



24th October 2025

Dear parents/carers and students,

It is my privilege to take up the post of Headteacher of our wonderful Downlands community. The academic year has had the best possible start, beginning with our Year 11 students achieving some of the strongest results we have ever seen. This success is a testament to the dedication of our staff, the hard work of our students, and the unwavering support of our parents/carers. It also serves as a fitting tribute to Mr Wignall's leadership over the past nine years.

Our results are significantly above national, county, and regional averages, with 87% of students achieving a good pass (Grade 4 and above) and 35% securing a Grade 7 and above. This compares to national averages of 67% for Grade 4+ and 22% for Grade 7+.

This term, we have warmly welcomed our new Year 7 cohort, who have embraced the many opportunities available to them. This week, they attended a fair showcasing our pupil focus groups, with many signing up to take part. They also enjoyed a day of team-building activities in our Forest School.

In these first few weeks, our students have been successful in building friendships, contributing to our school community, and engaging in their learning. As you will see throughout this newsletter, our ever-present ROCKS character development movement continues to thrive and remains central to our school's ethos. A shining example of this was our recent Open Evening, where over 150 Year 10 students and our Year 11 prefects volunteered their time to guide prospective families around the school. Special thanks go to our Year 7 speakers, Zara and Milly, and our Year 11 spokespeople, Lilia, Blake, and Frank.

Last year, Weald Community were crowned our Community Champions, earning a well-deserved trip to Chessington World of Adventures for accumulating the most ROCKS points through their contributions to our community.

We were also delighted to welcome visitors from Ashikita, Japan, who joined us for a morning of lessons and were hosted by our families as part of our international school programme.

This term, Downlands proudly achieved the Gold Award for the School Games Mark—an endorsement of the breadth and inclusivity of our sporting offer. A heartfelt thank you to our PE Department, staff, and wider community for supporting our clubs and activities. The final report praised our inclusive approach, noting the variety of fun and alternative opportunities such as Kin Ball and Capture the Flag.

It has been a pleasure to meet many of you at our Parent/Carer Information Evenings and other community events. Looking ahead, we are excited to host our Christmas Fair next half term, and I very much look forward to welcoming you there.

Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable half-term break.



Matthew Ashdown
Headteacher

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

INSET DAYS

- Friday, 5th December 2025
- Monday, 5th January 2026
- Monday, 13th April 2026
- Monday, 29th June 2026

EARLY CLOSURE- LAST DAY OF TERM

On Friday, 19th December school will close at 12.15 pm.

EARLY CLOSURES - STAFF TRAINING

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.

- Wednesday, 7th January 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 MESSAGE - SCOPAY - CAFETERIA

May we take this opportunity to remind you to top up your child's canteen account to ensure sufficient funds are available for them to purchase food, if they use the canteen. Students requesting debt from the Finance department should only be in extreme circumstances.

We thank you for your understanding and cooperation in helping us to promote independence, organisation, and personal responsibility among our students.

Finance Office

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

COMMUNICATIONS FROM FINANCE AND TRIPS OFFICE

Please note all communications for Trips and Finance are now being sent by SCOPAY, we have noted that some parents/carers may have unsubscribed from this in the past. This may mean you miss important communications such as;

Canteen Notices such as Christmas Lunch dates and payment details

Trip Application letters

Reminders about upcoming trips and final details

Please click on the link below to resubscribe and add downlands@scopay.com to your safe email address list;

<https://www.scopay.com/resubscribe>

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

MyChildAtSchool
Bedfordshire 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

Antihistamine Permission
EpiPen uses
Paracetamol Permission

Parental Consent

Bedfordshire Consent

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.

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.

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

MESSAGE FROM RECEPTION

As we approach the midpoint of the autumn term, we would like to express our sincere appreciation for your continued support in helping our students settle into their routines and approach their studies with focus and commitment.

Following the half-term break, we kindly ask that parents and carers refrain from dropping off forgotten items at Reception during the school day. By this stage, students are expected to take full responsibility for preparing for their day and ensuring they bring all necessary equipment and materials with them. The only exception to this will be lunch boxes, which may still be dropped off at Reception if required.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE MEDICAL ROOM

Please ensure that your emergency contact information is up to date. 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 to 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 antihistamines for the symptoms of hay fever. We ask that this be administered at home before the start of the day. Any medication 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.

CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS



As we approach the end of a busy half-term, we have taken the opportunity to recognise and reward our students for their hard work, effort, and commitment across all areas of school life. Staff have been awarding Bronze Postcards to pupils who have excelled in demonstrating our ROCKS values within their subjects, as well as Community Postcards to those who have actively participated in extra-curricular activities and school events beyond the classroom.

So far this academic year, our incredible staff have awarded over 27,000 ROCKS points and sent more than 2,000 postcards — a fantastic reflection of the effort, enthusiasm, and kindness shown by our students every day.

Well done to everyone for such a positive and successful start to the year!

KINDNESS FRIDAYS

This term, we have been taking part in Kindness Fridays during tutor time. Each week, students and tutors come together to discuss acts of kindness, celebrate individuals who have demonstrated thoughtfulness and compassion, and reflect on the importance of kindness in our everyday lives.

These sessions have helped to promote a positive, caring atmosphere across the school and remind us all that even small acts of kindness can make a big difference.



THANK YOU

#HelloYellow

YOUNGMINDS

HELLO YELLOW – SUPPORTING YOUNG MINDS

We were proud to take part in 'Hello Yellow' on World Mental Health Day. On 10th October, students and staff across Downlands showed their kindness and support by wearing something yellow to raise awareness for young people's mental health. Together, our amazing school community raised over £760 for the YoungMinds charity.

ROCKS REWARD TRIP

In September, our winning community, Weald, enjoyed a fantastic reward trip to Chessington World of Adventures.

Students and staff had a wonderful day filled with fun, excitement, and team spirit — a well-deserved celebration of Weald's success.

Congratulations once again to everyone in Weald for their outstanding achievements!



DIVERSITY CLUB



WORLD AFRO DAY



This term we celebrated World Afro Hair Day. We shared information about how different shaped hair follicles impacts the hair. We followed up with an assembly led by a Year 11 student who spoke openly about her journey through school. The importance of educating everyone about the wide variety of hair types and styles is paramount in developing an inclusive community.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

We also led year group assemblies during Black History Month, linking this to our ROCKS values.



Living the Values of Black History Month

How can you embody the spirit of Black History Month?

- **Resilience:** Keep trying even when things get tough —support others who are facing challenges.
- **Optimism:** Share positive messages and celebrate progress in your school and community.
- **Community Spirit:** Join school events, help organise activities, and uplift voices around you.
- **Kindness:** Show compassion and respect to everyone —small acts make a big difference.
- **Self-Awareness:** Learn about your own identity and appreciate the diverse backgrounds of others.

Honoring strength and success through challenges

STUDENT VOICE FAIR

We took part in the Student Voice Fair during lunch time, informing students about the Diversity Club and invited them to come along and join us. We made bookmarks and Indian sweets, as well as displaying some of the events we run.



DIWALI

We have shared information about Diwali.



Here is how our International Partnership School celebrated Diwali.



STEAM CLUB

DOWNLANDS STEAM CLUB

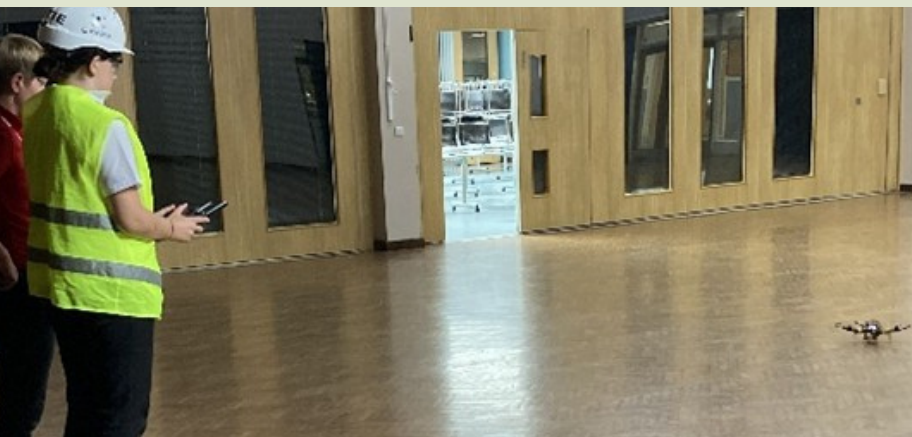
The Downlands STEAM Club is an educational programme for young people that focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics through practical, hands-on activities.

Students are encouraged to explore ideas, solve problems creatively and work together on engaging projects that connect classroom learning to the real world. The club aims to build confidence, curiosity and critical thinking while showing how STEAM subjects can lead to exciting futures.



USING DRONES TO CONDUCT RESCUES AT SEA

We have been busy developing our presentation about using a drone to conduct rescues at sea and have now reached the second round of the competition. This involved a day with STEM ambassadors from Collins Aerospace, where we built our drone and had our first attempts at flying it.



DANCE

It's been a busy start to the term in Dance! Our extra-curricular programme is thriving; we have started our Gifted and Talented programme, as well as Downlands Dance Company and Junior Dance Company. After half term, some of our pupils will be working with Ceyda Tanc Dance Company in order to create a piece for the show.

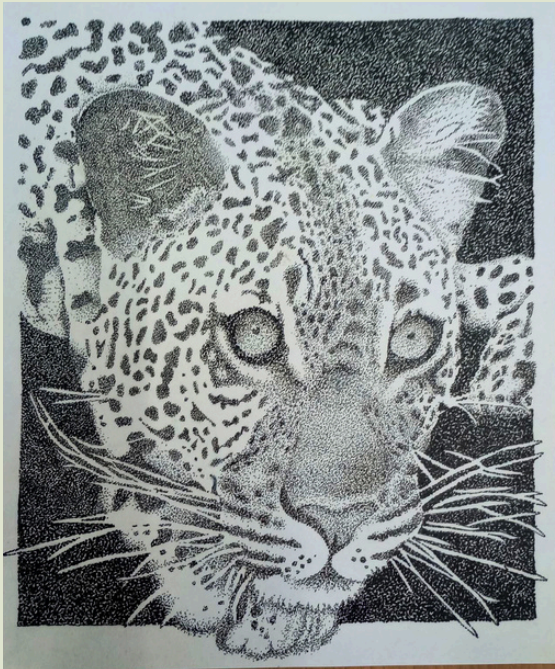
We've also welcomed our new cohort of GCSE Year 10 dancers. We had a fantastic trip to London, where students participated in a workshop at Pineapple Dance Studios and then saw 'Six' the musical. It was brilliant to bond as a group, as well as watching live dance in a theatrical setting.



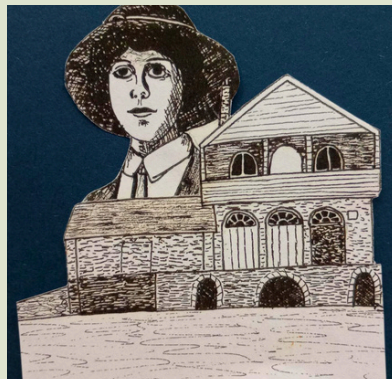
ART

Creative Highlights from the Art Department

Our students have been busy exploring their artistic talents this term!



Year 11 are demonstrating growing confidence and independence as they develop their individual responses in preparation for their upcoming mock exam at the end of November. Their work reflects thoughtful experimentation and a mature understanding of artistic concepts.



Year 10 have showcased their impressive craftsmanship by sculpting clay pumpkins inspired by renowned ceramist Kate Malone. Their pieces capture both texture and form beautifully and will soon be glazed in a rich palette of autumnal colours to bring them to life.



ART

Meanwhile, Year 9 have been diving into the world of colour and technique, learning new painting methods and exploring colour mixing to produce vibrant abstract seascapes. Their creativity and willingness to experiment have led to some stunning outcomes.

It's been a wonderful term of creativity, skill-building, and inspiration across all year groups — we can't wait to see what they create next!



PHOTOGRAPHY & TEXTILES

YEAR 9 GCSE PHOTOGRAPHY TASTER SESSIONS

Are you interested in taking GCSE photography?

Do you want to experience the Photoshop editing process?

Sign up for one of the taster session dates below on Bromcom.

You have the exciting opportunity to create work on one of the following lunch times:

Tuesday 11 November

Monday 19th January

Tuesday 27th January

One session slot per person.

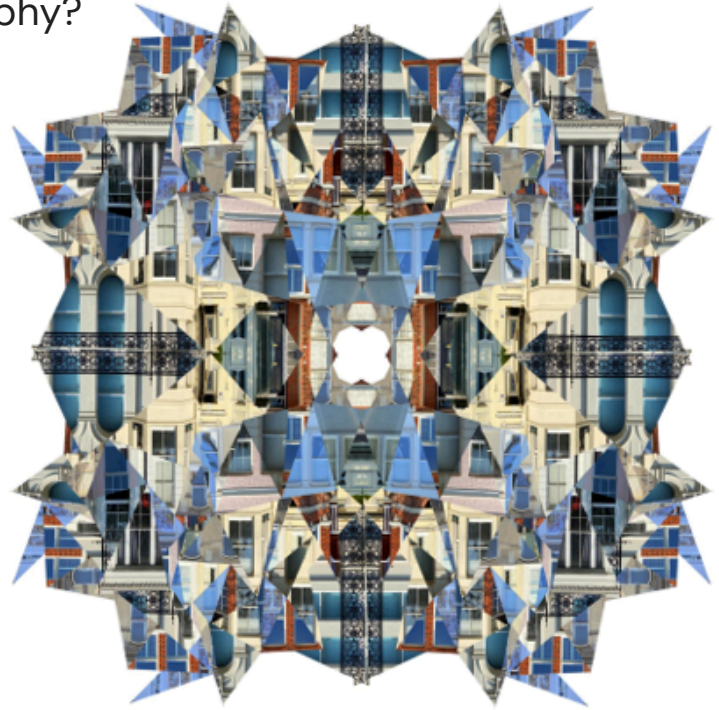


PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to the students who won Photo of the Month—well done on capturing some great shots!

PHOTO OF THE MONTH
WINNER
ALBIE 9EJ



PHOTO OF THE MONTH RUNNER
UP
BETTY 8MV

Submit your entries by the 1st of each month to
chamblywalker@downlands.org
Max 2 entries per person per month

REQUEST FOR DONATIONS – TEXTILES DEPARTMENT

We're looking for donations of **old newspapers** to help protect tables when adding dye to fabric. We'd also really appreciate any clean **cotton sheets** in white, cream or other light colours (no longer used), as these are perfect for dyeing and for creating toiles in Textiles. If you have any to spare, please drop them off at school reception.

Thank you for your support!

YEAR 7 NETBALL

It has been wonderful to see so many enthusiastic Year 7 students at netball club. We have many tournaments and fixtures coming up which is exciting, and we are looking forward to hosting and visiting many schools this year.

YEAR 8 NETBALL

Netball is very popular amongst our Year 8 students which is wonderful to see. Downlands recently hosted a versatility tournament with 10 teams attending. One Downland's team reached the final and beat Christ's Hospital 13-0 which was a fantastic result. This demonstrated what an incredible versatile group of netballers they are! We have many more tournaments and fixtures to come.

EQUESTRIAN NEWS

The following students participated in a school's competition at Hickstead recently. They came an amazing 3rd out of 63 competitors in the 90 cm jumping. The team also won the 70cm jumping with Amber coming 3rd individually, with 77 competitors in this class. It was a very good day.

The equestrian team also competed recently at Felbridge, in a national qualifying event, where only the top two teams earned a place at the NSEA National Championships on Friday 17th October. Downlands delivered an outstanding performance, finishing in an impressive 2nd place!



NSEA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The team attended the NSEA National Championships on Friday and had a fantastic time across both Thursday and Friday. The girls were an absolute credit to the school. Although it wasn't our day on Friday—with just two unlucky poles—they still had a brilliant experience and made the most of the event.



DOWNLANDS ACHIEVES THE SCHOOL GAMES GOLD AWARD



We are delighted to announce that Downlands Community School has achieved the School Games GOLD Level Mark Award for the 2024/2025 academic year. The School Games Mark is a Government-led award scheme launched in 2012, facilitated by the Youth Sport Trust to reward schools for their commitment to the development of competition across their school and into the community, and we are delighted to have been recognised for our success.

U14 NETBALL

The U14 Netball team have once again proven themselves a force to be reckoned with, delivering an outstanding start to the year. Competing in the Sussex round of the National Schools Tournament at Worthing College, the team faced formidable opponents, including several large independent schools, in a series of intense, end-to-end matches.

Undeterred by the strength of the competition, the team displayed drive and determination. The matches were closely contested, and the standard of play was high, but our team rose to the challenge. Every player contributed to a phenomenal team performance.

The team remained unbeaten throughout the tournament, earning a well-deserved place in the Regional Finals this coming January. They have secured a place in the Regional Finals this January thanks to their hard work and consistency. The team continues to improve, and we look forward to seeing how they progress.

The results were as follows:

- 8-7 win v Roedean
- 10-7 win v Brighton Girls
- 8-4 win v Hurst
- 14-4 win v Ardingly College
- 10-7 win v Seaford College
- 6-4 win v Burgess Hill Girls
- 10-6 win v Romero
- 9-9 draw v Brighton College



YEAR 10 NETBALL

The Year 10 Netball team have delivered a phenomenal performance this half term, remaining unbeaten in their league, with seven victories against local schools.

Among these was a particularly intense 8-4 win over a strong Warden Park side. In a high-pressure match, the team demonstrated composure and tactical discipline — capitalising on every centre pass and crucially turning over their opponent's play to secure the win. Across the league, the team scored an impressive 141 goals while conceding only 19, a testament to their dominance on both ends of the court and the incredible depth and cohesion within the squad.



The team also took part in a versatility tournament, which highlighted their adaptability, as players were required to compete in unfamiliar positions. Rising to the challenge, the team delivered an amazing performance, scoring 58 goals in 3 matches and maintaining a clean sheet throughout the event. Their efforts were rewarded with a well-deserved tournament victory.

After half term, the team take on Hurst in the first round of the Sussex cup, and we are excited to see what they can produce!

YEAR 11 NETBALL TEAM

Well done to the Year 11 netball team, who finished second in the Versatility Tournament at St Pauls. They played excellent netball competing against eight different schools. The team also played matches against Cardinal Newman, PACA and Blatchington Mill.



YEAR 8 & 9 GIRLS FOOTBALL TEAM

The Year 8 and 9 girls football team have had a fantastic start to the football season. Firstly, in the National Cup, they beat Shoreham Academy in the first round 3-1 with a fantastic team performance. They then played Varndean school and won 2-1 with a late goal scored by Alice. We look forward to the next round vs St Bede's in November.

Additionally, the U14 girls team played superbly well, away vs Bishop Luffa School in Chichester. They won the game 3-1. Well done to all the girls involved, and we look forward to the next round vs Chichester High School.



YEAR 10 GIRLS FOOTBALL TEAM

This team have made an excellent start to the National Cup, beating Thomas Bennett 13-0 in round 1. Following this they played Willingdon Community School in a closely contested match, coming out on top in extra time and winning 5-4. These girls will play Bohunt Horsham in the next round, good luck!



U15 BOYS RUGBY TEAM - WIN THE CLIVE MURPHY MEMORIAL CUP AT BEXHILL ACADEMY

It all started on a breezy yet hopeful afternoon on Monday, 22nd September. The Downlands boys looked tired yet hopeful for a victorious tournament ahead, clad in their black and white kit they entered with excitement. Even though their kit was clouded with bad luck they knew they could overcome it.

It started with Beacon where the lads started strong, a convincing 40-0 victory was enough to boost their spirits an early try by Rhys kicked off many tries by Daniel, Archie and Henry. A great start for the boys in black and white.

Next up was the home side, Bexhill, the team knew it would be a tough game and they were hit early, conceding 24 points in the first minutes. A few late tries in the half meant the team went into half-time 24-12 down. But little did they know Mr Blackburn had a few tricks up his sleeve, some clever substitutions and a great team talk got the boys up for it and they came out ready for a comeback. Some quick tries by Olly and the two rugby magicians Daniel and Tommy meant they were one try away from winning. This was when it happened; Tommy kicked it crossfield and a brilliant catch and finish by the ginger bullet Daniel won the game for Downlands in the dying minutes of the game. The substitute bench erupted in joy and Downlands took the win again.

Leading into the final game against Claverham they knew all they had to do was win or draw to take the trophy home. They started off a bit shaky, the nerves clearly getting to them; they were 21-0 down, and a scrappy try from Archie gave them some hope before the half-time whistle blew. Coming back out the Downlands team were aggressive and strong, getting some tries back. All they had to do was score, and they had won it. This was when Tommy broke the line and made a mad dash for it and he scored, that was an absolute worldie. All he had to do was kick it through the posts and Downlands would win the trophy. The entire sideline went silent in anticipation and Tommy started his run-up up he kicked it and it flew through the post. Downlands were in the final stretch. Some stellar defending by Tristan and Hugo down that left wing forces a penalty and Wilson absolutely smashes it off the pitch, forcing the referee to blow the full-time whistle. Downlands won the trophy and walked away victorious!

Written By Ollie



INDIA TRIP

This July, 27 students from Years 10 and 11 embarked on an unforgettable journey to Chennai, India, as part of our biennial partnership visit to Ellen Sharma Memorial Higher Secondary School. This long-standing relationship, now in its 15th year, continues to be a cornerstone of our commitment to developing global citizens—students who are curious, compassionate, and connected to the wider world.

The week-long trip was packed with cultural exchange, learning, and friendship. Our students spent most of their time immersed in the vibrant life of Ellen Sharma School, participating in a wide range of workshops alongside their Indian peers. From the graceful movements of classical dance and the calming flow of yoga to the fiery energy of silambam (a traditional martial art), every activity offered a window into the rich cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu.



One of the most memorable aspects of the visit was the traditional cooking workshop, where students learned to prepare local dishes using authentic techniques and ingredients. The aromas, flavours, and teamwork made it a truly sensory experience that brought everyone together.



INDIA TRIP

Beyond the school gates, we explored the local area through two enriching day trips. One day was spent visiting the historic town of Mamallapuram, the cultural museum Dakshina Chitra, and the Crocodile Bank—a conservation centre that fascinated students with its diverse reptile species. The second day took us into the heart of Chennai city, where we visited the stunning Kapaleeshwarar Temple, a masterpiece of Dravidian architecture, followed by some well-earned shopping in the bustling local markets.



Throughout the trip, our students demonstrated maturity, enthusiasm, and a genuine openness to new experiences. They represented our school with pride and respect. Their ability to adapt, engage, and lead was inspiring, and we couldn't be prouder of how they embraced every opportunity. This partnership with Ellen Sharma Memorial Higher Secondary School is more than just a trip—it's a living example of how education can transcend borders. It reminds us that global citizenship is not just taught in classrooms but lived through shared experiences, mutual respect, and cultural understanding. We look forward to continuing this meaningful relationship and to the next chapter in our journey together.



YEAR 7 CAMP

In July, 225 of our Year 7 students set off for an unforgettable week at YMCA Fairthorne Manor near Southampton. The camp offered the perfect setting for adventure, friendship, and personal growth—and our students embraced every challenge with resilience and optimism.

From kayaking across calm waters to aiming high in archery, students pushed themselves to try new things and overcome fears. The low ropes course and team-building activities were especially powerful in fostering a strong sense of community, as students learned to trust and support one another through each obstacle.

Kindness was woven into every moment—whether it was helping a friend with their harness, cheering on a teammate, or simply sharing a laugh during downtime. One of the most joyful evenings featured a giant slip and slide, where laughter echoed across the fields and students celebrated each other's daring slides with infectious enthusiasm.



Self-awareness grew steadily throughout the week, as students reflected on their strengths, learned from their experiences, and discovered new ways to connect with others. The final evening brought everyone together around a glowing campfire, where hot chocolate, songs, and shared stories created a warm and reflective atmosphere. Students spoke about their favourite moments, the friendships they had formed.



Year 7 Camp is more than just a week away—it's a milestone in our students' journey, helping them build confidence, deepen relationships, and live out the values that define our school. We are incredibly proud of how each student embodied Resilience, Optimism, Community, Kindness, and Self-awareness throughout the week.

CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT

As the summer term drew to a close, our Year 8 and Year 9 students took part in an exciting week of Curriculum Enrichment Activities (CEA)—a celebration of a fantastic year and a chance to further develop their Resilience, Optimism, Community, Kindness, and Self-awareness.

Each student selected an activity that suited their interests and challenged them in new ways. One group spent the week designing and building rollercoasters from scrap materials in school, showcasing incredible creativity and resilience. Their efforts were rewarded with a thrilling visit to Thorpe Park, where they saw engineering in action and tested their creations against the real thing.

Another group channelled their artistic flair with a visit to Brighton's Pottery Painting Café, followed by a cupcake design and baking session back at school. Their optimism and self-expression shone through in every brushstroke and sprinkle.

For those seeking adventure, two action-packed days in Crawley offered laser-tag and paintballing—activities that demanded teamwork, courage, and quick thinking. Meanwhile, the Brighton Explore experience gave students a chance to discover their local city with fresh eyes, visiting Brighton Pier, the Upside Down House, an escape room, and Jungle Rumble mini golf. These activities fostered community spirit and self-awareness as students navigated challenges and celebrated shared successes.

A magical journey awaited those who visited the Harry Potter Studios, followed by a relaxed day in school watching the films together. Kindness and camaraderie were at the heart of this experience, as students bonded over their shared love of storytelling.

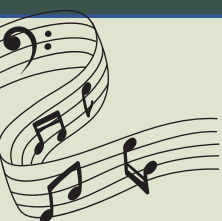
Beach lovers enjoyed volleyball at YellowWave and watersports at Hove Lagoon, where resilience and optimism were tested by waves and wind—but smiles never faded. Finally, speed enthusiasts had their adrenaline pumping with go-karting at Q Leisure and virtual racing at Vroom in Brighton Marina, combining physical skill with digital precision.

Across all activities, students demonstrated the very best of our school values. The CEA week was not just a reward—it was a meaningful extension of our curriculum, helping students grow as individuals and as part of a wider community.

We are incredibly proud of how our students embraced the opportunities, supported one another, and lived out their ROCKS values in every moment.



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 *	Ms Lai	www.westsussexmusic.co.uk
Singing		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.

*Help with the cost for selected lessons is available for qualifying families. You can apply for the West Sussex Bursary here www.westsussexmusic.co.uk/bursary/

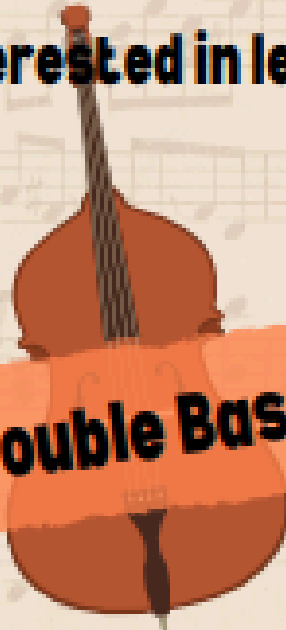
If the purchase of an instrument is preventing your child from starting instrumental lessons you may be interested to hear we have some Trumpets, Violins and Clarinets available to borrow from the department. Please get in contact if this something you would be interested in.

Mr A Wardrobe
Head of Music



Endangered Instruments Bursary!

Ask the music department if you are
interested in learning one of these FOR FREE!

A brown double bass instrument.

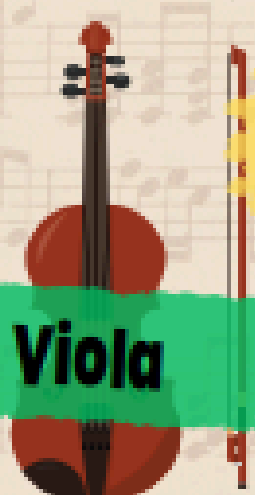
Double Bass

A black oboe instrument.

Oboe

A brass French horn instrument.

French Horn

A red viola instrument with a bow.

Viola

A dark wood bassoon instrument.

Bassoon

YEAR 11 GCSE INFORMATION

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO JOINED US FOR THE YEAR 11 GCSE REVISION INFORMATION EVENING

Your attendance reflects a real commitment to supporting your child at this crucial stage, and we are genuinely grateful for the time you gave to be there.

Evenings like this make a tangible difference. When parents and carers are informed and actively involved, students feel more supported, more confident, and better prepared for the challenges ahead.

The guidance shared during the session is designed to help you actively support your child's revision and navigate the GCSE period with clarity.

By working together, we can give our young people the strongest possible start to their exams.

YR11 MOCK EXAMS WILL BE HELD 3RD-14TH NOVEMBER EXAM TIME TABLES CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEBSITE:

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

Exam Day – Check list

Before sitting your exams, ensure you know:

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

What you 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)



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.

DSA - DOWNLANDS PTA

The Downlands PTA (Downlands School Association) 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.

2024/25 FUNDRAISING: SUPPORTING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS & THE CHARACTER PASSPORT

Last year's funds have been used to purchase new audio-visual equipment for the main hall, replacing our outdated system. These upgrades mean we no longer need to hire sound and lighting equipment for school productions, resulting in significant cost savings while enhancing the experience for both students and audiences.

Additionally, funds have supported the Character Passport initiative and contributed to the renovation of our Design Technology rooms.

THE PTA NEEDS YOU - CAN YOU 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? Get in touch with us at dsa@downlands.org

WHY JOIN?

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

DOWNLANDS CHRISTMAS PRIZE DRAW – PLEA FOR DONATIONS

Our Downlands School Association Christmas Prize Draw is just around the corner! We're looking for prize donations – anything from event tickets and gift vouchers to bottles of wine or Christmas hamper goodies.

If you or your business can help, please email kate_hobson@yahoo.co.uk by 31 October. Business donors are welcome to share website or social media details so we can thank and promote you online.

Since moving our draws online in 2020, you've helped raise an amazing £39,500 for the school – thank you for your fantastic support!

Tickets will go on sale soon after half term – watch this space!

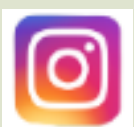
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

14 OCTOBER – DOWNLANDS QUIZ

29 NOVEMBER – DOWNLANDS CHRISTMAS MARKET



Get in touch with us at
dsa@downlands.org



[downlands_school_association](https://www.facebook.com/downlands_school_association)

DSA - DOWNLANDS PTA

**DOWNLANDS
SCHOOL
ASSOCIATION
QUIZ
NIGHT**

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

**Friday
14th November**

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!**



Buy tickets – DSA Quiz Night 14th November – Downlands School, Hassocks



DOWNLANDS
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

CHRISTMAS MARKET

FESTIVE FOOD & DRINK
CHRISTMAS STALLS & GAMES
ARTS & CRAFTS MARKET
ENTERTAINMENT
DOWNLANDS CHOIR
ORCHESTRA

**SATURDAY
29 NOVEMBER
11AM - 2PM**

**AT DOWNLANDS COMMUNITY
SCHOOL, HASSOCKS**

SECOND HAND UNIFORM

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

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




**SCHOOL
UNIFORM**
Donations Needed

If you've got old school uniforms that don't fit or are just sitting in your wardrobe, why not donate them to the school? Your pre-loved uniforms could be exactly what another student needs!

Thank you for your continued support

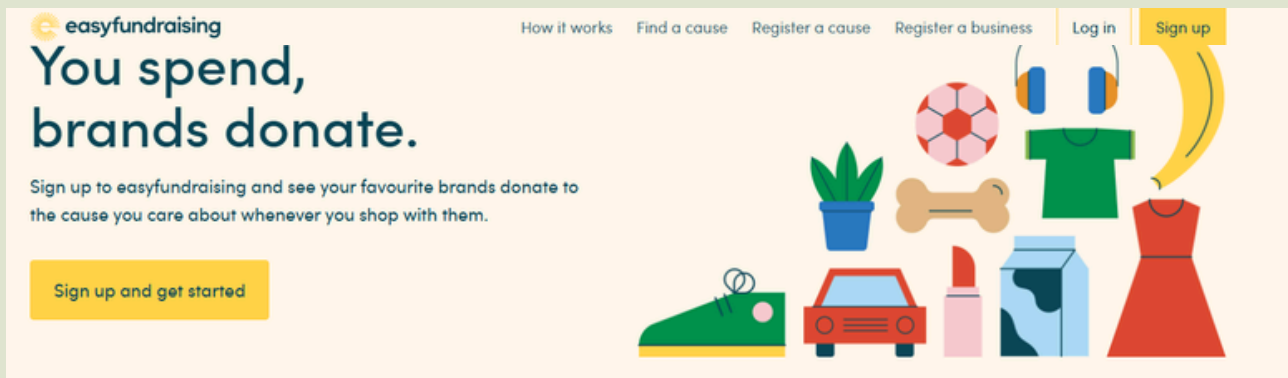
**OUR NEXT SECOND HAND UNIFORM SALE WILL
BE AT THE DOWNLANDS CHRISTMAS MARKET
ON SATURDAY 29th November 11-2pm**

Did you know you can support our school effortlessly every time you shop online? With easyfundraising, every purchase you make from your favourite retailers—like Amazon, Argos, eBay, and M&S—**can generate a free donation for us, at no extra cost to you.**

It's completely free, quick to set up, and makes a real difference. Whether you're booking a holiday, doing your weekly grocery shop, or treating yourself to something special, you'll be helping raise vital funds simply by shopping as you normally would. Sign up today and turn your everyday shopping into everyday giving!



<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/>



easyfundraising

How it works Find a cause Register a cause Register a business Log in **Sign up**

You spend, brands donate.

Sign up to easyfundraising and see your favourite brands donate to the cause you care about whenever you shop with them.

Sign up and get started

Illustration showing various items: a potted plant, a soccer ball, a bone, a green t-shirt, a red dress, a sneaker, a red car, a pink bottle, a blue milk carton, and a red dress.

Your fundraising journey starts today

Support a cause

You can pick within a selection of brands national and local causes.

4 questions, takes around 2 minutes

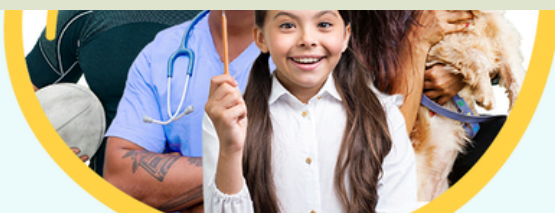
Register your own cause

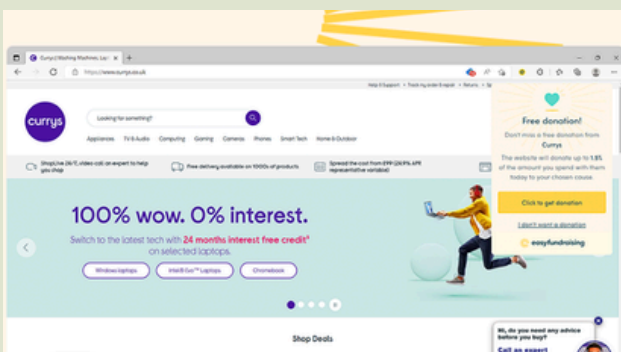
We'll guide you through the entire process, from the registration to getting your first donations.

8 questions, takes around 4 minutes

What's your cause name?

Create my profile





100% wow. 0% interest.

Switch to the latest tech with **24 months interest free credit*** on selected laptops.

Windows laptops Intel i5 laptops Chromebooks

Shop Deals

Get donations in one click!

The Donation Reminder is our browser extension that pops up when a brand will donate as you shop. You can then get your donation in one click.

The Donation Reminder is also available on [your mobile and tablet](#).

Add extension

Trusted by over 420,000 users

And available on

EVERY CLICK COUNTS—JOIN EASYFUNDRAISING TODAY AND HELP MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE WITH NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

VACANCIES

JOIN OUR TEAM



**DO YOU WANT TO JOIN A FRIENDLY,
ENTHUSIASTIC, AND COMMITTED TEAM
IN A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY SCHOOL ?**

We are currently recruiting for:

**Cover and Recruitment Officer – Job Share Grade 6 Spinal
Column Point 9 Starting salary £9,519.07 15 hours per week,
7am to 3pm on Thursday and Friday to include a 30-minute
unpaid break Term Time Only to Include Inset Days**

**For more details and to download an application form
please visit:
<https://www.downlands.w-sussex.sch.uk/join-us/vacancies>**

COMMUNITY BOARD



Remembrance Sunday Community Event 9th November 2025 13.30 – 14.45

We hope that many of you of all ages, will join the Parish Council and the Church of St Cosmas and Damian to mark Remembrance Sunday this year. Burgess Hill marching band has been commissioned to support a procession, with the Guides, Scouts, Brownies and Cubs, starting from Adastra Park and proceeding to the Church at Keymer where there will be a short ceremony led by Fr Alex. This will include the laying of wreaths by adults and of small crosses by children and young people. We have been liaising with the Guide Leader to build in some activities that will involve young members more closely with the essence of the event and will help raise their awareness of real people who lived in Hassocks and had their lives curtailed through war.

In order to make the route safe for the procession we have applied to close a section of Keymer road from Adastra Park to Beaconhurst. Residents and visitors will be unable to use their vehicles to traverse this section of Keymer Road and some adjoining roads for a short period of time from 1.00pm for around two hours. Residents and businesses likely to be affected will be leafleted when we have finalised the planning of this event. We have a Traffic Management Consultancy assisting us with the road closure on the day. To keep the cost down they are providing just two operatives to manage traffic. If anybody would be willing to volunteer, we would really appreciate the extra help. You will be provided with a hi-vis vest and given instructions.

If anyone is able to help, please can you email
helen.valler@hassocks-pc.gov.uk.

COMMUNITY BOARD

JÜRGEN KRAUSS, SEMI-FINALIST OF THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF IN 2021, IS COMING TO HAS SOCKS.



🍞👤👑 WEDNESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 8PM -
ADASTRA HALL, GREEN ROOM 👑👤🍞

Jürgen has fitted in a visit to Hassocks on his book tour to promote his new book of German Christmas goodies recipes, as well as give us the chance to get to know him better and ask him questions.

Tickets are: £12 for non-members of HT (£10 for members)

Come join Jürgen for an evening of chatting about being in the Bake Off kitchen, why being bi-lingual has been such a door opener for him and working with the German Embassy to promote his native language abroad.

His newest book will be available to buy and be signed with a personal message for you. Maybe a special Christmas gift for you or the baker in your life?

Contact hassockstwinning92@gmail.com
(or use this code) to get more info on how to buy tickets.





COMMERCIAL DANCE CLASS

UPBEAT GROOVES, VIBES & MOVES



AGES 11-18 ALL LEVELS WELCOME

DANCE STUDIO, FREEDOM LEISURE HASSOCKS

5.45PM - 6.45PM THURSDAYS FROM SEPTEMBER

WWW.CREATESPACESTUDIOS.COM

COMMUNITY BOARD



AGES 11 TO 15

DRAMA CLASSES IN *Hurstpierpoint*

SCOUT HUT, BROWN TWINS ROAD,
HURSTPIERPOINT, HAS SOCKS, UK

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

BOOK A NO OBLIGATION TASTER SESSION NOW

info@theyoungactorsgroup.com



VB DANCE
Burgess Hill and Hassocks



Ballet - Pointe - Jazz - Tap - Modern Theatre - Acro - PBT
Under 5's Dance Classes
Recreational, Grades and Vocational Training 4-18 Years

vbdance.com/taster



Have any odd jobs that need doing?

Good
rates

**Reliable Local
Handyman**

No job
too small

Available for *all* kinds of household and
garden maintenance and repairs:

- Tiling & Flooring
- Skip runs
- Flat pack furniture
- Picture and shelf hanging
- Painting, decorating & paper hanging
- Fence repairs and gardening
- Shelving
- And much more (just ask)

Contact for a free quote:

07460714224

USEFUL INFORMATION



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:

[West Sussex Road Safety Facebook Page](#)

Together, we can make our roads safer for everyone.

Thank you for your support!

aspens.org.uk
charity no: 1171446

 **aspens**
Empowering people on the autism spectrum and with learning disabilities.

Girls Group Mid Sussex

 St Andrews Hall, Burgess Hill, RH15 0LG

 Mondays fortnightly (term-time only)

 5pm-7pm

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

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

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

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

Please email childrenreferrals@aspens.org.uk to book



Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust

HEALTH FOR TEENS

GET HELP WITH ALL KINDS OF THINGS LIKE...

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

VISIT:

WWW.HEALTHFORTEENS.CO.UK

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

TEXT YOUR SCHOOL NURSE FOR
CONFIDENTIAL HEALTH ADVICE AND SUPPORT:

 **07480 635424**

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

SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD

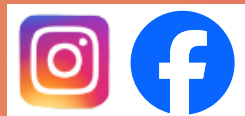


Did you know? The average British 12-year-old now spends 29 hours a week – equivalent to a part-time job – on devices, leaving little time for real-world activities and connections. Time spent on a device is time not spent with others: playing, exploring, interacting and developing vital life skills. A national movement, led by parents aims to challenge the new 'norm' of children owning and using smartphones. There are 35 parent groups in West Sussex alone. A group of 60 Downlands parents/carers 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>

THANK YOU

WE'RE INCREDIBLY GRATEFUL THAT YOUR LIKES, SHARES, AND FOLLOWS ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM ARE HELPING OUR AMAZING COMMUNITY CONTINUE TO GROW!



HAVE A GREAT HALF TERM!