



Downlands Community School
College Road
Blandford Camp
Blandford Forum
Dorset
DT11 8BG

Tel: 01258 453348
Email: office@downlandsschool.org
Web: www.downlandsschool.org
Twitter: @downlandsschool

Headteacher : Mr J Rielly

Friday 30th August 2024

Dear Parents,

I hope you and your family have had a lovely summer holiday. My colleagues and I are already preparing for the new school year and we cannot wait to welcome your children back to school in the next few days. I just wanted to present some key information prior to starting back.

Training days

Dorset Local Authority have set out the term dates for this year (and next) on [this website](#). We have planned to have two INSET days at the start of term, so children should return to school on Thursday 5th September (*children starting in Reception Class will have a phased return as advised). The dates of all 5 INSET days are as follows: 3/9, 4/9, 20/9, 4/11, 24/2. You can find a full break down of our school year on [this school website page](#). Families new to the school are warmly welcomed to attend our Registration Morning (Tuesday 3rd September, 0900 to 1200hrs) where you will be able to visit classrooms, meet key adults and purchase school uniform. Returning families can also purchase uniform on this morning and we will have stalls set up in the main school hall.

Attendance

Improving school attendance and punctuality is still an issue of national importance as recently outlined by the Education Secretary. I will be writing to all parents in more detail about this next week, referencing our attendance policy which is approved by governors and the Local Authority. We will also be celebrating the attendance of pupil groups via our fortnightly newsletter. I look forward to working with all parents in supporting high standards of attendance and punctuality during this academic year.

Start of term

The new school year starts on Thursday 5th September for all children, though our reception classes are having a phased start and Mrs Loveless will have informed parents of the first days for the children in Reception.

School day times

Just a reminder of our school day times*:

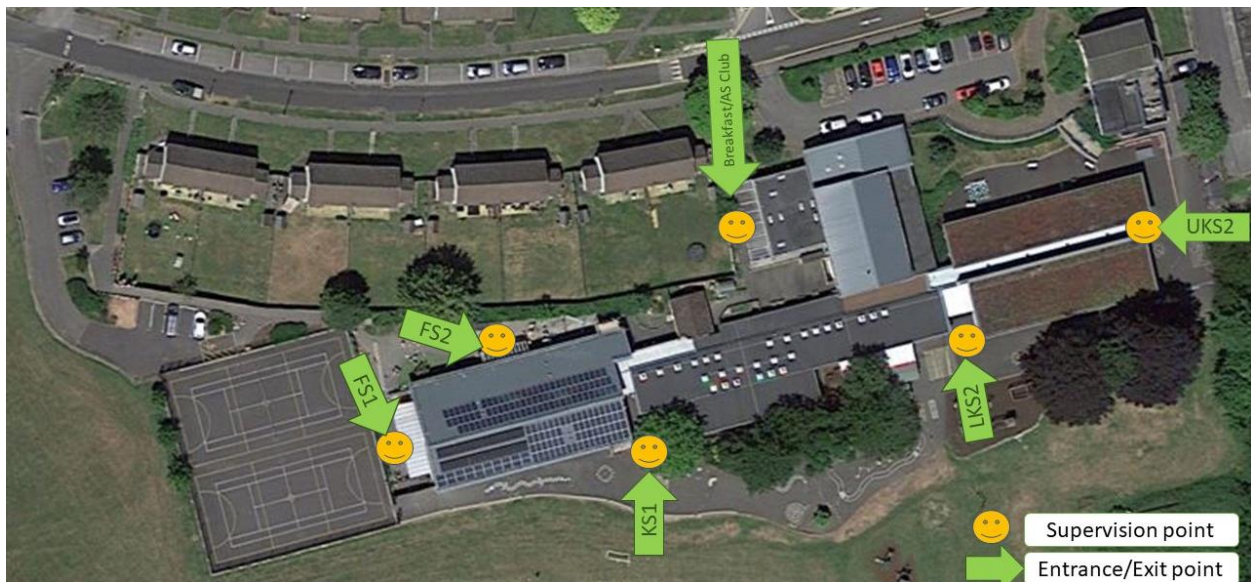
- 0830hrs Gates open and children are allowed to enter the school building
- 0840hrs School register opens (official start of the school day)
- 1515hrs Home time

School gates will be locked until 0830hrs, so please ensure that children do not arrive too early as the school site is not supervised until gates are opened.

** Children and parents using our pre-school (FS1) should arrive at school for 0850hrs drop off, being collected at 1450hrs if staying for a full day*

Supervision and drop off points

The map shown here shows the access points for the different phases of the school:



All children between FS1 and Y2 must be accompanied to school by a responsible adult and supervised until met by a member of staff. Until 0830hrs, parents and children arriving early to the school site should wait in the tennis courts. Parents using the rear drive access to the tennis courts must stick to the footpath in the interest of safety and wait in the tennis court area if they arrive early. Other than two disabled parking spaces, all parking on the school site is designated for staff or school visitors only.

Bikes and scooters

Children are welcome to use bicycles and scooters to get to school. There are bike racks available near the KS2 and KS1 entrances. We insist that all children wishing to cycle to school, and stow their bikes on site, wear a helmet and use a road worthy bicycle/scooter. We will issue termly permits to all children wishing to do so and these will not be reissued if a helmet is not worn or if bicycles are ridden unsafely on or around the school site. All users of bicycles and scooters must dismount before entering the school site – this includes young children on balance bikes. Please could parents support us in this as we do have vulnerable adults and children in the community and everyone’s safety is our paramount concern.



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Behaviour

We will be using our school values to celebrate and promote positive behaviours throughout the year: We care. We share. We believe. We achieve.

For the last four years, we have also adopted an approach to behaviour management that is underpinned by Therapeutic Thinking, which is promoted by Dorset Council. You can find full details of this approach in our Relationships Policy presented on the [policies page](#) of our website. Alternatively, you can hear myself and other colleagues talking about the philosophy behind this approach, also on our website [here](#).

From time-to-time, extra support and interventions are required to maintain standards in behaviour for the benefit of all within the community. As such, school governors and I have recently developed a clear and graduated approach to managing behaviour where expected standards are not being met and this is presented in Appendix 12 of the Relationships Policy. Parents will be informed if their child's behaviour is causing concerns and they will be expected to support the school where relevant.

Extended provision

We offer breakfast club from 0745hrs and an after school club till 1700hrs (1600hrs on Fridays). Full details of the pricings and timings of our extended provision are available on [our website here](#). If you intend to take advantage of the MOD wrap around care scheme, please contact the office and a member of the team will be able to help you in this regard.

Classes and teachers

As previously communicated, this is the list of classes/groups and associated adults:

Class/Group Name	Year Group	Adult (Role)
Dandelions	Foundation Stage 1	Julie Palmer (Childcare Leader) Harriet Sheils (Keyworker) Jules McKechnie (Keyworker) Becky Wright (Keyworker) Helen Marshall (Keyworker)
Chestnuts	Foundation Stage 2	Mrs Loveless (EYFS Lead and Horse Chestnut Class Teacher) Mrs Le May (Sweet Chestnut Class Teacher)

		Mrs L Culliford (Teaching Assistant) Mrs S Gooding (Keyworker)
Ash and Fir Class	Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1)	Miss Burch (Ash Class Teacher) Miss Alston (Fir Class Teacher) Mrs Le May (KS1 Lead) Mrs S Montgomery (Teaching assitant) Mrs M Hampson (Teaching assistant) Mrs H Mead (Teaching assistant)
Beech and Cedar Class	Years 3 and 4 (Lower Key Stage 2)	Mrs A Robinson (KS2 Lead/Cedar Class Teacher) Mrs Legg (Cedar Class Teacher) Miss Hoare (Beech Class Teacher) Mrs M Lewis (Teaching Assistant) Miss C Hampson (Teaching Assistant) Mr M Potter (Teaching Assistant)
Sycamore and Willow Class	Years 5 and 6 (Upper Key Stage 2)	Mrs Garton (Sycamore Class Teacher) Mr Jolliffe (Willow Class Teacher) Mrs A Robinson (KS2 Lead) Mrs C Haggar (Senior TA) Mrs P Luke (Teaching Assistant) Mrs G Tamang (Teaching Assistant)

A full list of staff names and roles can be found on the school website [here](#).

I would remind all parents that the best way of communicating with teachers is via an email to the office (office@downlandsschool.org). We also use a virtual platform called Seesaw for sharing learning journeys across the school year and all new parents will be given access to their child's individual account.

Below is a map of the school with the afore mentioned classes/groups:





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Parents should not routinely enter the school corridors or classrooms upon drop off and collection unless express permission has been granted by the headteacher, or they are invited to do so by a member of staff on singular occasions.

Y5/6 Pencil cases

As previously communicated, starting in September, we ask that each Y5/6 pupil bring their own stationery to school. Specifically, each pupil will need to have the following items:

- Pencil case
- 2 pencils
- 2 black pens (biros)
- 15cm ruler (or 30cm foldable ruler)
- 1 rubber (eraser)

We ask that pupils refrain from bringing excessive stationery (e.g. colouring pencils/pens, oversized sharpeners) or stationery that is particularly valuable.

Weekly Headteacher drop-in sessions

If ever you would like to talk to me in person, I will be available most Friday mornings between 0900 and 0945. You will not need to make an appointment, though we will organise meetings on a first come, first served basis. Conversations will be limited to 15 minutes on these occasions, but I would always be happy to arrange follow-up meetings as required. The first drop-in session will start on Friday 6th September.

I hope this initial letter has been informative and I would also highlight the 'Parents' pages of our website where further information about topics such as uniform, snacks/lunches and home learning can be found. In the meantime, my colleagues and I look forward to meeting you and your families in person over the coming days and working with you in the care and support of your children across the course of the school year.

Yours faithfully

