



4th April 2025,

Dear Parents, Carers, and Students,

Thank you once again for your support this term, it has been a pleasure working with your amazing children.

As you are aware, Mr Matthew Ashdown our Deputy Headteacher has been appointed as Headteacher from 1st September 2025. All at Downlands are delighted about this appointment, Mr Ashdown is a brilliant school leader who will continue our successful school improvement journey.

Thank you also to our new prefects, senior prefect team, and Head Prefects. They have made an excellent start and are doing a fantastic job in helping staff to manage the school. A big thank you also goes to our outgoing prefect team for their dedication and hard work.

I wrote home on Monday about Downlands becoming a smartphone-free school in September, please find the link to the letter [here](#). A uniform letter has also gone home this week with details of uniform next term and with the change to policy that from September the blue uniform will be for all Key Stage 4 students – [here](#).

We recently celebrated the Spring Concert which was a fantastic showcase of our students' talent and dedication. A huge well done to all the performers, as well as the music teachers whose guidance and enthusiasm made the event such a success.

Thank you to everyone who came to the Comedy fundraising event and a huge thank you to the DSA for organising it. The evening was fronted by the amazing Stephen Grant and raised over £2,500. The money raised by the DSA this year will help fund the ROCKs programme and new audio-visual equipment for the main hall. We are pleased to announce that the installation will take place over the Easter break.

Our ROCKS programme is committed to providing even more enrichment opportunities and we are excited for our next Character Day on 16th May which will feature trips to Wakehurst Place and the Arundel Wetlands Centre, offering our students the chance to explore and learn in inspiring settings.

Today we say a fond farewell to Mrs. Jones, our Business Manager, whose dedication and expertise have been invaluable to the school. We also say goodbye to Mrs. Duala, our Pastoral Support Officer, and Mr. Horne, our IT Technician, all of whom have made a significant impact through their hard work and commitment. We sincerely thank them for their contributions and wish them all the very best for the future.

We now wish our Year 11s the very best as they prepare for their GCSEs, with the first exam taking place on Thursday, 8th May.

Today marks the departure of the trip to Iceland, and we hope everyone has an incredible time. We're all looking forward to seeing the students again after Easter and hope you all have a restful break.

Many thanks for your continued support

Mark Wignall
Headteacher

CONTENTS

1	Words from Mr Wignall
3	Contents
4	Important Information
7	Spring Concert
8	Geography
9	Design Technology
10	STEM
11	Art
13	English
14	Food Tech
15	Steam Club
16	Diversity Club
17	Eco Club
18	Library – World Book Day
20	World Scholar's Cup
21	Dance
22	PE
28	Careers
29	Exam Information
30	Thank You – Downlands Community
32	PTA News
35	Useful Information/ Community News

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

INSET DAYS

- Wednesday, 25th June 2025
- Monday, 21st July 2025
- Tuesday, 22nd July 2025
- Wednesday, 3rd September 2025
- Thursday, 4th September 2025 Staff Training Day.
- Friday, 5th December 2025
- Monday, 5th January 2026
- Monday, 13th April 2026
- Monday, 29th June 2026

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.

- Thursday, 5th June 2025
- Wednesday, 11th June 2025

TRANSITION DAY

- Wednesday, 2nd July – Year 7's are not in school
- Years 8, 9 and 10 are expected in school as normal.

AUTUMN TERM 2025

- Friday, 5th September 2025 students return to school
2025–2026 term times can be found on the website calendar

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

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.

UPDATING CONTACT DETAILS - MCAS

Please ensure that any updates to your contact information are made through the MCAS app rather than via email. This helps us keep records accurate and up to date efficiently. Thank you for your support!

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



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

ONLINE SAFETY

Following on from the launch of the blockbuster hit, Adolescence; we feel it would be an appropriate time to share the following emoji library that young people are using.

We strongly recommend the use of family monitoring apps to help you keep your young people safe online and monitor their social media communication. Recommended apps include Fami Safe, Apple Family and Life 360.

You may also be interested in reading the updates published by the government on the Online Safety Act <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/online-safety-act-explainer/online-safety-act-explainer>

If you have any online safety concerns, please ensure you report these to 999 if in immediate danger or 101.



SPRING CONCERT



SPRING CONCERT

What a night! Our school's Music Concert was amazing, featuring incredible performances from the Jazz Band, Orchestra, Choir, Brass Band, and Steel Pans. Thank you to our talented students, dedicated teachers and wonderful audience for making it such a memorable evening!



GEOGRAPHY

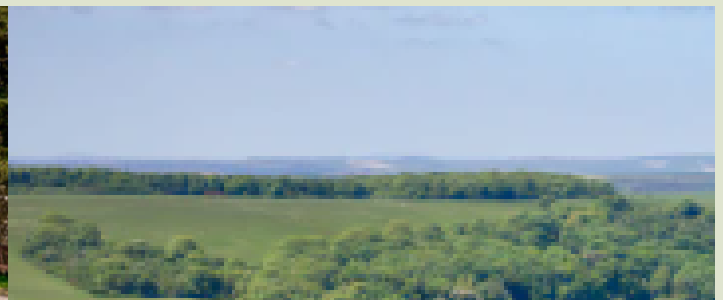
YEAR 11 GEOGRAPHY BOOSTER WEEKEND: BRINGING THE GCSE SPEC TO LIFE!

On Friday 21st March, our Year 11 geography students took their learning beyond the classroom with an action-packed 24 hour booster trip to Truleigh Hill Youth Hostel. With the stunning South Downs as their backdrop, they explored key topics from the GCSE specification: rivers, coasts, retail, and urban environments; by experiencing them first-hand.



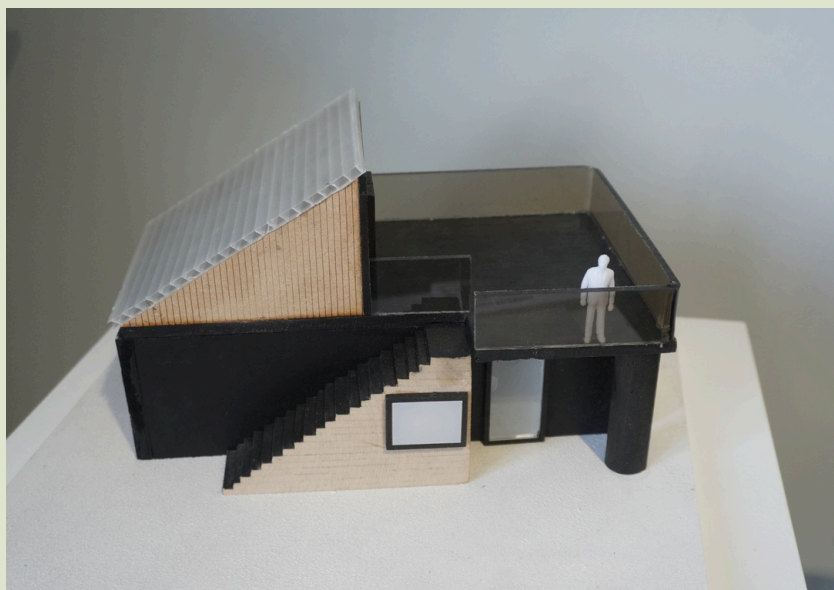
From Likert surveys to data collection, students saw geography in action, making invaluable links between theory and reality. Evenings were filled with fiercely competitive revision games, putting their knowledge to the test in the best way possible.

A huge well done to all who took part – you've given yourselves a fantastic boost ahead of exams! 🌍🇪🇺



DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

Students in Year 10 have been honing their skills this term through an Architecture unit. They have researched the works of renowned designers such as Thomas Heatherwick, Zaha Hadid and Sir David Adjaye.



A key focus of the unit was exploring the significance of the iterative design process. As part of this, students created a wide range of models and sketches; using both traditional methods, such as hand-drawing and physical model-making, as well as digital modelling techniques.

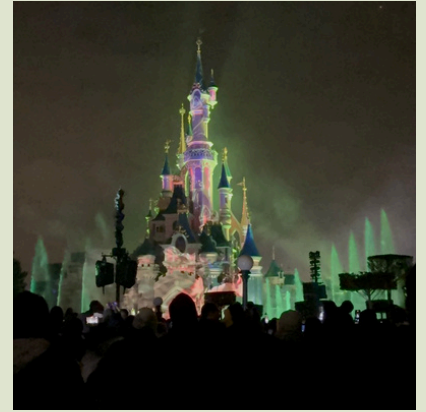
The final outcomes presented here showcase a combination of laser-cut and hand-cut elements, all produced independently by the students.



STEM STUDY EXPERIENCE TO DISNEYLAND PARIS

Over February half term, we took 35 Year 10 students to Disneyland Paris on a STEM study experience. For some pupils, this was their first experience of Disney or even a theme park. The excitement at 6am at Hassocks station on departure day was intense.

Over the 2 days of actually being in both the Disney Studios park and the theme park itself, pupils were able to experience the rides and attractions knowing some of the science behind it.



The trip included a Disney STEM seminar with a Disney Imagineer. This was interactive and allowed our fantastic students to show off their knowledge and application. After the seminar, the students were able to use a STEM app linked to the attractions and rides to complete tasks that were set for them. They were able to measure their G-forces on rides and also understand the biology into why some people scream and feel nauseas, while others love every minute of a scary ride!



The mapping for the laser shows to the pyrotechnics involving chemical reactions were also an eye opener to the amazing firework display that they were all able to watch at the end of the day. Our students were fabulous and thoroughly enjoyed the trip. The team of staff were awesome too and even braved some of the rides! Well done everyone, we look forward to taking another awesome group of students next year!

Mrs Shah

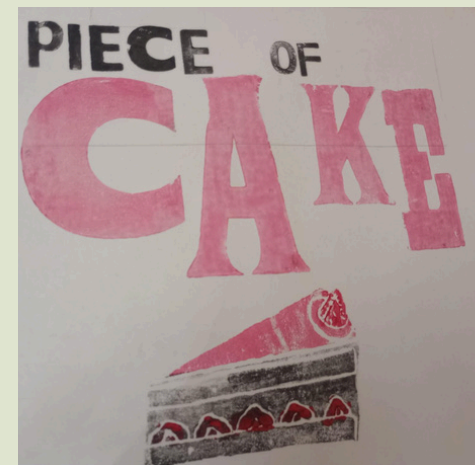
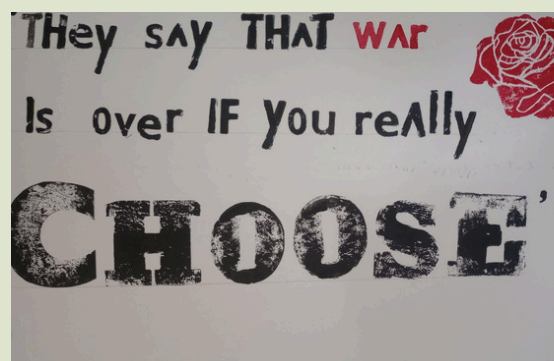
ART

DITCHLING MUSEUM OF ART+CRAFT



The Art Department recently took Y10 pupils to a workshop at Ditchling Museum. This was a fantastic opportunity for pupils studying GCSE Art to explore the museum's collection. During the workshop, pupils were inspired by posters from the Ditchling Press, originally designed to promote local events such as dances, fairs and theatre productions.

Pupils experimented with the museum's printing wood type blocks and created their own poster. Some of the work will be exhibited in the museum in a future exhibition. Here are some examples of the work!



Year 7 Matisse Easter cards Inspired by Henri Matisse

Studying Henri Matisse is essential for understanding the evolution of modern art, particularly through his innovative use of colour and form. As a leading figure in the Fauvist movement, Matisse revolutionised the approach to colour and composition, conveying emotion and energy in ways that broke from tradition. His later cut-out works demonstrate his continuous experimentation with materials and forms, showcasing his ability to innovate across mediums. Matisse's impact on art history and his ability to evoke deep emotional responses make his work a vital study for anyone interested in the development of modern artistic practices.



YEAR 8 WAR POETRY

Our students have been exploring war poetry, delving into the powerful themes and emotions captured by poets of the past. Inspired by their studies, some pupils took the initiative to create their own poems—choosing to craft original pieces rather than traditional creative writing or trench diary entries. Their work reflects a deep engagement with the subject, showcasing both creativity and thoughtful reflection.

In trenches deep, where soldiers lay
their courage tested every day
Through mud and blood, they bravely fought
In battles fierce, their lives were fought

In cold and fear, they fought as one
Facing the foe beneath the sun.
Their sacrifice, we must recall
In memory of those who gave it all

Angus, Year 8



The whistle blows, a chilled piercing sound
We stumble onwards through the clinging mud
Whole ghostly figures haunt the ravaged ground
the lifeblood spills, a crimson, tragic flood.

Each weary step, a burden hard to bear
the distant guns an constant throbbing dread
Through choking fumes and poisoned stagnant air
We march on blindly counting soon the dead

A flare explodes, illuminating fear
On faces gaunt, begrimed with sweat and grime
We huddle low, knowing death is near
lost in this landscape on borrowed time

No glory here, no honour to be found
Just endless loss, a future torn
with shattered dreams upon this cursed ground
A poisoned arrow piercing every heart

Alfie, Year 8

FOOD TECH

This half term in Food Technology, our Year 7 students have been busy developing their culinary skills by making fresh salads and delicious Easter biscuits. They've enjoyed experimenting with flavours, textures, and presentation while learning essential cooking techniques.



Jake



Emily



Oscar P.



Lucy



Zach



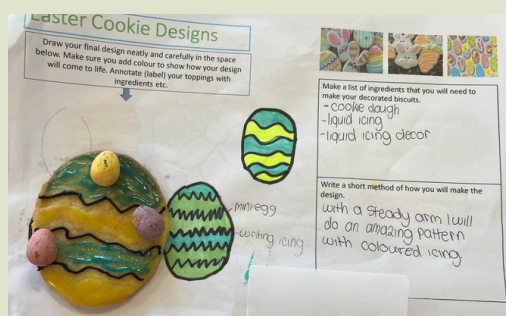
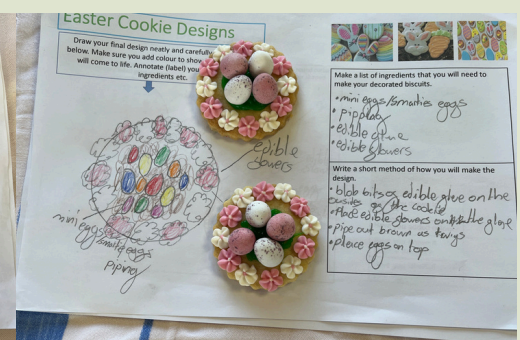
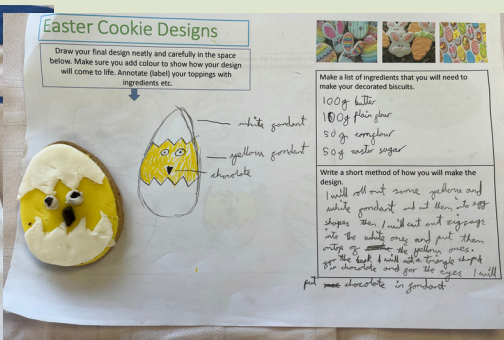
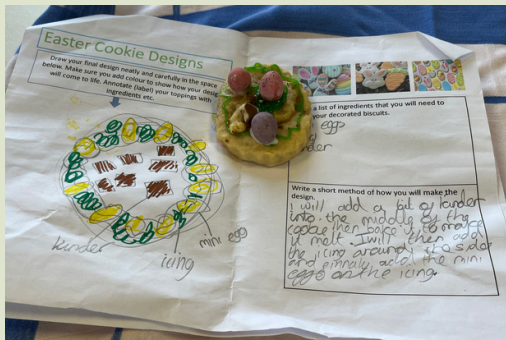
Eric R



Cam



Eric S



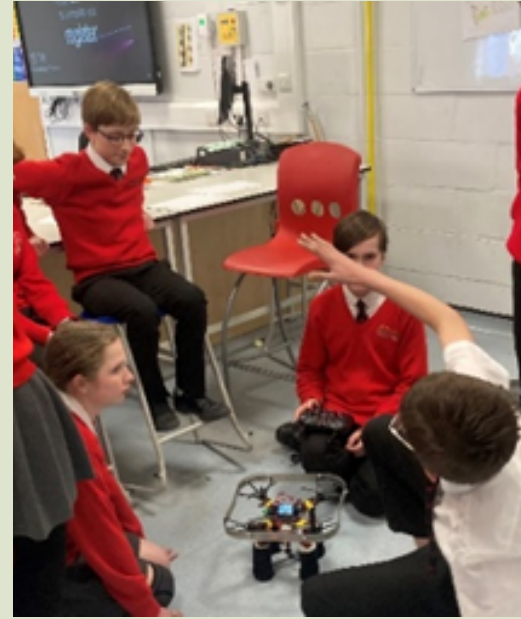
Year 7 food students were asked to design their own decorated easter biscuits and then come and make them in lessons this week. The standard was very high but our two winners are: Annabelle and Sophie.



STEAM CLUB



We have been busy finding out about the history of kites and had fun making some. We have also made towers, lighthouses, as well as learning how to build and program robots. We have all completed our drone flying licence, learnt how to calibrate a drone and had a go at flying it as well. We are currently designing a wrap for a F1 go kart competition.



DIVERSITY CLUB



CELEBRATING THE HINDU FESTIVAL OF HOLI

HOLI IS A HINDU FESTIVAL THAT CELEBRATES SPRING, LOVE, AND NEW LIFE.

Monday's Diversity club organised a celebration for the Hindu festival of Holi. They enjoyed making special sweets and sold them to raise money. They invited other students to come along and learn a special dance for the celebration.

We made £38:50 and we have decided to send it to UNICEF towards the Disaster in Myanmar following the earthquake.



WE MEET EVERY LUNCHTIME IN H4. COME ALONG AND JOIN US .

ECO CLUB UPDATE!

This half term Eco club had the exciting opportunity to visit Wakehurst place! We began the day taking part in Wakehurst's current citizen science project which is all to do with 'Trees for Bees'. This involved students learning about the huge range of bee species that we have in the UK (Over 1000!) and the importance of them. We then monitored different tree species, recording how many different types of pollinators visited each within a 3 minute time frame. We also had to record if the trees were flowering yet or not as some are experiencing seasonal changes due to climate change.

This research is to help gain a better understanding of the conditions our bees like and the types of trees they are most drawn to. It was really exciting to know that this data will be contributing to real scientific research!



In the second part of the afternoon, we were privileged to meet and talk to the Kew International Award winner for this year; Cécile Bibiane Ndjebet. She has won numerous awards for her work and activism around the importance of conserving land and women's land rights across predominantly Africa but also worldwide. It was so inspirational to hear her story and her passion. She then left us the mission to spread awareness of the importance of caring for our environment and raising awareness, even in small ways as the small ways can make a big difference.

It was a brilliant day and we were also very lucky with the weather - glorious sunshine and a really great chance to learn outside amongst nature.

LIBRARY NEWS

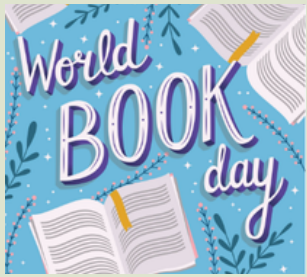


The spring term has been a big reading month at Downlands, with the Library and English departments working together to host events that inspire a love of reading in our students!

At the end of February, some avid year 9 readers took part in the Southern School Book Awards hosted by Hurstpierpoint College.



Over the previous months, these students diligently read through a selection of books, voted on their favourites and had the opportunity to attend an awards night in which they could hear from, and meet the authors! It was a fun and exciting evening for the schools taking part.



In March, staff and students dressed up in their favourite book character costumes for World Book Day! We had a fantastic time celebrating and were very impressed by everyone's creativity. Super effort to students who won prizes for their costumes! Donations made for dressing up on World Book Day raised an amazing £177 for Book Aid International; a charity which donates books and money to help build libraries in developing countries!



As part of World Book Day, students could also join the competition to design a captivating book cover which led to an amazing 163 submissions. Congratulations to the winners!



Students also raised money for Read for Good, a charity which provides books and storytellers for children in hospital, by engaging in an hour long sponsored read at school and asking family and friends to sponsor their reading outside of school. Downlands has already raised £218 for this amazing charity! A massive thank you to all students who participated.

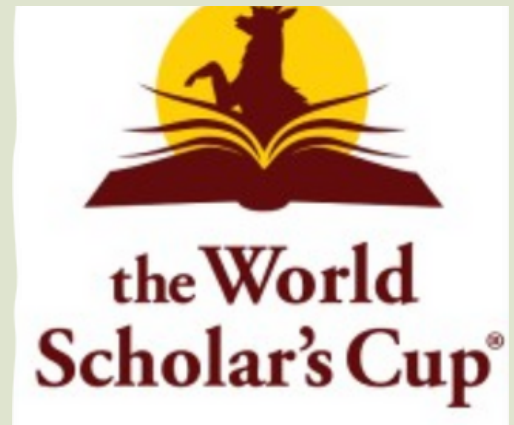
LIBRARY NEWS - WORLD BOOK DAY



WORLD SCHOLAR'S CUP

WORLD SCHOLAR'S CUP

Three of our students independently entered themselves as a Downlands Team in the World Scholar's Cup. They took part in the London-Surrey Round and achieved remarkable success.



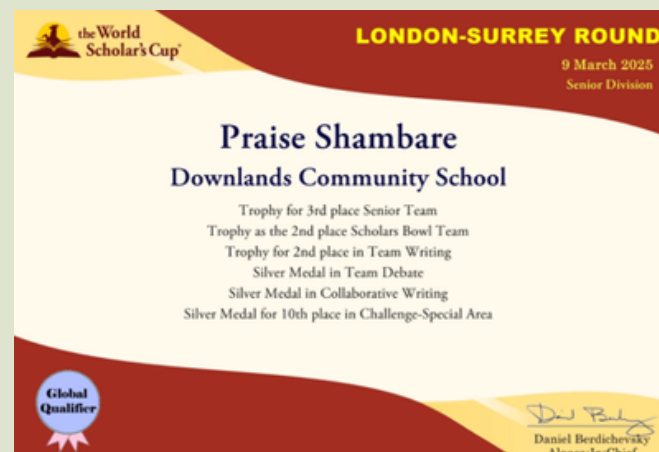
Every year, outstanding teams from all regional rounds are invited to compete in the Global Rounds, held in cities around the world. These events provide participants with the opportunity to enhance their intelligence, engage in complex ideas and challenges, and build valuable social connections with like-minded individuals. The Global Rounds serve as a unique platform for collaboration, learning, and growth. They also offer a special opportunity for students to represent their schools on a global stage, gaining fresh perspectives on international culture and innovation.

Despite being the only self-trained state school participants in a competition against top schools from across the country and mainland Europe, we came third overall, qualified for the global rounds, and won numerous other awards including:

- 2nd Team overall in Scholar's Bowl – Gold Medal
- 2nd Team overall in Collaborative Writing– Gold Medal
- Belle's award in Art and Literature – Gold Medal
- Tanya's achievement as the 2nd top scholar overall – Gold Medal
- Praise's award in collaborative writing – Silver Medal

This summer, our students hope to compete in Seoul, the birthplace of the World Scholar's Cup. This incredible opportunity will allow them to showcase their skills on a global stage, competing against schools from around the world and proudly representing Downlands on a different continent. They are currently working hard to raise funds to make this dream a reality.

Well done for taking the initiative to enter this competition—you should be incredibly proud of your achievement!



DANCE

Primary Dance Show

In March Mrs Brewington organised 'A Chance to Dance'. Our Year 9 dance leaders went into primary schools in the local area and choreographed with groups of pupils who then performed in the show. The theme was musicals and it was fantastic to see both primary and secondary pupils performing!

Let's Dance 2025

At the end of term we took two groups of students to perform at Let's Dance 2025. The students had a wonderful day and gave beautiful performances.



U13 HOCKEY

The U13 girls hockey team had an amazing half term. At the start of the half term, we travelled to Oathall to play a series of 3 friendlies where we walked away with 2 victories and a narrow loss. Later in the half term, we took part in the England Hockey state school's festival at East Grinstead Hockey Club.

The team played amazingly well throughout the tournament, participating in well fought penalty shuffles. The team achieved 3rd place, progressing as the tournament went on. It was amazing to see the team being able to represent Downlands and showcase their talent for a sport they play outside of school.



U14 GIRLS RUGBY

The U14 girls rugby has had a great run of fixtures this half term, with over 6 matches. They performed particularly well in the UR7s tournament. They used their strength, speed and agility to beat Oscar Romero, The Regis School and Reigate to top their group. The team have benefited from various matches held at Cardinal Newman this half term, developing their tactical awareness of the game along with their skill and cohesion.

It is amazing to see how their confidence has grown throughout the year and we are already looking forward to more rugby fixtures next academic year.



U15 BASKETBALL

The U15 girls basketball team travelled to Tanbridge to compete in a local basketball tournament. For some of the girls, this was their first competitive basketball game, but they took to the sport incredibly well thanks to the expertise of other teammates within the squad. It was amazing to get so many pupils involved in the tournament, and even better to see some incredible lay ups and defensive plays in action. The girls narrowly missed out on 1st place but did extremely well to secure 2nd – well done team!



YEAR 8 NETBALL



The Year 8 netball team continue to train hard, showing incredible commitment. They recently won their end of season tournament, playing 6 different matches, all without loss. There was some incredible shooting and defending on display, with the team moving the ball up and down the court with fluency and ease. The team continue to show outstanding versatility on the court, with all players being able to attack and defend with confidence. They will now progress into the second round of the tournament, representing Mid-Sussex. Good luck team, keep up the amazing work!

YEAR 8 NETBALL B & C TEAM

This half term, the Year 8 netballers have shown incredible dedication to the netball club, which was highlighted during the friendly fixtures that were held against St. Pauls. The two teams showed incredible progression of skill, as well as their game and tactical awareness. Both teams won their games, but most importantly, it was amazing to see so many of them enjoying their netball.



YEAR 9 NETBALL

The Year 9 netball team won their end of season netball tournament, winning all of their games. It was amazing to take such a large squad, demonstrating the depth within the team. There was some incredible shooting and defending on show throughout, resulting in them becoming the winners of the tournament. They too will now represent Mid-Sussex in the second round of the tournament. Good luck!



U16 GIRLS RUGBY

The team have had an amazing half term, attending the UR7s tournament. The team worked amazingly well as one unit, using their individual strengths to score some amazing tries. They showed some incredible pace on the ball and demonstrated their amazing tackling technique and strength. They came 2nd in this tournament and should be extremely proud of their achievements.



U13 GIRLS CRICKET



The U13 girls cricket team played in the County Finals of the ECB indoor cricket tournament this half term. They won their first match comfortably against Bede's, demonstrating some tight and consistent bowling whilst continuously finding the gaps with the bat. They did the same during their second game, with some incredible fielding resulting in us winning the game by 1 run. Unfortunately, the girls lost their game against the Regis school, meaning they narrowly missed out on the final due to runs scored. The team showed amazing skill throughout the whole competition and should be incredibly proud to have got as far as they did within the tournament.

YEAR 7 BASKETBALL

The Year 7 Basketball team have continued their amazing start to the season and have now won 16 games in a row and are still unbeaten! The team have scored 435 points and only conceded 143 points across all competitions. They have finished top of their Junior NBA group and will now progress to the play-off rounds after the Easter holidays. They have recently played the Mid-Sussex District Basketball final against Forest School. It was the team's toughest opponent yet with Forest leading by 9 points at half time. The team worked extremely hard in the third quarter and managed to cut down their opponent's lead to just 4 points heading into the fourth and final quarter.

The final quarter was very tense with both teams making baskets at either end. With 17 seconds on the clock, Forest were leading by one point. Ethan dribbled down the length of the court making the opponents think he was driving towards the basket in the attempt to score a lay-up, but Ethan had other ideas. He suddenly pulled up and hit a huge 3 point shot which then put Downlands into a 2-point lead with only seconds left on the clock. Downlands managed to defend ferociously for the remaining seconds of the game and secured the victory and are now crowned as the Mid-Sussex champions. We are now looking forward to the Junior NBA play-off rounds which start after Easter. Keep up the good work team!



YEAR 9 BASKETBALL



The Year 9 Basketball team are currently having a very successful season. They have won the majority of their Mid-Sussex district games which led to them progressing to the Mid-Sussex semi-finals. The team put in a very strong performance against Warden Park, winning the semi-final and recently played their Mid-Sussex cup final against a very strong St Paul's side. The game was extremely close with both teams scoring some outstanding baskets. Unfortunately, they came up short and narrowly lost by 2 points (1 basket). The team is hoping to improve next year and go on to win the cup!

YEAR 7 NETBALL



I have had the pleasure of taking the Year 7 netball teams this year. Netball club has been extremely busy with lots of enthusiasm and excitement each week. I am proud to say that we have had over 35 students represent Downlands and play competitive matches against other schools since September which is brilliant to experience.

Downlands have competed in both the Mid Sussex league and the Mid Sussex tournament and out of 12 schools, we came 2nd in both of these competitions, demonstrating the high ability of these students. Both of these events were of a very high standard and I can't wait for what the season brings next year in Year 8.

CROSS COUNTRY

We attended the Sussex Schools Cross Country event at Christ's Hospital in Horsham. The competition was for Year 7 students and we had a superb uptake of 16 students taking part. Each race for the boys and girls had over 330 runners. Competing against state schools and various independent schools, with approximately 54 different schools. It was an amazing experience for all involved over the glorious setting at Christ's Hospital.

We are so proud of all who took part, and have achieved so much as individuals in this cross country event. Their finishing places are as follows:

THEA W – 47TH
IVY R-M – 152ND

FAYE G – 140TH
KRISTEN J – 164TH

SOPHIE A – 142ND
EMMA G – 169TH

ORLAGH C – 151ST
RUBY D – 206TH

PHOENIX B – 23RD
WILLIAM T – 82ND

BEN T – 55TH
OTIS V-T – 158TH

TADGH K – 64TH
LEO B – 250TH

WILL S – 73RD
ALFIE T – 252ND

To have 6 of our students in the top 100 of their respective races is a new milestone for Downlands; it is not easy to run over distance and to have the mentality to push through is a huge trait. Well done to all involved.



YEARS 9 & 10 GIRLS HANDBALL

Following on from our successful campaign last year in the handball national competition we re-entered our 3rd place team, into the U15 competition this year, (the next age group for their competition). We faced Durrington and Tanbridge House where we knew we had to finish 1st to qualify, fortunately the girls were unphased by the challenge and played superbly throughout. Their development of skills and tactical ability in Handball has improved on last season, so we're excited for what's to come. We beat Durrington 10-0 and Tanbridge 4-1, giving us maximum points and qualification to the South East Regional Finals at Rochester, due to be played Thursday 24th April.



YEARS 7 & 8 GIRLS HANDBALL

A younger age squad has been introduced to our handball squads this year, with us entering a year 7/8 girls' team, which made up this year of all Year 8s despite a high turnout for trials at the start of this year. The girls have developed so quickly in such a short space of time, through curriculum lessons and clubs. Their ability shone through in the competition – playing against Durrington and Tanbridge House. The girls successfully beat Durrington 6-2 in the first game, and needed just one more win to qualify. The second game saw us beat Tanbridge 8-2, therefore booking our place in the South East Regional Qualifiers – to be played alongside the U13 boys at Score Leisure Centre in Leyton on 19th May. It will be a very competitive day but we have loads of excitement to see how far this team goes.



SWIMMING GALA

The finale of the year long swimming competition came to an end in March with our Junior, Inter and Open swimming teams going in the Super League B Finals up at the K2 in Crawley. We took 18 high quality swimmers to the event, varying from individual strokes to team medleys. Each team was created to give us the best possible chance of medals, with the students strengths on show. We fared well in a strong league with opponents from Seaford College, Warden Park, Brighton College, Bedes, Downsends, Lancing College and Patcham. As a team we finished in 5th place, scoring 150 points overall, 17 points off of 3rd place, which is an extremely respectable position to finish in when a lot of our students were swimming 1 or 2 years above their age band which is phenomenal. To summarise our medalists, here are the results:

INTER GIRLS 4X50M MEDLEY – 3RD

OPEN BOYS 4X50M MEDLEY – 3RD

IDUN M – INTER GIRLS 50M BACKSTROKE – 3RD

FAYE G – JUNIOR GIRLS 50M BREASTSTROKE – 3RD

THOMAS S – JUNIOR BOYS 50M BREASTSTROKE – 3RD

HARIS D – OPEN BOYS 50M BREASTSTROKE – 3RD

ISSY C – OPEN GIRLS 100M FREESTYLE – 2ND

POPPY U – JUNIOR GIRLS 50M BUTTERFLY – 3RD

GWEN W – OPEN GIRLS 50M BUTTERFLY – 3RD

LENNOX M – OPEN BOYS 50M BUTTERFLY – 3RD

SQUADRON GIRLS (ANY AGE) – 6X50M FREESTYLE – 1ST PLACE

SQUADRON BOYS (ANY AGE) – 6X50M FREESTYLE – 2ND



YEAR 10 - WORK EXPERIENCE & TASTER DAYS

As we head towards the Easter break about half of the Year 10s have managed to arrange confirmed placements for their work experience taking place on 15th–17th July.

For those still needing a placement, the holiday break is an ideal time to discuss choices with your child, and to reach out to any and all contacts through your own family and friend networks. Please check the live spreadsheet shared with you all, as this continues to change with some new opportunities opening up.

If there are any parents/carers out there from any age groups who would like to offer a work placement to a Year 10 student, please contact me careers@downlands.org and I can go through the details and practicalities with you.

The ever-popular taster days at both BHASVIC and Varndean are full for this summer now, but all the other colleges are starting to open up applications for their Taster Days, so do keep an eye on the website for what is open for bookings. Taster Days are a great way of students getting a flavour for some of the dozens of new subjects they might want to study when they leave Downlands, as well as getting a feel for the individual colleges.

As a reminder, ALL the providers will have open events in the Autumn term for parents, carers and year 11s to explore the college, and talk to the subject tutors.

YEAR 11 - DESTINATION DATA

We have asked all Year 11 students to complete their destinations box in their Unifrog account with the provider they believe they are most likely to attend after Downlands. If any students missed the opportunity to complete this 5-minute task during school time, please can they do so over the holiday. We are expected to record the planned destinations of our students for the government, so it is really important that this brief form is completed.

Please also ensure that your Year 11 child has added a personal email address to the settings of their Unifrog account. This will enable them to continue to access all the up-to-date information available on this careers platform for free, and to not lose access to any of the work they have already started, such as CVs, personal statements and logging of skills and activities which are so useful for future applications and interviews.

CAREERS INFORMATION - WEBSITE

<https://www.downlands.w-sussex.sch.uk/curriculum/work-experience-careers/>

Please visit the Careers section of the school website where you will find a wealth of information on career pathways and next steps:

- [General Careers Information](#)
- [Specific Career Fields](#)
- [Find Your Path](#)
- [College Open Events](#)
- [Work Experience](#)
- [Apprenticeships & T Levels](#)
- [Careers Education, Advice and Guidance](#)
- [Careers Speed Dating](#)
- [Job Vacancies & Competitions](#)

YEAR 10 WRITTEN MOCK EXAMS

22ND - 29TH APRIL

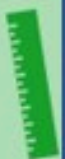
Before sitting your exams, ensure you know:

- ☐ the date, time and location of each of your exams. You might find it helpful to write this information in a calendar or planner.

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.

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 

What you cannot take into exams:

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

If you have any questions about your exams, please ask your teacher or exams officer.

gread@downlands.org



YEAR 11 GCSE EXAMS

- MFL GCSE Speaking exams – 28th April–2nd May 2025
- Photography GCSE practical exam – either 1st–2nd May 2025 or 6th–7th May 2025 (class teacher will advise which days)
- Art GCSE practical exam – either 6th–7th May 2025 or 8th–9th May 2025 (class teacher will advise which days)
- GCSE Written exams series – 8th May to 19th June 2025
- GCSE exam contingency Day – 25th June 2025 – This is a reserve date in the event of national or significant local disruption to exams in the UK
- GCSE results Day – 21st August 2025
- GCSE certificate evening – 27th November 2025 (tbc)

WARNING TO CANDIDATES



1. You must be on time for all your examinations.

2 Possession of a mobile phone or other unauthorised material is not allowed even if you do not intend to use it. You will be subject to penalty and possible disqualification from the exam/qualification.

3 You must not talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the examination room.

4 You must follow the instructions of the invigilator.

5 You must not sit an examination in the name of another candidate.

6 You must not become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the examination.

7 If you are confused about anything, only speak to an invigilator.

Exam timetable information will be sent from the following email address, please add it to your contacts
SchoolWorkSpace noreply <noreply@schoolworkspace.co.uk>

THANK YOU - DOWNLANDS COMMUNITY



COMIC RELIEF

WE RAISED AN AMAZING £1,111

A HUGE thank you to everyone who donated to this incredible cause!

We're thrilled to announce that we've raised over £1,111 for Comic Relief! Your generosity and support will make a real difference.



CHARITY EASTER EGG DONATION

375 EGGS DELIVERED TO THE ROYAL ALEX CHILDRENS HOSPITAL

Once again a massive THANK YOU! to our incredibly generous Downlands community, who have donated an AMAZING 375 Easter eggs to the children at the Royal Alex Hospital. Mr Matthews delivered them this morning.



DSA - DOWNLANDS PTA

THANK YOU TO OUR WONDERFUL PTA

The DSA are a fantastic group of friendly, dedicated volunteers who work together to raise much needed funds that directly benefit our students and school projects, including the Character Passport. From organising fun events to supporting essential resources, the PTA plays a vital role in enriching the school experience for our students.

We are very grateful for their help in organising and running the Quiz Night, Christmas Market, and Christmas Prize Draw, as well as providing refreshments at school shows and events.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

A huge thank you to everyone who attended our fundraising Comedy Night! We are thrilled to share that we have reached 50% of our £25,000 fundraising goal. This year, a portion of the funds will go towards new audio-visual equipment for the main hall, set to be installed over the Easter break. These upgrades will eliminate the need to hire sound and lighting equipment for school productions, reducing costs and enhancing performances for both students and audiences."

Thank you to everyone who has supported our fundraising efforts so far—let's keep going!

SUMMER FAIR - SAVE THE DATE

Save the Date! Our Summer Fair is happening on Saturday, 21st June, and it's set to be a fantastic day of fun and festivities. We can't wait to see you there!

THE PTA NEEDS YOU - CAN YOU HELP ?

LOOKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY?

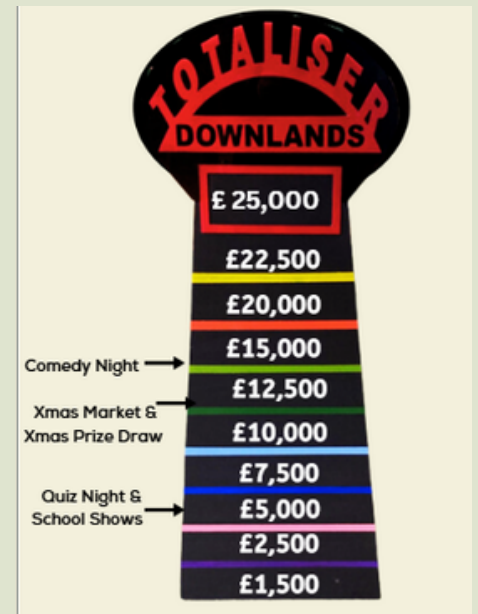
Our PTA is a fantastic group of friendly, dedicated volunteers who work together to raise much needed funds that directly benefit our students and school projects. From organising fun events to supporting essential resources, the PTA plays a vital role in enriching our school experience!

WHY JOIN?

- Make a real impact in our school
- Meet other supportive and enthusiastic parents/carers
- Get involved in exciting events and activities
- Share your skills and ideas—everyone's contribution counts!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

- Whether you can offer a few hours or take on a larger role, your support is invaluable. No experience is needed—just your willingness to help!
- Interested? Come along to our next PTA meeting or get in touch with us at dsa@downlands.org. We'd love to welcome you aboard!



TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR SCHOOL AND OUR CHILDREN.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

**DOWNLANDS
SCHOOL
ASSOCIATION
QUIZ
NIGHT**

Hosted by Mr Smith
6.30 bar opens, 7pm quiz,
10.30 pm finish

**Friday
9th May**

Teams of up to 6

Trophy & prize for
the winning team!

£8

Cheese
board
included



**This is a popular event and tickets
are limited so get them early!**



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.

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.

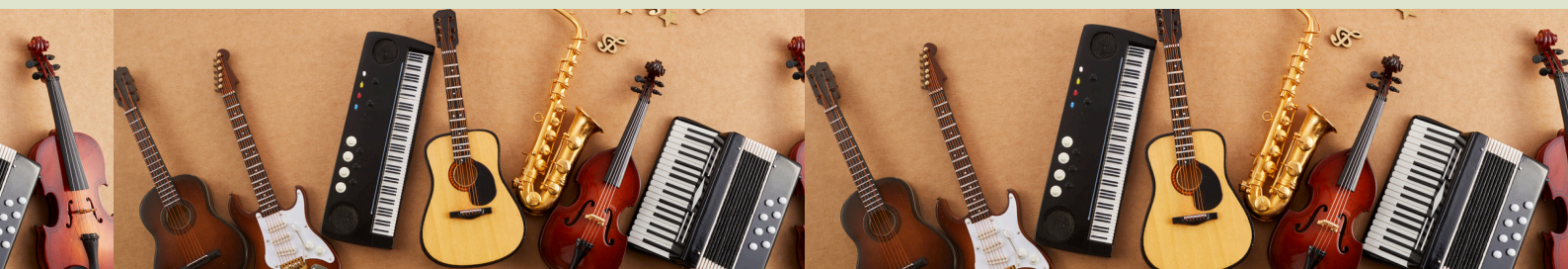
If you would like to enquire about additional music lessons with one of our Visiting Music Teachers (VMTs) their contact details, along with the discipline they teach, are listed here:

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

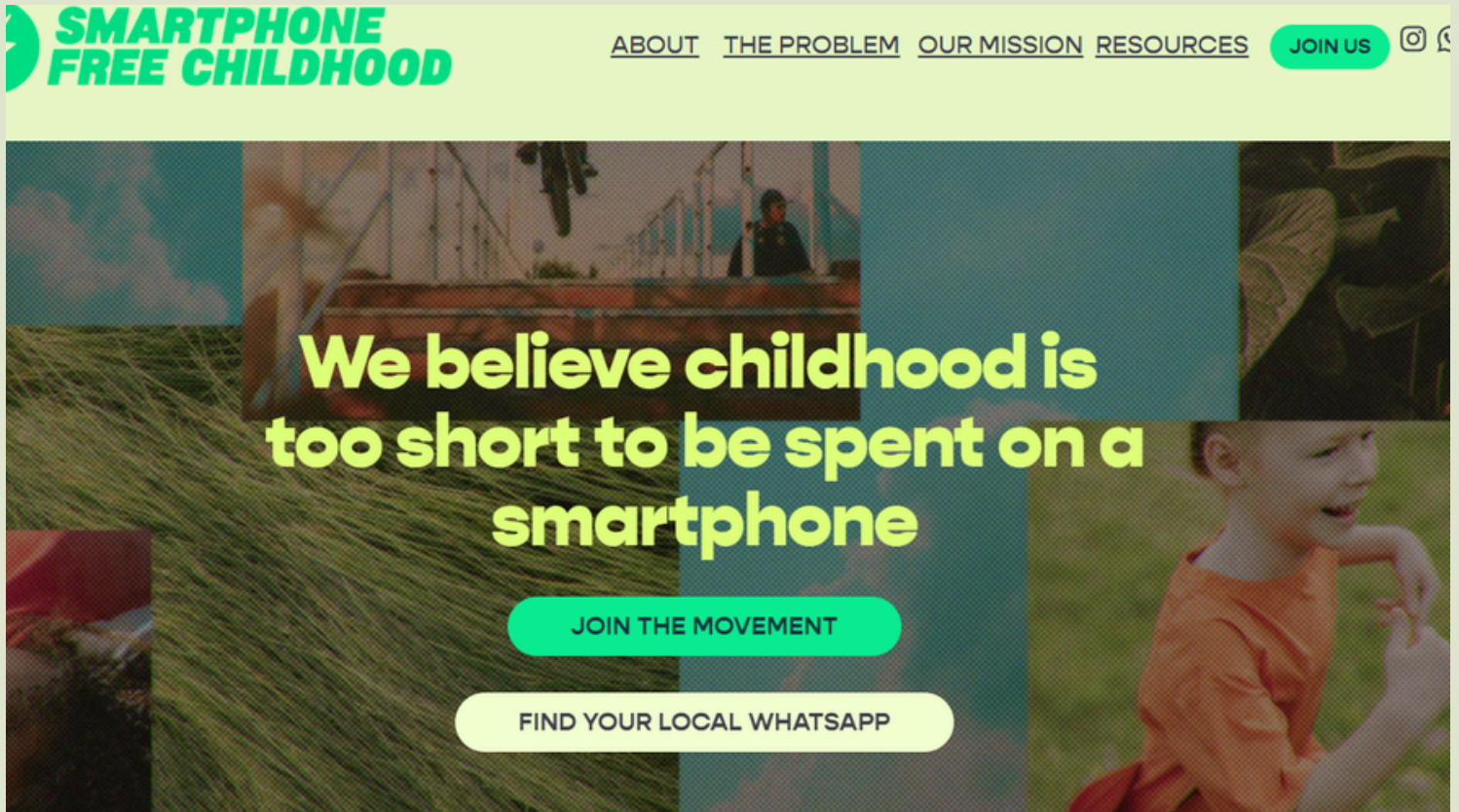
If your child is interested in studying an instrument that is not listed don't hesitate to contact me at school via email awardrobe@downlands.org and I will try my best to find a tutor.

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



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>



West Sussex Road Safety

703 likes • 1K followers

Like

Search

At West Sussex County Council, we are committed to promoting road safety and keeping our communities safe. One way we do this is through our West Sussex Road Safety Facebook page, which has been running for approximately three years.

This page provides valuable updates, advice, and resources to help parents, children, and all road users stay informed about key safety initiatives and best practices.

To support this effort and help keep children and families in your community safe, we would greatly appreciate it if you could share the following link with parents:

[!\[\]\(cf531ed27e91483460120fcc057b3901_img.jpg\) West Sussex Road Safety Facebook Page](#)

Together, we can make our roads safer for everyone.

Thank you for your support!

USEFUL INFORMATION

An online talk by Jane Keyworth



Supporting a Child with ADHD

Challenging the stereotypes, offering practical support and explaining more about this condition

Thursday 3rd April 10 -11:30am

Tuesday 29th April 7 - 8:30pm

Talks are recorded and available to watch for up to 48hrs after the session £24



Book online
facefamilyadvice.co.uk
go to **PARENTS**
on the **Homepage**



Easter Timetable

all sessions delivered live online via zoom £24 each 90 minutes long
book online at facefamilyadvice.co.uk

Facing Defiance	7 April 7pm
Anxiety Based School Avoidance	8 April 10am
Understanding Anger	8 April 7PM
Anxiety Explained	14 APR 10am
Cannabis & Ketamine Awareness	14 APR 7pm
What is ACT	15 April 10am
Introduction to OCD	15 April 7pm
Supporting Healthy Sleep	22 April 10am
Understanding the Teenage Brain	22 April 7pm
FREE Responding to Angry Behaviour	24 April 7pm
Improving Family Communication	28 April 10am
Autism Improving Communication	28 April 7pm
Understanding Addictive Behaviour	29 April 10am
Supporting a Child with ADHD	29 April 7pm
Anxiety Based School Avoidance	6 May 7pm

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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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

USEFUL INFORMATION



NHS
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:

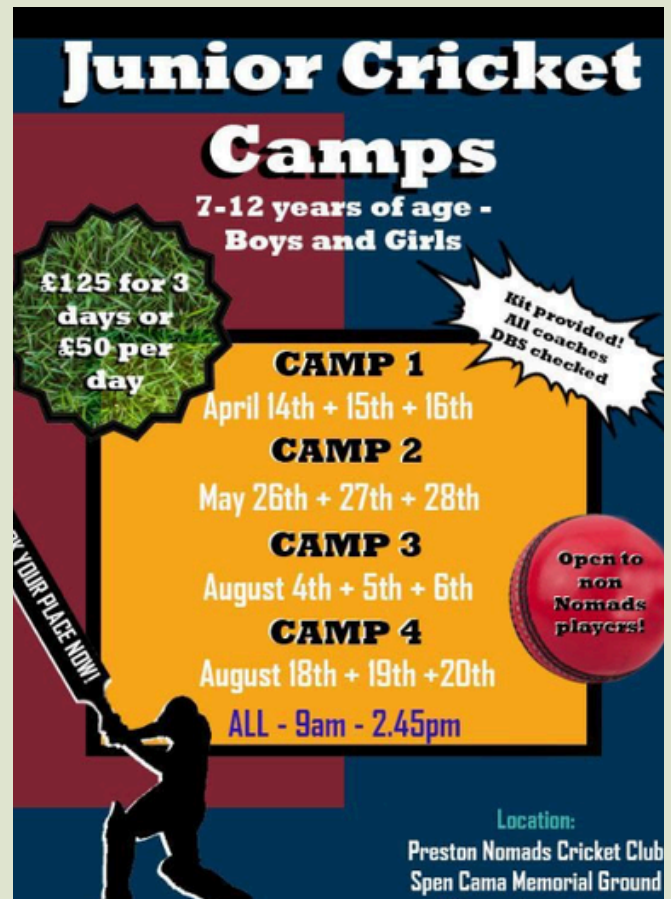
WWW.HEALTHFORTEENS.CO.UK

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

QR code



Junior Cricket Camps

7-12 years of age - Boys and Girls

£125 for 3 days or £50 per day

Kit provided! All coaches DBS checked

CAMP 1
April 14th + 15th + 16th

CAMP 2
May 26th + 27th + 28th

CAMP 3
August 4th + 5th + 6th

CAMP 4
August 18th + 19th + 20th

ALL - 9am - 2.45pm

Open to non Nomads players!

Location:
Preston Nomads Cricket Club
Spennithorne Memorial Ground



THE YOUNG ACTORS
group

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

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

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

HAVE A GREAT EASTER BREAK!

