



Newsletter 11

24/04/2026

Dates for your diary!

SUMMER TERM 2026

4th May - Spring Bank Holiday
 11th May - KS2 SATs week
 19th May - KS2 Orchestra trip

25 - 29th May - HALF TERM




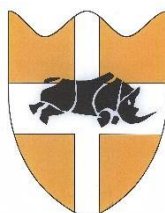
16th Jun - Sports Day & Community Picnic
 26th Jun - Armed Forces afternoon
 6th Jul - Level 2 Bikeability
 7th Jul - Transition day/Move up morning
 8th - 10th Jul - Yr 5/6 Residential trip
 21st Jul - Last day of school term

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope you and your family are well. The summer term has started with some fine weather and school life has resumed its busy self after a welcome Easter break.

Attendance




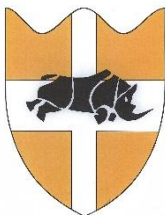
School attendance levels continue to be well above average compared to national statistics for primary schools, but it would be great to get closer to our whole school target of 97% attendance. Remember, with 12 weeks left, attendance rates can still be improved significantly for individuals.

			
95.6%	95.2%	96.4%	96.5%

The NHS offer [guidance](#) about when it is ok to send your child to school.

House points

The final term has arrived so there are about 12 weeks to amass the most house points possible. Can anyone catch Kiwi?

			
178	204	239	166

Spotlight on Young Carers

All staff at the school have recently received training in the identification and support of Young Carers from the Dorset based charity MyTime. This organisation uses the following definition of a Young Carer:

“A Young Carer is a child or young person who provides, or intends to provide, care for another person in their family. Young carers could provide care for their parents, siblings or grandparents, or anyone in their home.”

This definition is brought to life in [this short video](#) prepared by MyTime in working with children locally.

Some estimates put the number of Young Carers at 1 in every 5 children. Previously, schools were constrained to Local Council definitions which set a higher bar for identification and might have meant that appropriate support, understanding and resources do not get to the children and families who need it.

During Monday’s assembly, we will talk to the children about Young Carers to increase their awareness. I will then write to all parents and carers later that week to focus further on this issue and promote open conversations with the school to help get help and support to where it is needed. Mrs Garton is receiving extra training as our nominated Young Carer Champion and she will help shape our school’s approach over the coming months. We have also developed a new policy with governors which can be found [here](#).

If you would like to talk to us about this policy and the extra support which might be on offer to your child, please get in touch with the school office (office@downlandsschool.org).

The Butterfly Hub goes from strength-to-strength

Since September, Downlands Community School has developed a non-LA commissioned specialist resource base which we call The Butterfly Hub (TBH). Children follow a sensory based curriculum with high staffing ratios and tailored resources, taking advantage of specialist advice from professionals from The Association of Dorset Special Schools (TADSS).



We have plans to develop this provision still further thanks to the support of the following charities:

- Armed Forces Education Trust
- Royal British Legion
- The Brigade of Gurkhas Education and Welfare Trust
- The Royal Signals Charity



As a charitable consortium, they have joined forces to provide funds in excess of £30,000 to allow us to achieve the following over the next few weeks:

- A purpose built air-conditioned sensory room
- A bespoke tactile mural in the main school corridor
- Improved access from TBH main room to the KS1 garden
- Improvements to the KS1 garden

I look forward to informing you about these developments in subsequent newsletters.



KS1 trip to Charisworth Farm

The children had a great time at the farm. They saw some Aberdeen Angus cows, some sheep with their new-born lambs and they learned all about the wheat that is grown on the farm and how it can be used to feed the farm animals. After the children had lunch in the farm's barn, they went digging for worms.



Have a lovely weekend.

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/>