

DOWN'S VIEW NEWSLETTER

July 2026



Dear all,

As we come to the end of another busy year, I would like to thank every member of the Downs View community for their commitment, professionalism and unwavering dedication to our pupils and families.

Working in a special school is both a privilege and a responsibility. Every day, our staff go above and beyond to meet the diverse needs of our pupils, providing care, support, challenge and encouragement that helps them thrive. Whether supporting communication, building independence, celebrating achievements or helping pupils overcome barriers, the impact of our staff is seen in the progress, confidence and happiness of our young people. Thank you to every member of staff for the difference you make each and every day.

This year also marks the end of an era, as we say farewell to Jackie Hutchings, our Deputy Headteacher. Jackie has made an exceptional contribution to Downs View over many years and has played a pivotal role in shaping the school. Her commitment to pupils, families and colleagues has been unwavering, and her leadership, wisdom and compassion have positively influenced lives across our community. I want to extend thanks from everyone at Downs View and wish her well for the future. She will be greatly missed.

Alongside our farewells, we are delighted to welcome several new members of staff to Downs View next term, alongside exciting developments as colleagues take on new leadership roles. We warmly welcome Laura Stoker, our new Deputy Headteacher, and Maddy Tabona, one of our new Assistant Headteachers. We are delighted to see Gemma White stepping into her new role as Assistant Headteacher. We look forward to the experience, expertise and enthusiasm they will bring to the school community.

We also say goodbye to a number of valued teachers:

Laura Saunders, Lizzie Kroon, Maria Cahill and Mark Washington. We thank them for their hard work and dedication and wish them every success in their future endeavours.

I would like to thank our parents, carers, trustees and wider community for your ongoing support throughout the year. We are proud of all that our pupils have achieved and look forward to building on these successes when we return in September.

Finally, I want to extend a special thanks to the Friends of Downs View for the support they have given. After many years of service Lisa Burgess and Peter Mapledoram are stepping down. They have raised thousands of pounds, including funding playgrounds, soft rooms and Drusilla's passes. We now urgently need parents to step into the roles to take the friends forward.

We have had a variety of successful sponsored events this year. A huge congratulations to the students that took part in our sponsored swim, they raised a huge £582 that will go towards the refurbishment of the school's soft room.

Over the summer, Odie's dad Will is swimming the length of Lake Geneva to raise money for Downs View, we all wish him every success! More info in the Friends update at the end of this newsletter.

I hope everyone has a safe, restful and enjoyable summer break.

Vanessa Hickey

Executive Headteacher

Reminder - 1 + 2 Sept are INSET days for staff training - school/colleges closed to students.

Thurs 3 Sept - First day back for school and Link, Life Skills closed.

Mon 7 Sept – Life Skills open.

Respect Aspiration Resilience



School term dates 2026/27

Name: Downs View Hub

	September 2026						October 2026					November 2026						December 2026				
Monday		7	14	21	28			5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28
Tuesday	1	8	15	22	29			6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29
Wednesday	2	9	16	23	30			7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30
Thursday	3	10	17	24			1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31
Friday	4	11	18	25			2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	
Saturday	5	12	19	26			3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	
Sunday	6	13	20	27			4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27	

	January 2027					February 2027					March 2027					April 2027						
Monday		4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22		1	8	15	22	29			5	12	19	26
Tuesday		5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23		2	9	16	23	30			6	13	20	27
Wednesday		6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24		3	10	17	24	31			7	14	21	28
Thursday		7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25		4	11	18	25			1	8	15	22	29
Friday	1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26		5	12	19	26			2	9	16	23	30
Saturday	2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27		6	13	20	27			3	10	17	24	
Sunday	3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28		7	14	21	28			4	11	18	25	

	May 2027						June 2027					July 2027					August 2027					
Monday		3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23	30
Tuesday		4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24	31
Wednesday		5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25	
Thursday		6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26	
Friday		7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27	
Saturday	1	8	15	22	29		5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31		7	14	21	28	
Sunday	2	9	16	23	30		6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29	

Key

	Bank holidays (see details below)
	School holidays
	INSET day for most schools
	(5 INSET days in total, chosen by individual schools)

 First day of term

 Last day of term

Bank holidays 2026/27

Christmas Day	Fri 25 December 2026
Boxing Day (substitute)	Mon 28 December 2026
New Year's Day	Fri 1 January 2027
Good Friday	Fri 26 March 2027
Easter Monday	Mon 29 March 2027
Early May Bank Holiday	Mon 3 May 2027
Spring Bank Holiday	Mon 31 May 2027
Summer Bank Holiday	Mon 30 August 2027

Number of days (total requirement 195)

Autumn 1 st half	39
Autumn 2 nd half	35
Spring 1 st half	30
Spring 2 nd half	24
Summer 1 st half	34
Summer 2 nd half	33
TOTAL	195
	(includes 5 INSET days)

DOWN'S VIEW SCHOOL



School Activities

What a busy term it has been with lots of sunshine (at times too much!) and plenty of fun and learning taking place at school.

Downs View Splashathon - This was a great success and thank you to all those who sponsored the children splashing and swimming in the pool, in support of Friends of Downs View and Odie's dad, Will, who is swimming the length of Lake Geneva!!

Sports Day - What a hot and enjoyable day that was and well-earned ice pops at the end of the event. Well done to all the children and adults that took part and the Year 11 Sport Leaders and staff who helped set up the activities



Thank you also to all the teachers for the great range of termly parent/carer engagement events to show you a snapshot of what is happening in your child's class and how we support their learning.

One parent organised for the Reptylers to come into class for a special birthday treat!



DOWN'S VIEW SCHOOL



Graduation assembly - Always full of many memories and lovely videos highlighting the progress the children have made over their time at school. We are extremely proud of all our leavers and celebrated their achievements as they move on to exciting new opportunities. Some will be moving on to DVLC, while others head to Brighton MET, SupaJam, or Plumpton. Good luck for the next steps in your education

Curriculum Activities

Next term students are exploring:

- Primary : Reception to Year 2: **My body**
- Primary :Year 3 to Year 6: **Space**
- Secondary: **Earth care**: very relevant with our current climate!

Looking ahead to Next Year

We've been delighted to welcome new students into school as part of their transition programme. Prior to the summer break, all students will receive a transition booklet, enabling them to familiarise themselves with their new class and teacher over the holiday period.

This term has been particularly busy for recruitment, with several successful appointments made across the school. In September we will be welcoming new teachers Jennifer (Puffins), Sarah (Robins) and Mark (3MC), along with two new Deputies - Gemma, our amazing Foxes teacher and Maddy, as well as Laura - the new Deputy Head and 2 teachers returning from maternity, Rachel and Chloe.

We also have to say goodbye to Lizzie (Otters teacher and current primary phase lead) who is off to teach in Asia, Laura (Puffins teacher) who is moving to be nearer her

family and Maria (Butterflies teacher) who is retiring and a farewell to TAs Ibi (Puffins), Sarah (3JE), Elsie (Rabbits), Asmpel (3JE) and Irene (MDSA).

I wish everyone all the best for future and would like to thank all staff across the school, who work so hard to provide consistency and support for our students.

Parent Support - CAMHS-LD will be running their termly Positive Behaviour Course here at Downs View in the Autumn term and again in the Summer term, so look out for the information which will be sent to you via school ping. We hope many families will find this helpful. To book or request further information, please email: spft-camhs-ld@nhs.net

A Personal Farewell

As this is my final contribution to the school newsletter, I would like to thank all students, families and staff who have been part of my journey at Downs View School. It has been a privilege to work with such a dedicated and caring community. I would like to also say a thank you to Louise – school nurse who always goes above and beyond for our families.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Downs View, from starting at The Link back in 2010, through the challenges of the Hollingdean merger and Covid, several OFSTEDs and finishing my Downs View career at the school. Throughout this time I have been fortunate to work with so many amazing staff who always strive for the best for our children and families.

I wish everyone a happy, restful summer and every success for the future.

Cheerio, Jackie Hutchings, Deputy Head

DOWN'S VIEW LINK COLLEGE



Hi all

We have had a fantastic term at DVLC and we are looking forward to the summer holiday. There have been lots of fun activities happening over the last few weeks which everyone has enjoyed. We had the last Fab Café of the college year on Tuesday 14th July, thanks to all who contribute to the café and to parents and carers who come to support.

Well done and thank you to the DVLC Student Council who have done a great job representing their classes and the college at our meetings throughout the year.

We are looking forward to our Leavers Assembly and Prom on Friday 17th July. It is always such a lovely day in the calendar and an opportunity to celebrate progress and achievement, as well as having a good time on the dance floor later in the evening. A big well done to the students at DVLC for their achievements this year and wishing our Y14 leavers lots of luck for the future.

Thanks to all the staff at DVLC for their continued hard work and support for the students.

Wishing everyone a fantastic summer.

Best wishes,

Juliet



Room 8

Students in Room 8 have been proudly growing sunflowers from seeds. They have been keeping a weekly diary, taking photographs of their plant; counting leaves; measuring heights and learning how to keep them healthy. There has been a discreet competition to see whose will be the tallest! The students have now planted their sunflowers outside so they can take advantage of the sun and flourish.



DOWN'S VIEW LIFE SKILLS COLLEGE



Dear learners, parents and carers,

I can't believe we are already at the end of another fantastic college year!

This term has been full of exciting opportunities, celebrations and proud moments. One of the highlights was our annual Open House, where learners showcased their creativity, confidence and talents to families, friends and visitors. Learners worked alongside local artists throughout the term, exploring a range of creative projects and developing their skills in preparation for this special event. It was wonderful to see so many people enjoying the learners' artwork and achievements.

Transitions have also been a major focus this term. We have supported our leavers in preparing for their next steps through an extensive transition programme, including visits to future placements and opportunities to become familiar with new environments.

We were delighted to welcome learners who will be joining us next year. Our annual Welcome Breakfast was a great success, bringing together current learners and future learners in a friendly and supportive environment. It was lovely to see so many happy faces and new friendships beginning to form.



Respect Aspiration Resilience



DOWNSVIEW LIFE SKILLS COLLEGE

Work experience continues to be a real strength of the college. We are incredibly proud of the success of learners undertaking placements in the community. Some learners have had very positive experiences at the Caterlink canteen, Nando's, Scope and Speak Out, developing their confidence, independence and employment skills. Others attended a workshop at Miller & Carter, where they gained insight into the catering and hospitality industry. These opportunities help learners develop valuable skills for adulthood and future employment. We are very grateful to our community partners for supporting our learners.

Rooms 4 and 6 have done a fantastic job running the college café, welcoming customers, serving refreshments and developing their communication, teamwork and enterprise skills. It has been wonderful to watch their confidence grow throughout the year.

Learners have undertaken work experience in the community garden this term and their work blossomed into our annual Community Garden Birthday Celebration, another memorable event. Learners enjoyed welcoming members of the local community and were treated to a fantastic performance from Red Zebra. The Community Garden continues to be a place where learners can develop skills, build relationships and make a positive contribution to the wider community. They also held a competition to find out who had the tallest sunflower and the biggest courgette!

As we prepare to say goodbye to our leavers, we celebrated together at the Prom, a special evening full of smiles, laughter and memories. While we are excited for their next adventures, they will be greatly missed. We are incredibly proud of everything they have achieved during their time with us.

The final week of term will see us celebrate the achievements of all learners. There have been so many stars, successes and proud moments this year, and every learner should feel proud of the progress they have made.

Thank you to all staff, families, carers and community partners for your ongoing support and commitment to making the college such a positive and enriching place to learn.

Work is underway to develop the annexe over the summer, a reminder that the start of the autumn term will need to be delayed until **Monday 7th September**. Apologies for any inconvenience this may cause and we appreciate your understanding while these improvements are carried out.

Have a lovely summer and we look forward to welcoming everyone back in September.

Kind regards,

Raul



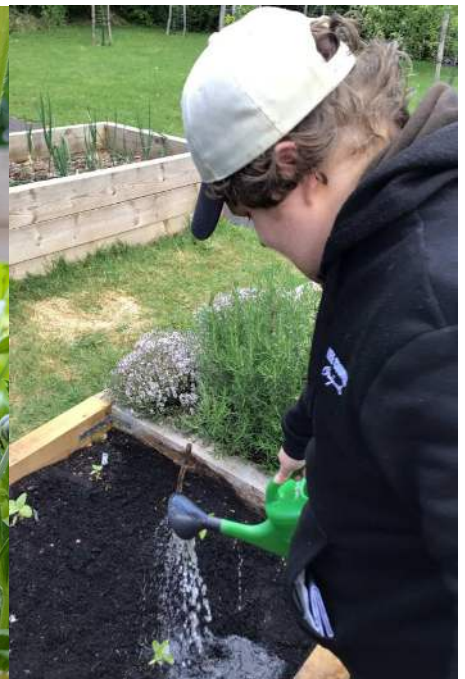
DOWN'S VIEW LIFE SKILLS COLLEGE



This term students from Faye's class have been doing really well at work experience. In this photo (above left), a student is working at The Real Junk Food Project Brighton – a community centre café which uses food waste destined for landfill to feed people who need it, on a 'pay as you feel' basis. Students cook, take orders, serve food and drink to customers, and clean – lots of great experience!

Faye's class have also been helping with the weekly college café. As the weather has been so sunny, the café has taken place outside several times, under the trees of one of the college gardens (above middle). Idyllic!

They also used their class's raised bed in the community garden to plant a bed specifically for flowers. They planted sunflower seedlings (which they had planted as seeds and cared for themselves). They also planted seeds for various flowers straight into the soil. And just look at how the flowers in their bed look now – beautiful!



DOWN'S VIEW GOVERNOR UPDATE

Dear Parents and Carers

With the end of the term approaching and looking to the start of the new school year comes change to the school governing board also. We hope to be welcoming several new governors; details will follow in September. We will be saying goodbye to governors Jacqui Shepherd and Sean Davies, whose children attended Downs View. I'm sure you'd all like to join us in thanking them for their years of service and commitment to the school. We will also be saying goodbye to governor Mike Waller, who has represented staff interests on the board for this year. Mike will be continuing as a teacher at Downs View.

Looking back over the past school year, there were five full governing board meetings (FGBs); the final one took place on 6 July and governors were updated on a range of issues related to staff and governor recruitment, panels, health and safety and the focus on school development areas looking forward to next year. Headteacher Vanessa informed the board that Deputy Head Jackie Hutchings will be leaving at the end of this school year and thanked her for her years of hard service. The Board expressed their appreciation for her dedication and commitment over so many years. We are pleased to hear that a new Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will be in place as from September.

What do Governors do?

Well, first, Governors don't run the school on a day-to-day basis. School Governors are volunteers. We come from all walks of life - parents, teachers, professionals, retirees, Local Authority (LA) representatives. All Governors are DBS checked and go through a verification process as there are some restrictions. After appointment we attend training given by the LA and have access to the Brighton & Hove Governor Support team.

We 'sit above' the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) offering strategic advice and ensuring that the school

follows agreed policies and procedures. We keep a close eye on the school's performance against budget, making sure that we spend appropriately and achieve value for money; we also make sure the school operates within financial regulations.

We look at the school's performance against its annual plan - whether targets have been achieved, what successes there have been, things that didn't go quite according to plan and why. We're there to support the SLT in finding solutions to setbacks.

Governors are involved in the appointment of the Head Teacher and senior staff. We monitor performance and offer encouragement and support. We help with Ofsted visits. We also have a role in the disciplinary decision process following the LA guidelines, policies and procedures.

More informally, Governors aim to visit both the school and the Link College to see how the plans are put into action. Some of the Governors will take responsibility (lead) for a particular area of school and college life, such as Health & Safety, Inclusivity etc. That Governor will aim to visit DVS and DVLC once or twice a term and report back to the Full Governors' Board. There is a separate Finance Committee (FC) comprising 2-3 Governors and the School Business Manager. This committee goes through the budgets, and detailed monthly and quarterly reports with a 'fine tooth comb' to ensure spending plans are being followed and if not, why not. After this initial review the reports are submitted to the FGB for further review and approval.

FGB meetings are held in the evenings around 5 times a year. The FC meets on a further three occasions. Meetings are usually in person at either DVS or DVLC but can also be online via TEAMS.

We also try to attend school and college events such as coffee mornings, sports day, prize giving, etc. We wear a Governor lanyard on site - so, if you see a lanyard, do stop us for a chat!



DOWN'S VIEW GOVERNOR UPDATE



Meet new governor Caz Maguire

I am Caz Maguire and I'm very excited to be one of the new governors at Downs View school.

I am a retired teacher and have spent most of my career working with deaf children. Most of this time was in special schools and units but I spent the last ten years of my career as an Advisory Teacher in West Sussex. I loved this varied role, working with newly diagnosed babies and their families and visiting deaf children in nurseries and primary and secondary schools. Among these were two special schools and this experience inspired me to become a co opted governor here. I am impressed with the positive and vibrant atmosphere and the level of support available to students, families and staff at this fantastic school.

In my spare time I enjoy swimming, theatre, learning French and spending time with my grandson.

SUMMER HOLIDAY SUPPORT

BRIGHTON AND HOVE SCHOOLS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

All sessions need to be booked in advance. Please book at <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/smhs-summer-2026-4842716>

29 JULY, 4, 12, 18, 25 AUG

WALK AND TALK

📍 Hove, Preston or Queen's Park

Join our friendly team for a relaxed Walk and Talk session. An opportunity to talk through questions or concerns about your young person, with mental health professionals

ONLINE PARENT/CARER DROP IN

Online sessions with our mental health professionals to ask questions or discuss concerns you have about your child or young person (age 4-18)

📍 Online

27 JULY, 3, 10, 17, AUG

PARENT DROP IN AND PLAY FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN AGE 4-11

6, 13, 20 AUG

Come along to Portslade Hub for a chance to chat with our team about your children's mental health and wellbeing. Children are welcome and will be able to play while you speak to the team.

📍 Portslade Hub, BN41 2PG.

🕒 10.30 - 12.30

SECONDARY SCHOOL TRANSITION - ONLINE DROP INS

Online drop in sessions, available throughout the day, to talk through worries or questions about your child's transition into Year 7

📍 Online

27 AUG

TRANSITION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL - IN PERSON SESSIONS

📍 Portslade Hub, BN41 2PG.

4, 6, 26, 28 AUG, 1 SEPT

These sessions provide a space for young people going into Y7, 1:1, in person. Parent/Carers are also welcome. This space is designed to explore any worries or anxieties about transition to secondary school and to discuss strategies to help manage this change.

To get the most out of these sessions, young people will need to be able to discuss their worries/anxieties with a practitioner and be prepared to engage and practice the strategies explored in the session.

MANAGING THE RETURN TO SCHOOL

📍 Al Campo Lounge, 84 London Road BN1 4JF

A space for parents/carers to talk to SMHS practitioners about easing the transition to school for the new term. Bring any concerns and questions you have. Children are welcome and are the responsibility of the parent.

5 AND 27 AUGUST
10.30 - 12

Questions? Email schoolsmentalhealthservice@brighton-hove.gov.uk

FRIENDS OF DOWNS VIEW SCHOOL & LINK COLLEGE

DOWNS VIEW SCHOOL, WARREN ROAD, WOODINGDEAN, BRIGHTON, BN2 6BB

The Friends of Downs View have had a very healthy year of fundraising, thanks to some amazing individuals and the generosity of their families, friends and the DV community.

Many thanks to our **seven Brighton 10k runners**. They all did brilliantly back in April.

Huge gratitude as well goes to parent **Will Ellis**, whose **Lake Geneva Swim** is just around the corner! He has smashed his fundraising target ahead of time. We will all be rooting for him in **mid-August** when he undertakes this epic challenge after many months of preparation. There may well be coverage on the local BBC news, so keep a lookout for that! There's still time to donate – [click here](#).

A big thank you to those of you who sent in donations for the Summer Fun Day raffle. As it was unable to go ahead, it has been decided that they will be added to the Christmas raffle instead.

We are still **looking for new parent/carers volunteers** to take on the day to day running of the Friends of Downs View. There has been little interest so far and this puts the charity in a precarious position going forward.

Peter, former Treasurer and myself, former Chair, will remain as 'caretakers' until the Autumn half term, by which time a decision will be taken, along with Vanessa Hickey, about the future of the charity. More on that in September.

Enquiries can be made via our email info@friendsofdownsview.org.uk

On behalf of the Friends committee, have a wonderful Summer everyone! Lisa Burgess

Level 1 & Level 2 CYCLE



TRAINING at Preston Park and Hove Park



Monday 27 – Thursday 30 July
Monday 3 – Thursday 6 August
Monday 10 – Thursday 13 August
Monday 17 – Thursday 20 August
Tuesday 25 – Friday 28 August

10.00 – 12.30 each day
Ages 9 – 15

Places are limited and on a first-come first-served basis.

Level 1 is where you will learn to control your bike.

Level 2 is where you start with real traffic, but sticking to quiet roads.

Level 1 – Riders must be able to ride independently with confidence and without stabilisers.

Progression to Level 2 training is depended on meeting all level 1 modules to National Standards Level.

Levels 1 & 2 together is £50 per person. Concessions available

To book your place visit:

<https://cycling.envelope.host/courses/>
or contact Emily Tester on 01273 293847
or email: east.central@brighton-hove.gov.uk



Level 3

CYCLE



TRAINING at Preston Park and Hove Park



Monday 3 – Wednesday 5 August
Monday 10 – Wednesday 12 August
Monday 17 – Wednesday 19 August
Tuesday 25 – Thursday 27 August

Ages 11 – 15

1.15pm – 3.15pm each day

All children must have attended a level 2 course and should allow 3 months practice between levels. All trainees will be assessed on level 2 outcomes before progressing further.

Level 3 is where you learn to cycle safely on busy roads within the city.

Training includes roundabouts, traffic lights and filtering. You must have completed Levels 1 and 2.

Places are limited and on a first-come first-served basis.

Level 3 training costs £55 per person. Concessions available.

To book your place visit:

<https://cycling.envelope.host/courses/>
or contact Emily Tester on 01273 293847
or email: east.central@brighton-hove.gov.uk

