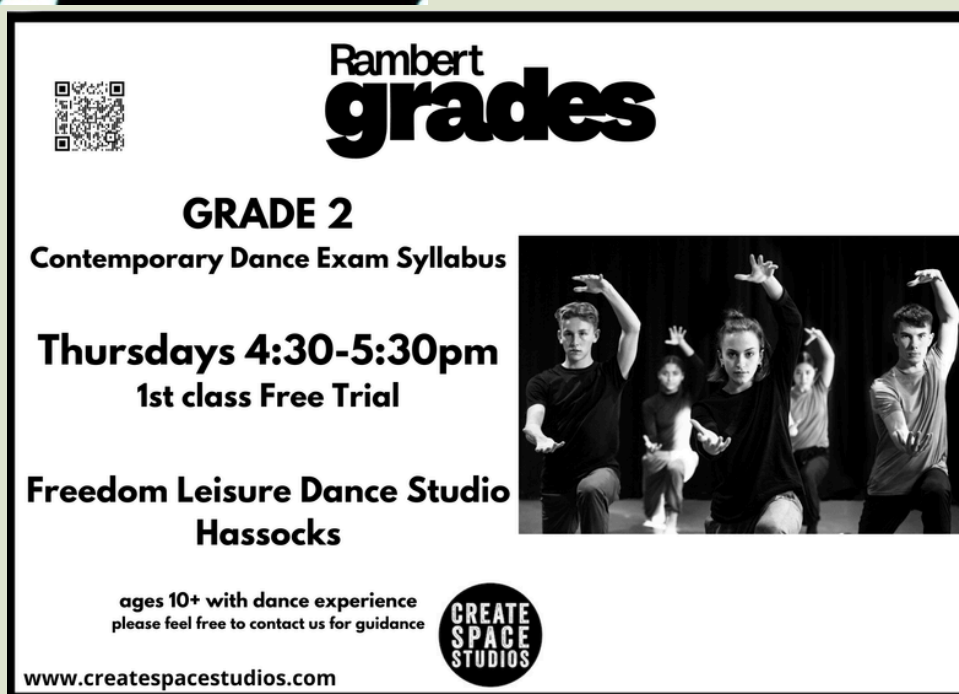
CREATE SPACE STUDIOS Dance Troupe 2025

For 11-18 year olds

Dance Studio Hassocks Sports Centre

Performance opportunities for boys & girls with dance experience.

Register @ www.createpacestudios.com



Rambert grades

GRADE 2
Contemporary Dance Exam Syllabus

Thursdays 4:30-5:30pm
1st class Free Trial

Freedom Leisure Dance Studio Hassocks

ages 10+ with dance experience
please feel free to contact us for guidance

www.createpacestudios.com

CREATE SPACE STUDIOS



AGES 11 TO 15

DRAMA CLASSES IN *Hurstpierpoint*

SCOUT HUT, BROWN TWINS ROAD,
HURSTPIERPOINT, HASSOCKS, UK

SENIORS (AGES 11 - 15) - FRIDAYS 16.30 - 18.30

BOOK A NO OBLIGATION TASTER SESSION NOW

info@theyoungactorsgroup.com



SPEECH & DRAMA LESSONS

DO YOU HAVE A CHILD WHO LOVES TO ACT?

OR MAYBE YOUR CHILD LACKS CONFIDENCE AND WANTS TO DEVELOP THEIR COMMUNICATION SKILLS?

My name is Liz Meredith-Jones and I am excited to be starting 'Speech and Drama' lessons to students of all ages at Downlands School. I originally trained as an actress but after a few years in the industry re-trained as a teacher, which I have been doing for nearly 20 years – both in the classroom and privately.

Rather than use the LAMDA syllabus I use the 'New Era examinations' which I find to be more holistic and offers students far more choice in the repertoire they can choose from. See the website if you would like to know more.

New Era Examinations website

The lessons I am offering will be in acting, poetry & prose or public speaking and last 30 minutes long. We will look at a variety of texts, poems and books tailored to the students interest and need. Lessons are fun but focused and examinations can be taken or not. The lessons themselves will take place in a dedicated room within the school, FRIDAYS on a rota system so students don't miss the same academic lesson twice in a term.

I am starting off by offering shared lessons to allow more students a chance to sign up, but if anyone is particularly interested in their child having a solo lesson this can be discussed.

The cost will be £17 for a shared lesson or £21 for solo and I will be starting after October half term so a total of 6 lessons for the half term at £102 (shared) and £126 (solo)

If you are interested in lessons for your child please fill in the form below and return to school by Friday 25th October 2024.

Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Any questions please feel free to contact me on mrs.meredith-jones@bhsfg.com or speak to Mrs Robertson, Head of Drama at Downlands.

I am really looking forward to starting at the school and working with your talented children.

Liz Meredith-Jones 🍀💜



Age Concern Hassocks



Age Concern Coffee Shop (open to everyone)



Age Concern Hassocks have noticed that quite a few parents browse their charity shop while they wait for children to finish school. They suggest that if parents came a few minutes earlier they would be welcome to use the coffee shop as well.

From Tuesdays to Fridays between 2pm and 3.15pm their Conservatory is available for visitors and their Mad Dog coffee and Hot Chocolate are the cheapest in the area.

<https://www.achassocks.co.uk/what-we-do/#coffee>

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone is liking, sharing & following our social media pages.

We are delighted to say that our audiences just keep on growing.



Thank you to our generous sponsors who have contributed to our new camera and filmmaking equipment



Stone Survey Ltd
Station Garage Hassocks
Good Law Solicitors
John Broomfield Removals
Hollington Electrical Ltd
Fosters & Co Estate Agents



HAVE A GREAT HALF TERM