



Newsletter 08

Headlines

06/01/2023

Dates for your diary!

SPRING TERM 2023

Sycamore Class Assembly - Thurs
19th Jan - 9am

Oak Class Assembly - Thurs 26th
Jan - 9am

Fir Class Assembly - Thurs 2nd
Feb - 9am

Children's Mental Health Week -
6th to 10th Feb

HALF TERM 13TH - 17TH Feb

World Book Day - Weds 1st

March - more details to follow

Ash Class Assembly - Thurs 2nd
March - 9am

Parents Consultations - Mon 6th

March and Thurs 9th March

Science Week - Fri 10th to
Thurs 16th March

Sweet Chestnut Class Assembly -
Thurs 16th March - 9am

Comic Relief - Friday 17th March

Sing Up Concert - Tues 21st

March - Details to follow.

Beech Class Assembly - Thurs
23rd March - 9am

Yr 6 Practice SATs Mon 27th to
Fri 31st March

End of Term Fri 31st March

**EASTER HOLIDAYS 3rd - 14th
April**

SUMMER TERM 2023

First day of term Mon 17th April

Class photos Tues 18th April

YR 6 SATS week Mon 8th to Fri
12th May

**HALF TERM - Mon 29th to 2nd
June**

YR 6 Transfer Day to TBS -
Tues 4th July

Yr 5/6 Residential - Weds 5th to
Fri 7th July

Last day of term Fri 21st July

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Happy New Year to you and your family. I hope you enjoyed the holidays and that your children have had an enjoyable 1st week of school in 2023.

SATs preparation for Year 6 pupils

Next week, we will launch our weekly SATs club on Wednesdays after school. We expect all Y6s to attend and we have the support of lots of colleagues to allow for small, focussed support groups for your children, working through practice questions for reading, maths and grammar. Hopefully, your children will find this a fun and confidence boosting exercise.

Goodbye to school staff

At the end of last term, we said a fond farewell to two colleagues working in Dandelions. Sharon Greaves has supported pre-school children for 8 years and has now moved back to Scotland. Shelley Shepherd has provided specialist SEN support to Downlands as well as being a keyworker for 7 years. We also recently said *au revoir* to Libby Abbott who started her maternity leave – I am pleased to report that she had her baby recently and that they are both doing really well.

We have made some excellent new appointments to the EYFS staff having been joined by Sammi Gooding, Becky Redden and Harriet Sheils. We welcome them to the team.

Smart Watches

The internet is an amazing resource which enables children to communicate, connect and be creative in a number of different ways, on a range of devices. However, the internet and social networks are forever changing and keeping up to date with children's use of technology can be a significant challenge.

Downlands School will soon be implementing a 'No Smartwatch in school' policy. This is to help reduce instances of loss or accidental damage and eradicate any inappropriate usage whilst in school and also give children a much-needed break from this aspect of technology whilst in the school environment.

Until our school policy is made more definitive on this issue, we expect that any parent wishing their child to wear a Smart Watch must get in touch with the school office, whereupon they will be asked to complete an exceptional circumstances e-form.

Safeguarding Alert

The Safeguarding Standards Team have alerted us to an on-line dare that involves self-harming and suicide that children are able to access and are being sent randomly on Facebook. I have attached it to the email with this newsletter ***but warn you that it is shocking and please ensure that this is for your eyes only.***

It will enable you to help to take any precautionary measures with your children on line.

And finally...

In our first week back, Reception Class carried out a lovely winter walk (see photo below) on the camp grounds near school, inspiring their curiosity about the world around them.



Furthermore, our paired reading restarted (see photo below) which provides a good opportunity for Year 6 pupils to show leadership in supporting younger children with their reading.



Have a lovely weekend

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "J Rielly".

James Rielly
Headteacher