



Newsletter 8

13/02/2026

Dates for your diary!

SPRING TERM 2026

16 - 20th Feb - HALF TERM
 23rd Feb - TEACHER TRAINING DAY
 5th Mar - World Book Day
 9 & 12th Mar - Parent Consultations
 6th -13th Mar - British Science Week
 6th Mar - Science Fair
 27th Mar - Last day of term

SUMMER TERM 2026

13th Apr - Terms starts
 23rd Apr - Fraser Portraits (Class photos)
 11th May - KS2 SATs week
 25 - 29th May - HALF TERM

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope you and your family are well. Where did that half term go? As we race towards the mid point of the 25/26 school year, it is a good time to reflect on a very busy last 3 weeks (and it gets even busier after the break too).

Attendance

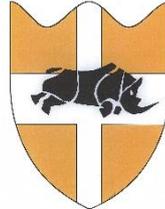
As we reach one half of the school year, our attendance competition is still really tight. There is still plenty of time to improve individual attendance and make a contribution to the House percentages.

			
95.7% ↓	95.3% ↑	95.9% ↑	96.0% ↓

The NHS offer [guidance](#) about when it is ok to send your child to school. I hope to see our overall attendance improving towards our target of 97%.

House points

With big increases for each House, the points competition is really starting to take shape. Can anyone catch Kiwi?

			
131 (+56)	157 (+74)	170 (+70)	122 (+46)

Special thanks to Ivy in Y3 for doing the counting!

Arts Week – Art as a tool for a healthy mind

Our annual Arts Weeks was another huge success, with children being encouraged to spend time engaged in arts and crafts as a way to maintain positive mental well-being.





Painting our healthy minds



PIC•COLLAGE

ARTS WEEK

'Art as a tool for a healthy mind'



Thinking about what a healthy mind is, listening to calming and relaxing music while creating clay brains.



PIC•COLLAGE

Stonehenge

To further their learning in history, children in Y3/4 visited Stonehenge recently. Their behaviour was impeccable and everyone enjoyed the day despite the drizzly conditions.



Zoo Lab

Children in EYFS and KS1 enjoyed the annual Zoolab visit.



Learning about faith and culture



Our Annual Science Fair – Save the date

British Science Week is from the 6th to the 15th of March 2026. We will be launching this special week on **Friday 6th March** with our annual **Science Fair**.

Parents are invited to work on a 'science project' which they could 'exhibit' to the rest of the school. A parent will need to accompany their child from 1330hrs on this day and we will allocate exhibitor tables once we receive application forms (sent separately). This year's theme is, 'Curiosity: What's your question?'

As well as the science fair, children will be doing more science-based learning than normal in their class groups and I will be doing some 'live' experiments in assembly.



World Book Day

We are excited to be celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 5th March at Downlands!

Children are encouraged to come to school dressed as their favourite book character, ready to enjoy a day dedicated to the wonderful world of books and reading. The day will begin with a special World Book Day assembly, followed by a range of fun and engaging activities celebrating books and stories.

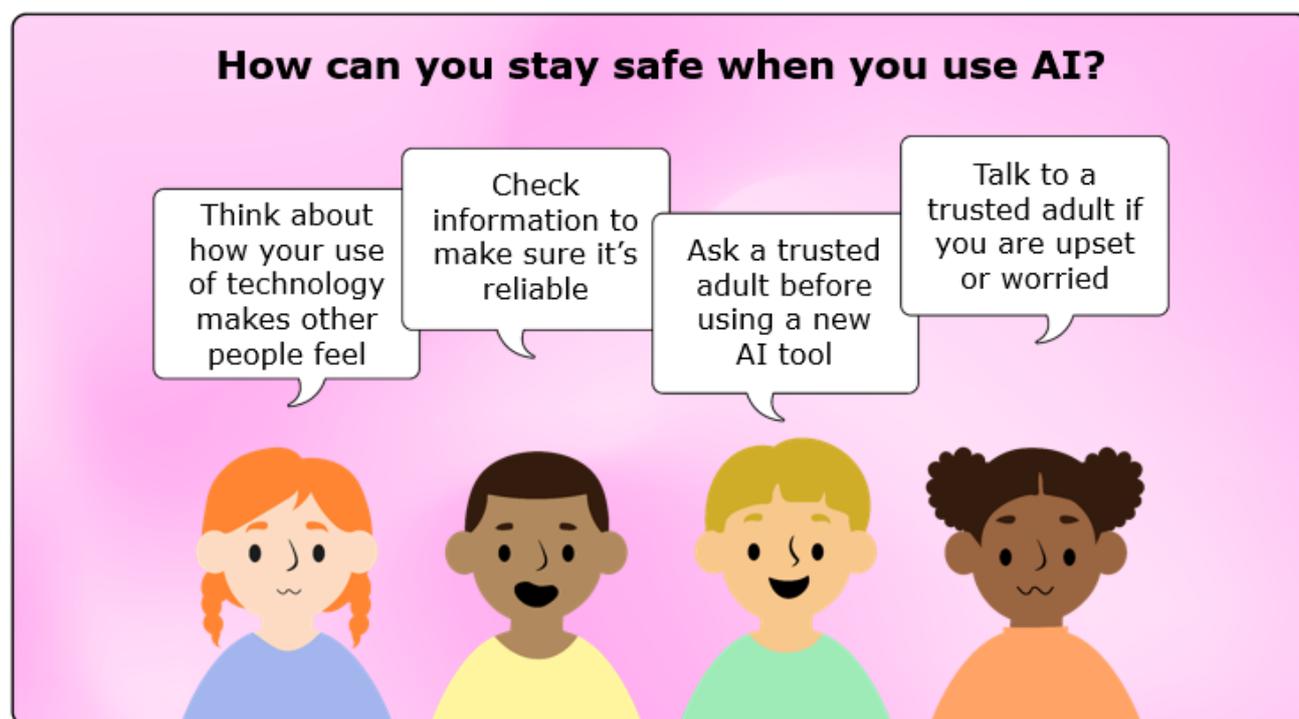
All pupils will take part in a Big Book Share, where they will listen to some much-loved stories read by members of staff at Downlands. In addition, our Key Stage 2 children will enjoy a live World Book Day lesson delivered by the BBC Bitesize team.

To further celebrate the day, each child will receive a World Book Day book token, which can be exchanged for one of the special World Book Day books or used to get £1 off any book of their choice. These tokens are accepted in most bookshops and large supermarkets.

We are really looking forward to a fantastic day full of imagination, creativity and a shared love of reading!

Internet safety

Thank you to the E-Safety Reps who spoke to all the children on Safer Internet Day (10/2/26). The theme was Artificial Intelligence: how it can be used for good as well as some cautionary tales and when to ask an adult if unsure.



A special online safety newsletter and useful links was shared with parents earlier in the week.

Extra Football Training

Michael Dacosta of Bournemouth AFC popped into share some top tips with our Y5/6 pupils. Thanks so much, Michael.



And finally, as we edge closer to the Spring equinox with lighter evenings and with the flood water completely receded, I am happy to say that Y3/4 children who live close by on camp will once again be able to walk to and from school on their own if they have their parents' permission. This will also apply to children staying to after school clubs.

Have a wonderful half term and we can't wait to see you and your children on **Tuesday 24th February**.

Mr Rielly
Headteacher

Supporting you and your child

The school is ready and able to support your family and help every child do well in school, build confidence, and have the skills they need for a bright and successful future. We understand that from time to time, families face challenges which might require the support of other agencies. The school has strong links with **Family Help** which is a new way that Dorset Council is offering support to families who need more intensive help and support. It brings together different types of help into one service, so families don't have to keep repeating their story to several workers. You can find out more [here](#).

All staff in school are trained on matters relating to safeguarding and child protection, but the following members of the team have more specialist training and are here to listen and help if needed:

Mrs C Goodall (Designated Safeguarding Lead - DSL)

Mr J Rielly, Mrs J Loveless, Mrs Y le May, Mrs A Robinson (Deputy DSLs)

Alternatively, you can contact the Family Support and Advice Line on 01305 228558. A friendly team member will listen to your concerns and help you decide what kind of support is right for you.

Lines are open:

- Monday to Friday: 8am to 10pm
- Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays: 9am to 10pm

Speak to a practitioner today if you have any worries or concerns about a child or young person.

Details on all of our policies, including attendance, complaints and uniform, can be found at <https://downlandsschool.org/policies/>