

DOWNLANDS NEWS



20th December 2024

Dear Parents, Carers, and Students,

We've enjoyed an incredible half-term filled with highlights, including the Downlands Quiz and the Burgess Hill Christmas Hamper Project. The Downlands Winter Concert was a fantastic celebration of talent, with captivating performances from the Orchestra, Choir, Steel Pans, and Brass Band.

A special mention goes to our Christmas Market, which was a resounding success, raising an impressive £4,000, with £786 contributed by student run stalls. The Prize Draw was equally impactful, generating over £3,028. Thank you to our amazing DSA for their hard work organising these events, and to everyone who participated and supported them. The funds raised will enhance our Character Passport programme and contribute to much needed new audio-visual equipment for the main hall.

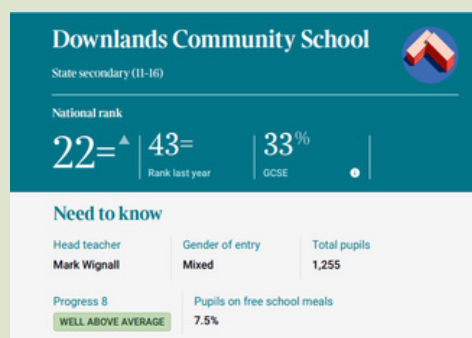
Our student leaders have truly excelled this term. Prefects have been dedicated to their roles, while Year 10 students stepped up admirably to cover these responsibilities as Year 11 focused on their mock exams. Year 10 students are now completing application forms and preparing for interviews, ready to take on prefect duties after the February half-term.

Earlier this month, the School Council held a productive meeting to discuss topics raised by Year Councils, including uniforms, ROCKS points, clubs, and diversity. The council includes two representatives from each year group alongside our Head Prefects, myself, Mrs. Hunt, and Mrs. Skelton, and is committed to making meaningful improvements to school life. I will share updates from these discussions during assemblies in the new term.

We are very proud of our Progress 8 score of +0.53 which means that our students are achieving over half a grade more in every subject than students nationally.

I believe that this is even more impressive given our relentless focus on providing a holistic education for all, and the emphasis placed on Character Development, clubs, trips, fixtures, activities and other experiences. Parents can access DFE performance tables for all school using this link:
<https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables>

We were also pleased to see that our ranking in The Times newspaper has gone from 43rd place nationally to 22nd in terms of 11-16 comprehensive schools – this is a great achievement as there are thousands of 11-16's in England.



Wishing you all a joyful and restful Christmas break. I look forward to seeing everyone refreshed and ready for a fantastic start to the new term on Tuesday, 7th January!

Mark Wignall
Headteacher

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

INSET DAYS

- **Monday 6th January 2025**
- Wednesday 25th June 2025
- Monday 21st July 2025
- Tuesday 22nd July 2025

EARLY CLOSURES

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.

- Tuesday, 14th January 2025
- Thursday, 5th June 2025
- Wednesday, 11th June 2025

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

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



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 call us to leave a message to report an absence, however Studybugs is our preference for absence reporting as it feeds directly in 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.

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



ROCKS



THIS TERM WE HAVE AWARDED WELL OVER 70,000 ROCKS POINTS AND HAVE ISSUED ALMOST 10,000 POSTCARDS. THAT IS AN INCREDIBLE ACHIEVEMENT!



Our ROCKSTARS Autumn Term Assembly took place on Thursday afternoon in the hall. Students with the highest points in each category, along with the overall winners from each year group, were celebrated in a special assembly. As a well deserved reward they enjoyed an afternoon of treats for their incredible efforts this term. Congratulations to all the winners!



We were absolutely amazed by the incredible talent of everyone who entered the Xmas X-Factor competition. Huge congratulations to Isabella in Year 9, a well-deserved winner of Downlands' Xmas X-Factor!



Thank you to everyone who took part running a student stall at the Christmas Fair. The students demonstrated fantastic ROCKS character, and their stalls raised an incredible amount of money. Well done!

DOWNLANDS CHOIR VISIT AGE CONCERN



Thank you to Miss Lincoln and the Downlands Choir for performing a Christmas carol concert at Hassocks Age Concern. The festive spirit was in full swing and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

THE CHRISTMAS HAMPER PROJECT

Christmas HAMPER PROJECT

This Christmas local organisations and churches are working together to provide and distribute Christmas hampers to people in need.

GLOBAL AMBASSADORS DELIVER CHRISTMAS FOOD DONATIONS



On Wednesday 4th December, Mr Smith, Ms Childs and eight of our dedicated Global Ambassadors proudly delivered food donations from our school community to Kings Church in Burgess Hill. These donations were for the Christmas Hamper Project, a Burgess Hill Town Council initiative. The project aims to provide hampers filled with festive food to local families in need, ensuring that everyone in our community can enjoy a special Christmas.



Our school contributed over 1,000 donations, a truly remarkable response that reflects the kindness and generosity of our students, staff, and families. The donations included a wide range of food items, all of which will go a long way in supporting those facing financial difficulties this Christmas.



Our Global Ambassadors, worked hard to collect, sort, and pack the donations in preparation for the handover. Their commitment to making a positive impact in our local community is truly inspiring.



THANK YOU!



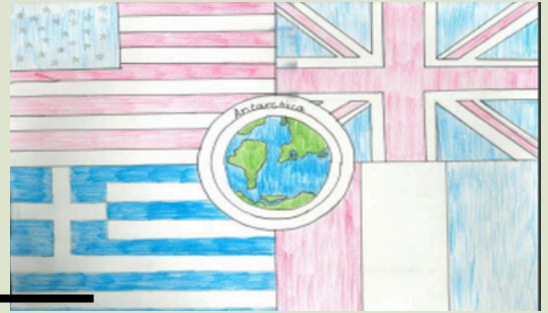
A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to this wonderful cause. Your support makes a real difference, and together, we have helped spread some festive cheer to those who need it most. We look forward to continuing our tradition of community service in the future.

UK POLAR NETWORK - GEOGRAPHY COMPETITION

This term Year 7 and 8 students in Geography had the opportunity to design a flag for Antarctica. This is to spread awareness of the Antarctic Treaty, a document signed on December 1st 1959, where 12 nations declared that Antarctica would be off limits to military activity and set it aside as a place for peace and scientific discoveries.

We received an incredible number of outstanding entries! The shortlisted designs are now proudly displayed in the main Humanities corridor.

The winners were selected based on which designs would best stand out on an icy background and be simplistic, yet eye-catching enough for a flag. Winning flags have been sent off to Antarctica and we are eagerly awaiting a return photo from scientists who are currently there with our flags (see winners below)



RTX QUADCOPTER CHALLENGE

We have been very busy since the end of last term developing our Quadcopter for the RTX Challenge. Our design changed a couple of weeks before the first assessment. We worked tirelessly to get our new ideas ready. We were now going to send our drone to volcanic areas to collect data.

We were really excited as we progressed from this assessment to competing in the Regional Finals. This was nerve wracking as we had kept crashing our drone and bits kept breaking. We worked on redesigning our quadcopter and went through at least six design stages. The big day came and there were three judges to impress. The obstacle course was challenging too. We had 20 minutes to complete this. Milo was an excellent pilot and completed the course after a couple of practices in a couple of minutes.



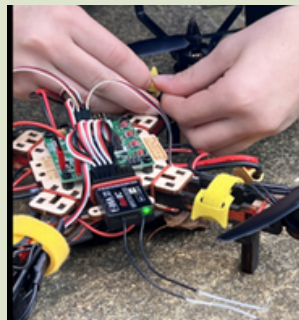
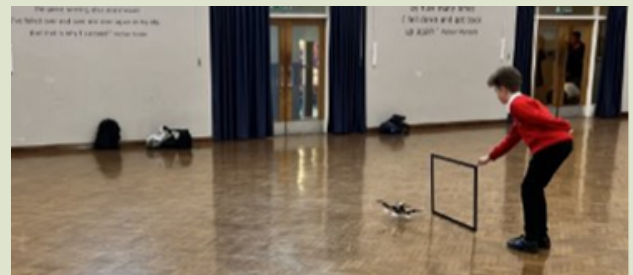
We found out that we had managed to qualify for the National Finals to be held at Cosford Air Museum.

We now needed to raise some funds to get there. We phoned and visited local companies and extremely grateful to Hassocks Hardware Shop, The Green Folk Kitchen, Phlorum and Brighton Vacuums for sponsoring us.

The pressure was on for us to complete our final adaptations. We had a great day. We found out that there were 174 schools from all over the UK involved in the competition and we had reached the final 15 schools. We were very proud. We had a very long day leaving at 5:30 a.m. and we did not return until 10 p.m. We didn't win but we learnt so much about design, communication, presentation and resilience.

The cage sections show the results of flying the drone in the obstacle course in a limited time. We came 5th overall out of 174 schools.

Position In Each Part of Challenge			Overall	
Cage A	Cage B	Presentation	Score	Position
4	5	10	386	5



MANY THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES FOR SPONSORING THIS EVENT:

HASSOCKS HARDWARE THE GREEN FOLK KITCHEN PHLORUM BRIGHTON VACUUMS

THE MAN AND THE ROBIN



THE ROBIN SITS AS THE AIR MISTS
IT SINGS AS ITS WINGS TWIST
IT LIFTS ITS FEET AS IT LETS OUT A TWEET
IT DIVES SO IT CAN THRIVE, THROUGH THE VINES THAT ARE NO LONGER ALIVE
IT LANDS ON THE SNOW, BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW.
IT STUMBLES AS THE DEER MUMBLE,
AND IT HOPS INTO HIS SHOP, AND RESTS UPON AN OLD MOP.
THE MAN AT THE COUNTER SHOWS WHAT HE NEEDS, BUT FOR SURE ISN'T GREED.
HE WALKS OVER TO THE ROBIN AND PICKS IT UP, HE PICKS IT UP AND SMILES.
HE SMILES AND SAYS, " IT HAS BEEN A WHILE" AND THE ROBIN PUSHES UP INTO HIS NECK.

YEAR 11 STUDENT.

FOOD TECH H - BISCUIT COMPETITION

BISCUIT COMPETITION

Year 7 students have been busy designing and baking Christmas biscuits for an exciting competition.

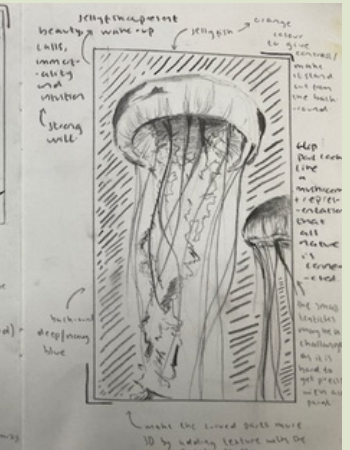
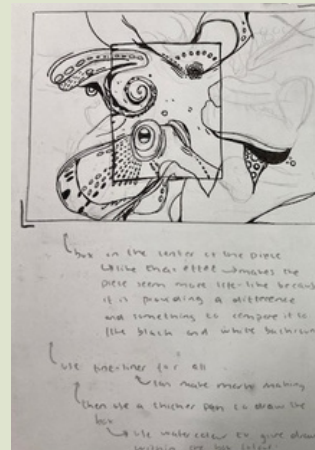
Here are some of the winning creations!



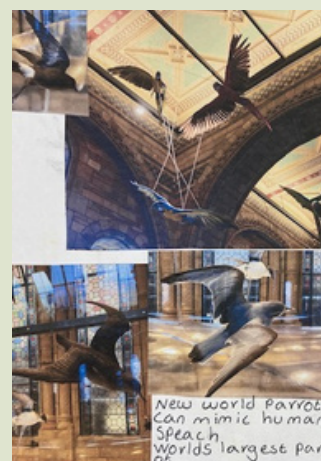
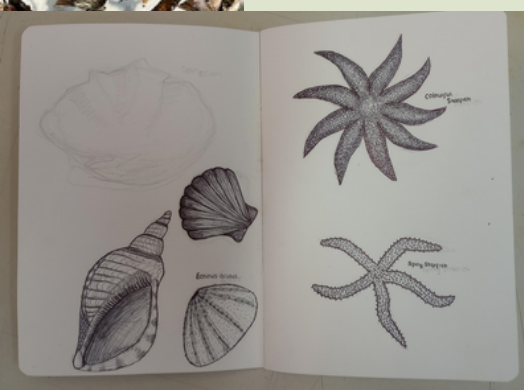
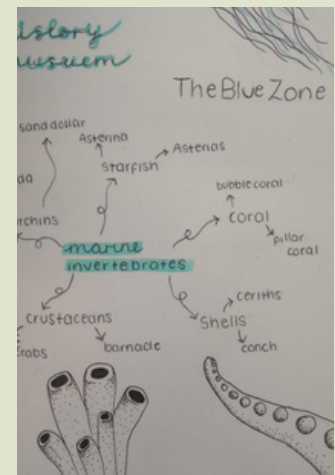
ART - NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM TRIP



The Year 10 Art students recently enjoyed a fantastic trip to the Natural History Museum, where they had the opportunity to explore the museum's incredible exhibits and gather inspiration for their artwork. From the impressive dinosaur skeletons to the stunning minerals and wildlife displays, students could observe the intricate details of nature.



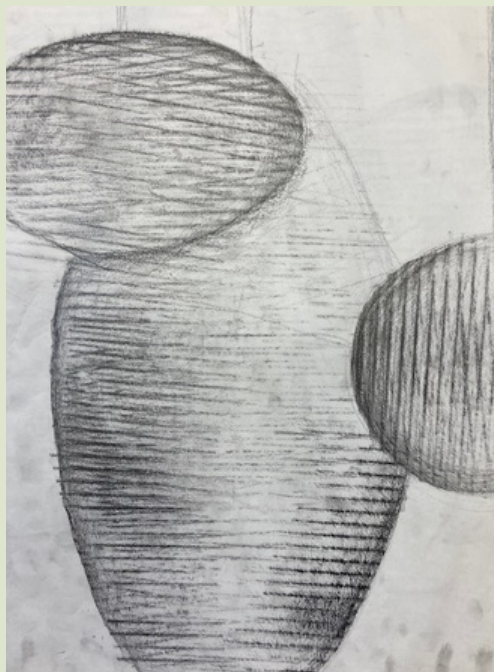
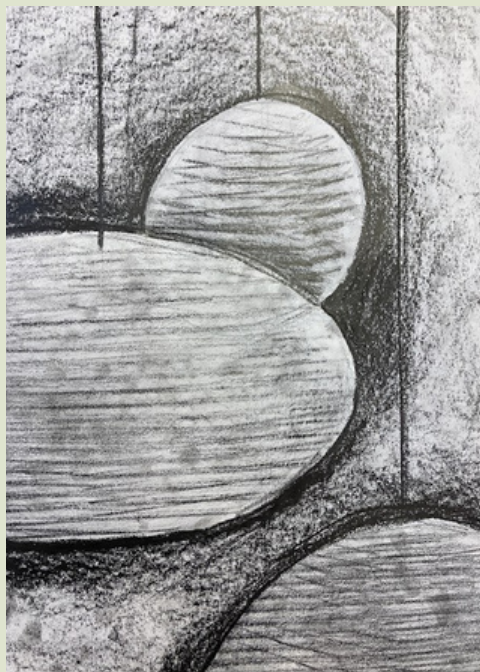
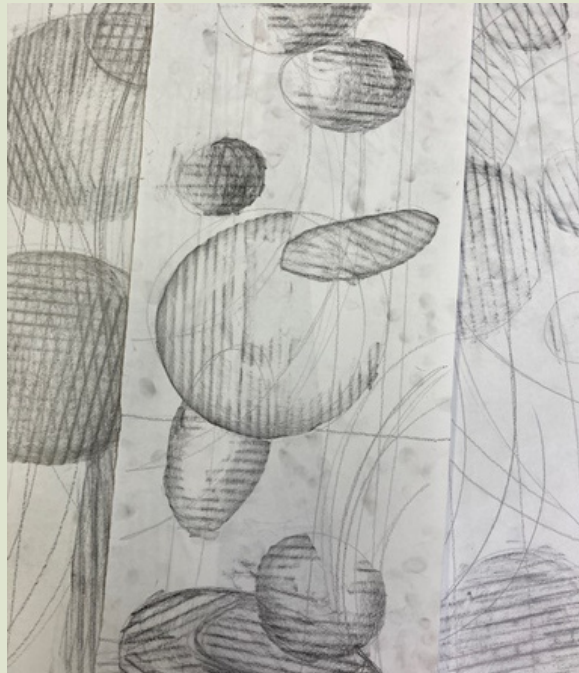
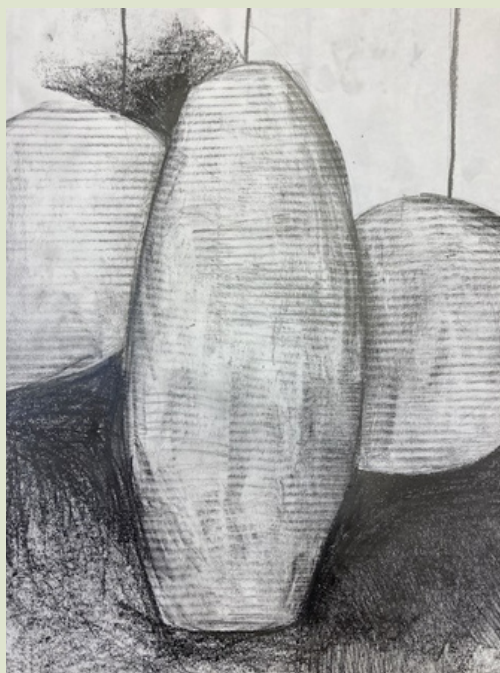
This hands-on experience will play a key role in shaping their art coursework, allowing them to bring a new level of creativity to their work. It was a truly inspiring day, filled with discovery and fresh ideas for their artistic journey.



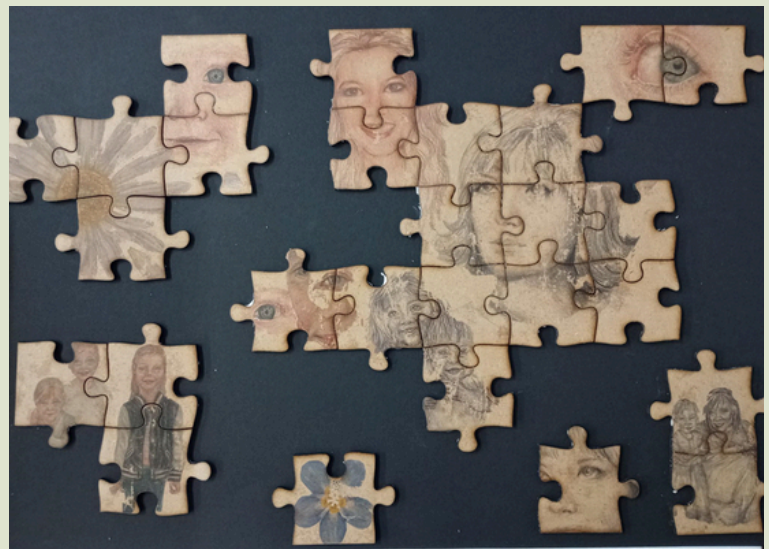
ART - DRAWING WORKSHOP



Students recently attended a Big Brave Drawing Workshop with talented artist Rob Le Grice, where they explored the art of observing still life. Working on an impressive large scale, they used graphite sticks to bring their subjects to life. This exciting challenge was designed to push their creative boundaries and boost their confidence in drawing.

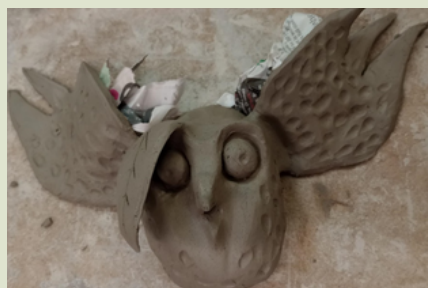


Year 11 have now completed their coursework worth 60% of the final grade. Pupils will be beginning their Externally Set Assignment on 2nd January 2025. A list of deadlines have been sent home. Here are some fantastic examples of our students work.



Year 9 Ceramic Workshop with visiting artist Jo Clemens

Year 9 pupils who are considering opting for GCSE Art have been experimenting with clay and oxide glazes. They have been inspired by Gargoyles and The Green Man. Here are some examples of their work in progress....



Library News – December 2024



The library has been busy this term, with lots of borrowing and library engagement across the year groups. Especially for year 7's who have borrowed close to 800 books collectively since September!

Please ensure books are returned or renewed before the due date to prevent overdue fines.

We've also had some new additions to the library team this term, and there are now 25 pupil librarians who help keep the library running smoothly at break and lunchtimes. As part of their role, pupil librarians also have the opportunity to create displays in the library; here are some of the most recent ones. Thank you to the students who volunteer their time, it couldn't be done without you.

Wishing you all a happy holiday and New Year!
From Ms Quick, Librarian



Happy
Holidays



Year 10 Netball

The Year 10 netball team competed in the Mid-Sussex league against nine other schools. The girls won all matches bar one and finished 2nd in the league! This is an excellent result and they should be very proud!



Years 8 & 9 Girls Football



The Year 8 & 9 girls football team has made a fantastic start to the year. They have won all games in the county cup so far against Imberhorne and Oriel. They are through to the quarter final in January! Additionally, they have had an amazing national cup run. They have won games against Blatchington Mill, Warden Park and Tanbridge! They are through to round 5 vs Imberhorne in the new year. We look forward to supporting this fantastic team and seeing how far they can go!

Years 10 & 11 Girls Football

The Year 10/11 girls have had a brilliant start to this school campaign. They have won league games against St Pauls 3-0, Bohunt Horsham 2-0 and drew against Oathall 2-2. We look forward to seeing the final league standings in the new year!

The team have also had a brilliant county cup run and are currently through to the quarter finals. They have won games against Shoreham Academy 6-2 and Uckfield College 2-1. We are very proud of this team and look forward to seeing the results in their final few games for Downlands.



Year 9 Badminton

The Year 9 badminton team played against St Pauls and Sackville in a fun badminton tournament. Excellent badminton was played and well done to all who participated!

Year 8 & 9 Rugby Team

The Year 8 & 9 rugby team played at Cardinal Newman this term. They battled hard winning one game 50 tries to 15! We are very excited to see this team progress and improve!



Year 10 & 11 Rugby Team

The Year 10 & 11 rugby team have completed two fixtures at Cardinal Newman school. They have played three matches, winning one game. They have progressed with confidence and ability and I look forward to seeing them play more matches in the new year! Well done girls!

Additionally, three Year 10 rugby players Layla, Jemima and Eva; have been sport leaders for the Year 7 girls rugby club this term. They are fantastic role models to the younger students and lead brilliant sessions – well done!



Year 8 Boys Football

The boys Year 8 football team have continued their fantastic start to the season. They have now managed to reach the final of the district league, which is to be played after Christmas. This was following an incredible semi-final match against Warden Park, in which with the last kick of the game, a 35-yard screamer, was scored by Oliver to equalise. Matthew then made two brilliant saves in the penalty shootout in order to take us through to the final. In the county cup the team have reached the last 16 and have a chance to reach the quarter-finals before Christmas. Well done to all of the players for their amazing efforts so far this season!

Year 11 Boys Football

It has been an absolute pleasure to coach this team over the last five years, they have grown so much both on and off the pitch and to see them get back to their best over this year has been a joy to watch. From taking them in Year 8 (Year 7 affected by covid) all the way to the county cup final in their first year in 2022, that being the most recent team to have won the county cup for Downlands, is incredible. Over the last few months during training, Year 11 they have been so much more dominant in games, developing as players, and I have no doubt they will all progress to do great things in football.

The boys recently made it to the last sixteen of the county cup, losing out 2-1 in a closely fought match against Claremont who are now an established football academy school. We have recorded two dominant victories this year and used around twenty different players, which in Year 11 is fantastic dedication from the team. It's been a pleasure, and I've been proud to coach the boys. (Miss Cole).



Sports Hall Athletics

We took four teams of seven to the indoor athletics competition at Haywards Heath College, representing their year group in boys and girls competitions against four other schools within the county.

This is the biggest turnout we've had over the last few years so it was a tough competition to qualify through, only the winners make it through to the regional finals later in 2025.

Our students did superbly, all competing in both track and field events such as relays, and individual sprint races over 100m – 400m alongside field events of standing long jump, standing triple jump, vertical jump, speed bounce and shotput.

The results were as follows:

YEAR 7 BOYS: 2ND PLACE BY 5 POINTS

YEAR 7 GIRLS: 2ND PLACE BY 9 POINTS

YEAR 8 BOYS: 2ND PLACE BY 21 POINTS

YEAR 8 GIRLS: 1ST PLACE BY 7 POINTS

YEAR 7 TEAMS		
ALICE LE NEVE FOSTER		JACK MERCER
KRISTEN JUPP		JACOB JUBA
LUCY MURRAY-WATSON		JONAH THOURGOOD-COLLINS
ORLAGH CORCORAN		PHOENIX BATCHELOR
RUBY DANIEL		STANLEY SHALLOE
SOPHIE ASTANIOU		TADGH KEARNEY
THEA WHITBOURN		WILL WESTWOOD
YEAR 8 TEAMS		
LEILA SPENCER		BEN COOPER
ISLA CHARMAN		DECLAN ZORATTI
PIPPA GREENHALGH		ELLIS ISAAC
ISOBEL GREENHALGH		FREDDIE FERGUSON
EVIE WOODBINE-HALL		LOUIE DOYLE
MAISIE PORTEOUS		RUBEN SERJEANT
MILLIE CHAMBERS		TOM LORAM



Year 7 Netball



We are so pleased to see how much our students enjoy netball here at Downlands. We are fortunate enough to have five netball teams in Year 7 and all students have been given the opportunity to play in a competitive match.

We have played Warden Park, St Paul's and Burgess Hill Girls in our fixtures and are unbeaten! We have many more fixtures in the diary to come which is exciting!



Year 11 Netball

This team continue to demonstrate a high standard of netball and are a pleasure to be with. Downlands are in the Sussex Cup, which is an elite competition of the highest standard and the Year 11 team played Brighton Girls. The girls played excellently, however they did lose to a very good team. Special congratulations to Charity and Ferne for being players of the match.



Year 7 Girls Rugby

This amazing team are currently unbeaten. They took part in fixtures as part of the U12 Sussex Love Rugby Festival and beat Oscar Romero, Durrington and Cardinal Newman. Continuing this winning streak at a County rugby festival in Worthing on a very muddy pitch in November, the team won all nine of their matches. This was an amazing achievement against some very tough opposition. Special mention to Ruby D who was nominated player of the entire tournament!

Year 7 Basketball

The Year 7 basketball team have made a fantastic start to the season and won nine out of nine games. The students are all incredibly dedicated and train at least three times a week. In the Junior NBA National League, they have faced tough opposition but have managed to win every match so far and are currently sitting top of their group. The team are also top of the Mid-Sussex league with a point difference of +100. Currently, 17 different students have played for the team and have all made excellent progress. The team have the Mid-Sussex semi-final after half term and also have the next stage of the Junior NBA national competition. Keep up the great work boys!



Year 9 Basketball

The Year 9 basketball team have started the season well and have won three games and lost two games (to very tough opposition). The team are working really hard and continuing to improve every game. After half term they have the Mid-Sussex semi-final and also two more national league games. We are hoping to finish in the top two places in the national league group stage to progress to the next stage of the competition.

Year 9 Football

It has been another great half term of football for the Year 9 boys. They have remained unbeaten this half term, progressing in both the district and county cups. The boys produced their best football of the year to be 5-0 up at half time in the District Cup semi-final against Bohunt. They have now booked their place in the final where they will meet Forest, with the game scheduled for the early part of January. The boys also continue to march on in the county cup following a strong win against Tanbridge. The boys now face a trip to Claverham in Battle knowing a win will book their place in the quarter final of the Sussex County Cup.



Year 7 Football

The Year 7 boys have continued to impress with their desire to play attractive, technical football. They completed a league game which saw them narrowly finish second overall. They then lost by the finest of margins in the district cup semi-final going down 2-1 to a strong Forest team. The boys continue to march on in the ESFA national cup. They booked their place in the 6th round, which is the last 32 schools in the country having started with over 1000, by beating a strong Regis team 4-2 under the lights at Downlands. They are the last team from Sussex left in this National competition. The boys are excited to see how far they can go in this competition!



Year 9 Netball

The Year 9 netball team have had some incredible success this half term. They won their game in the first round of the Sussex Cup against Great Ballard and then a further seven games in the netball league. It has been great to see an increased number of students representing the school!

Year 8 Netball

This Year 8 netball team have once again had an outstanding half term. They have beaten both Burgess Hill Girls and Great Ballard School in friendlies and the Sussex School Cup. They continue to train every week to ensure they progress and develop their teamwork and communication on court. They look to continue their unbeaten run since joining Downlands as they enter the new term.



DANCE

There has been a lot happening in Dance! Our extra-curricular companies are working hard towards creating pieces for our dance show in March.

In November, Year 10 GCSE students went to London to participate in a contemporary workshop at Pineapple Dance Studios. They then watched Mamma Mia at the Novello theatre and had a thoroughly enjoyable time!

In December, our Year 9 and 10 students participated in a workshop with Joss Arnott Dance Company. Students learnt repertoire and learnt new movement vocabulary which pushed and challenged them.





A guide to a more eco friendly Christmas!

By Downlands Eco Club

Why is this important?

Christmas is a joyful time but can often have a lot of excess and waste! This can lead to more rubbish in landfill which can take hundreds of years to biodegrade. Food waste can also emit methane as it decomposes, contributing in the long term to climate change.

Therefore, Eco Club would like to wish you a merry Christmas and help you with some simple ideas on how to be more eco-friendly at Christmas.

Reducing food waste:

One great way to reduce food waste is by creating new recipes from leftovers. There are lots of suggestions online but here are some of our favourites:

- ❖ Leftover roast potato breakfast hash:
<https://www.deliciousmagazine.co.uk/recipes/leftover-roast-potato-breakfast-hash/>
- ❖ Leftover cranberry sauce overnight oats:
<https://www.alenamenko.com/leftover-cranberry-sauce-overnight-oats/>
- ❖ Sprout pesto:
<https://www.deliciousmagazine.co.uk/recipes/sprout-pesto/>
- ❖ Vegetarian boxing day soup:
<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/boxing-day-soup> (You can always add turkey too!)
- ❖ <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/no-waste-christmas-recipes> (Turkey curry, Veg peel fritters and Cheese board mac and cheese).
- ❖ Christmas pudding deserts:
<https://www.taste.com.au/entertaining/galleries/leftover-christmas-pudding-recipes/r26rn9xv>

Christmas tree recycling!

<https://just-helping.org.uk/register-tree/> - You can enter your postcode to find out how you can donate to local charities in exchange for having your tree collected.

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/waste-recycling/treerecycling/> - Lots of local councils also recycle trees and some can even be put in garden waste bins!

Shopping local - Shopping local is a great way to support local businesses and to reduce air miles.

Some suggestions of local businesses in Hassocks, Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint: Humanity at Heart, Child Help Hassocks, Burgess Hill Lions book den.

Online platforms such as Vinted, Ebay, Depop and Facebook Marketplace are also a brilliant way of giving new life to preloved goods! It's also important to remember to donate items that could make lovely gifts before Christmas!

Wrapping/recycling: *People in the UK use 227,000 miles of wrapping paper every year, a majority of which is binned!!!*

So...how can You help?

- Don't use glitter/foil wrap as this can be more difficult to recycle.
- Use the scrunch test - if it stays scrunched, it's likely you can recycle it (it often says on the paper too!). Make sure to remove any tape.
- Wrapping that cannot be recycled can always be shredded and used to protect delicate baubles that are put away for the following year!
- Get creative - use newspapers and magazines or brown paper that can be drawn on!
- Use zero-waste embellishments, forage for sprigs of Holly for example!

Decorations:

- Decorations can also be upcycled/made from waste and are not only fun to create but can be saved for following years: <https://moralfibres.co.uk/zero-waste-christmas-decorations-to-diy/>



BERLIN TRIP

The Year 11 students were taken to Berlin. This trip was dedicated to students who are either studying German or History to further enrich their understanding of the language and the history of the city. The idea behind the trip was to show the students how Germany remembers World War II and the Cold War, as well as giving students the opportunity to practice their German with native speakers. We were chauffeured by a wonderful tour guide whose expertise on the Cold War and World War II helped the students understand the severity and long-lasting memory of the history of the city.



The students began by undertaking a walking tour, and observed the Reichstag, the German parliament building. This building is rich in history and the students learned about its use in the rise of Adolf Hitler, as well as the importance of the building in the Cold War division of the city.



The trip also took students to see various memorials within the city to commemorate those who suffered during both wars. For example, a guided tour around the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe gave the students a true understanding of the mass displacement and misery that was endeavoured by the Jews who suffered during the Holocaust. Students were asked to comment on how the memorial made them feel, to which many responded with words such as 'haunting, bewildering and devastating'. The students were then taken to Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp where they went into various barracks that people were kept in, as well as viewing the museum within the camp to further strengthen their knowledge, using primary evidence.



Students visited Berlin's Olympic Stadium, a breath-taking piece of architecture with an infamous history. The students learned how Adolf Hitler used the 1936 Olympics in Berlin to showcase the might of the Aryan, German people. This gave them an understanding of how sport was key in Hitler's propaganda machine to prove that the German people were superior to the rest of the world. Students were tasked with reading the various sports that had been etched onto the walls of the outer gate.

BERLIN TRIP

We visited many Cold War features of interest within the city and were taken to the preserved part of the Berlin Wall in Bernauer Strasse to examine the various murals that have been painted to remember the division of the city during the Cold War. The students were excellent at spotting metaphors and artistic interpretations of the Cold War and its impact on the German people.



To finish off the tour, we ended at the Palace of Tears, an exhibition that highlighted the consequences of the division of the city during the Cold War. The students were able to view propaganda films that were made during the time for both sides, highlighting the political alienation that many Berliners felt during the time period.



The students had some free time to buy gifts in one of Berlin's large shopping centres, as well as having the opportunity to try German cuisine in the evening, (Currywurst was a huge success). Students also had the opportunity to practice their German when purchasing gifts and food in shops and cafés.

Overall, the experience was incredibly moving and enhancing. The students observed with kindness and maturity and utilised the tour guide to further enhance their knowledge and curiosity. This allowed the students to get a feel for what Berlin had been through and gave them context for their German and History studies within school.

I believe that whilst the trip did contain some upsetting content, every student absorbed their surroundings and came away with a greater appreciation for the history of Berlin.





Unifrog for Parents

We use Unifrog, an online careers platform, at Downlands, to help us level the playing field for all our students to find reliable, accurate and up-to-date information on all potential career pathways and thousands of specific career roles.

As a parent/carer, if you wish to see for yourself what Unifrog is all about, please go to www.unifrog.org/sign-in and when asked if you have a sign-up code, click and add DWCS PARENTS when prompted.

Year 7

By now almost all of our Year 7s have had the opportunity to log into their Unifrog account for the very first time, taken their personality test, and begun to explore the career roles which might suit them. Students are very welcome to continue to explore the platform at home. As they move through the school we will be using the platform more to help them explore pathways and specific career opportunities.

Year 9

Year 9s have begun their tutor time programme by accessing the Unifrog programme, and are learning how to use the many different aspects of the platform. Their upcoming Careers Focused Character Day in January will give them lots of information and advice on choosing their options and potential pathways to follow after Downlands.

Year 10

Year 10s have also begun to explore the Unifrog platform during tutor times, as well as preparing for their Enterprise Day as part of the Character Day in January.

A reminder to Save The Date for 6pm on Thursday, January 9th when I will be officially launching this year's Work Experience for the year group with a presentation detailing all the information you will need to get your young person set up for their work placement in July. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Year 11

The vast majority of our Year 11s have now applied to their chosen colleges, and many have already had interviews and been accepted onto courses. Please do make sure that your child is checking the email used on the application regularly so that they do not miss out on the invitation to attend an interview, and a reminder that school will need to be informed in the normal way should that interview require the student to be out of school.

Whilst Varndean, BHASVIC and Newman have now closed for priority applications, it is not too late to apply to the other colleges. However, please do so as quickly as possible, as colleges fill classes as they go, and later applicants may find that their chosen subjects are already filled.

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	info@lovemusicschool.co.uk
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

If your child is interested in studying an instrument that is not listed don't hesitate to contact me at school via email awardrobe@downlands.org and I will try my best to find a tutor.

If the purchase of an instrument is preventing your child from starting instrumental lessons you may be interested to hear we have some Trumpets, Violins and Clarinets available to borrow from the department. Please get in contact if this something you would be interested in.

Kind regards

Mr A Wardrobe

Head of Music



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.

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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.

Your child's mental health and wellbeing: WhatsApp guide

WhatsApp age restriction is 13+

WhatsApp is a convenient and easy way to keep in touch with others. We know that connection to others is really important in terms of our wellbeing, however we need to be aware that there are also some risks to WhatsApp use, particularly for children and young people.

WhatsApp and emotional wellbeing

To start a chat on WhatsApp, all anyone needs is a person's phone number. If a child has given their number to someone else who then adds them to a group chat, everyone in this group chat will now have access to their number. This means that complete strangers can contact them.

Does your child know what to do if they get a message from someone they don't know?

Who is contacting me?

Be aware of chat lock. Chat lock is a feature which allows WhatsApp users to keep their chats in a separate locked folder, with its own secret code. This allows users to hide conversations, even if someone checks their phone and messages. This could include messages about harmful behaviours such as self-harm and inappropriate sexual content.

Secrecy and chat lock

WhatsApp has a feature which allows messages to be sent and only be viewed once. Unfortunately, this allows users to send inappropriate and abusive content which cannot be re-opened once seen. This means there is no evidence of what has been sent. It also means that if you check your child's phone you won't see a complete picture of what they have viewed.

You can never really know what has been sent or received by your child's account.

THRIVING IN EDUCATION

Disappearing content

Information sharing on WhatsApp can reach a lot of people, very quickly. This means that false information can rapidly gather momentum resulting in sharing of fake news. Children and young people may not have the critical thinking needed to understand what is real and what isn't. This also means that they may be vulnerable to scams. Internet Matters have produced a [toolkit](#) for parents and carers.

Scams and fakes

Teach them to be cautious

Guide them to ask themselves how likely a message from an unknown number is really from someone they know.

Adjust the settings

You can specify who can and cannot add them to group chats. You can do this in the 'Settings' menu under the 'Groups' tab.

Talk to them openly

Without judgment about what they are sharing and how they contribute. Consider with them how they can use group chats safely and that is okay to exit group chats if they feel uncomfortable.

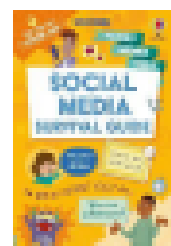
What can we do?

Internet Matters: What is WhatsApp – A Guide for Parents

[Internet Matters](#) is a fantastic website with a huge amount of information about internet safety. There are numerous guides for parent and carers, including WhatsApp.

Social Media Survival Guide

A recommended book for children and young people aged 10+ to empower them to stay safe online when using social media.



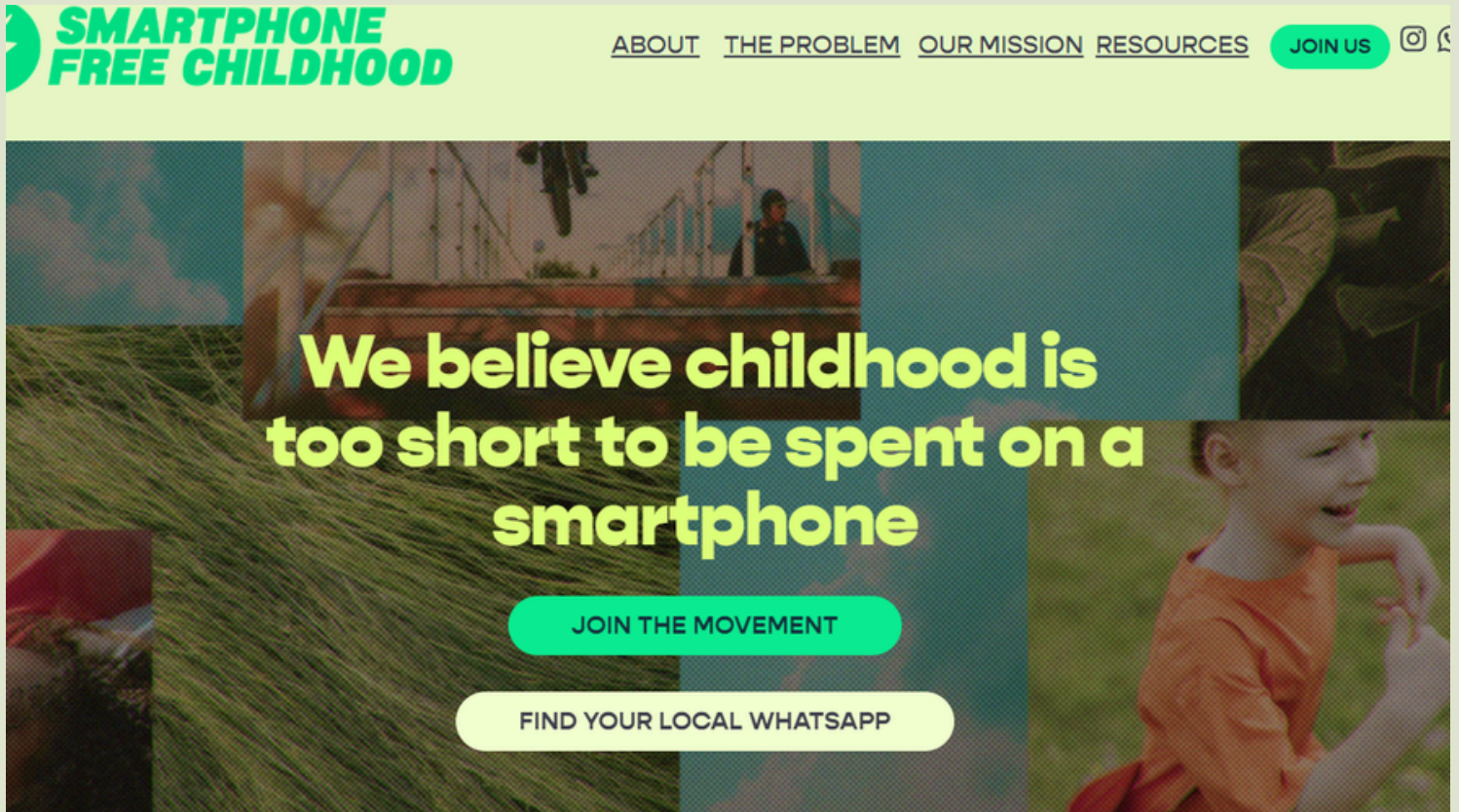
Thriving in education

For more support and advice, please visit our Thriving in Education [website](#) or scan the QR code.



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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



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>.

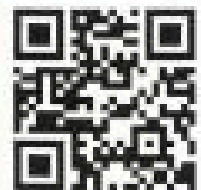
Those children and families that are not eligible for FSM will be able to access urgent support for food via the WSCC Community Hub. The Community Hub can be contacted on 0330 222 7980 and is open 9:00 – 17:00 seven days a week. Further information can be found via the [West Sussex County Council website](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk)

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



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



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Wishing you a very
Merry Christmas!