12th September 2025 Newsletter

@downsviewinfantschool and https://www.facebook.com/DownsViewInfantSchool/

Please find us on instagram and facebook:

September	
Monday 15th	Reception children stay for morning and lunch until 1.30pm
Tuesday 16th	• Reception children stay for morning and lunch until 1.30pm • 3.15-3.30pm Year 1 and 2 drop in session – come and meet your child's new teacher and see their classroom
Wednesday 17th	Reception children start full days – 8.40am – 3.10pm (gates close at 8.40am)
Tuesday 23rd	7.30pm – Friends of Downs View Meeting at the Old Mill Kennington – all welcome they look forward to seeing you if you can make it.
Friday 26th	School Nursing Team conducting Health Screening for Year R children – further information will be sent to parents/carers via parentmail
October	
Wednesday 1st	Vancols School Photographer – Individual School Photographs. Sibling photos of children **at Downs View** will also be taken. Please let the school office know if you would **not** like your child's photograph taken.

Your views, compliments or suggestions…….

We welcome any feedback from you which can be completed formally via parent view (www.parenview.ofsted.gov.uk) or via email (office@downs-view.kent.sch) or via the box in the front Reception area.

It has been lovely to see the new children start in Bee and Ladybird Class this week. I have been very impressed with the way that they are beginning to learn the routines in their classes. I look forward to them joining us for lunch too from Monday. Year 1 and 2 have been demonstrating the new values, being Ready, Respectful and Safe around the school. Well done for the fantastic start to the new school year!

Class Recognition
We are pleased to celebrate with you special achievements made by each class this week. All the children have been recognised for doing something that has demonstrated one or more than one of our school values. The table below informs you of each class's special achievement.

Class	Recognition
Bee	Bee class have been working hard on the school value of being 'ready' by sitting nicely on the carpet.
Ladybird	Ladybird class have been working hard on the value of being 'ready' by trying hard to sit on the carpet facing the right way.
Turtle	Turtle class have been working hard on the school value of 'respectful' by looking after the resources in the classroom.
Dolphin	Dolphin class have been working hard on the school value of being 'safe' by keeping their wellies under their pegs.
Starfish	Starfish class have been working hard on the school value of being 'respectful' by using their thinking thumb.
Snow Leopard	Snow Leopard class have been working hard on the value of being 'ready' by having a great attitude to their learning.
Penguin	Penguin class have been working hard on the school value of being 'ready' by quickly bringing their whiteboard pens to the carpet in time to start their learning.

Weekly Class Achievements and updates

EYFS
The EYFS team would like to start our first blog on the weekly newsletter by saying a huge well done to all the children for coming into school so brilliantly this week. We have seen so many happy faces! Thank you to you the grown-ups too by trying hard to let them enter school independently. I know how hard that is. This week we have achieved so much! We have started to get used to the classroom, outdoor area and further school environments and have even begun learning the names of the other children within the class.
This week try and encourage your child to continue being independent whilst at home. Get them to put their own shoes and coat on whenever you are going out the door. As you can imagine it is quite time-consuming to get 30 children ready, when there are just two adults so this would help us all!

Year 1
This week we are continuing to focus on the text 'Lost and Found' within English, we have written speech bubbles for what the boy and penguin would say to each other. Can your child find some simple facts about penguins for next week? E.g. Penguins eat fish, penguins have wings.

Year 2
This week, the children have shown us just how ready they are for year 2 by amazing all the grown-ups with their fantastic attitude to learning. Our science topic this term is 'Animals, including humans'. We have been learning that animals have offspring which grow into adults. If you are able to, please send a baby or toddler picture of your child into school on **Monday 15th September**. Thank you!

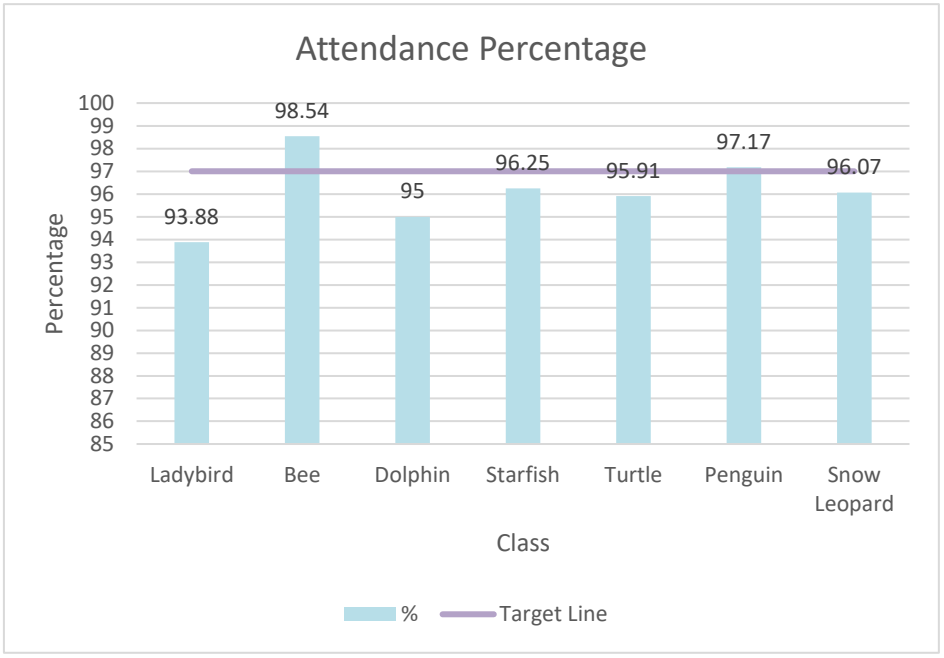
Downs View Superstars

Our theme this week has been 'Welcome Back Week'. The children have been getting used to the new room at club and seeing what new toys and resources we have. They have been enjoying our new comfy area as well as our arts and crafts area. The highlight of the week was being able to escape the rain and getting to play on the big playground and to play football and their own games with friends.

Wet weather clothing

Please ensure your child has a coat and wellies (waterproof trousers can also be provided if you wish) in school at all times: this week has proven that it can be sunny at the beginning of the day but raining by break or lunchtime. The children will access the outside areas at lunch time and play time even if it is raining. We also recommend that they have a change of clothes in school, particularly socks/tights/trousers/skirts in case they do get wet.

Attendance



For our first full week back, our whole school attendance is **96.11**, which is a great start to the school year.

Looking at the class attendance for this week, it's great to see some getting above the expected 97%, shown in the graph above.

Every day really does make a difference. When children miss school, they miss important learning, fun activities, and valuable time with their friends. This week was full of exciting opportunities to enjoy and learn from, and we don't want anyone to miss out.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us improve attendance**.**

Term Dates 2025-2026
Term 1 – Wednesday 3rd September – Friday 17th October 2025
(Monday 1st and Tuesday 2nd September – Training Days – school closed to children)
Term 2 – Monday 27th October – Thursday 18th December 2025
(Friday 19th December – Training day – school closed to children)
Term 3 – Monday 5th January – Friday 13th February 2026
Term 4 – Monday 23rd February – Thursday 2nd April 2026
(Friday 3rd April – Bank Holiday – school closed)
Term 5 – Monday 20th April – Friday 22nd May 2026
(Monday 4th May 2026 – Bank Holiday – school closed)
Term 6 – Monday 1st June – Friday 17th July 2026(Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st July 2026 – Training Days – school closed to children)

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI VIRTUAL FRIENDS

Artificial intelligence has seen significant development over the recent months, with companies releasing new AI-based software or adding an AI element to existing apps (such as Snapchat). One form of AI that has become especially popular has been the 'AI friend' or chatbot. There are now numerous 'virtual friend' apps available, with other successful platforms likely to adopt it soon.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONTENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI chatbots may not always recognise when content is age inappropriate or harmful and should be filtered out. As a result, there's a possibility that children could be exposed to offensive language or explicit material while conversing with their virtual friend. The companies producing such AI solutions are also unlikely to take responsibility for any content that their algorithms generate.

REDUCED SOCIAL CONTACT

An excessive reliance on chatbots for social interaction could potentially cause a child to begin reducing the amount of face-to-face communication they have, leading to social isolation. If young people become dependent on chatbots to provide companionship, it could possibly hinder the development of their real-life social skills.

LACK OF SENSITIVITY

Chatbot software isn't always sophisticated enough to pick up on subtle emotional cues or recognise signs of distress in children, as most humans would. It might therefore fail to respond appropriately. AI misinterpreting what it's being told or replying insensitively to a young user who's already struggling could potentially impact a child's emotional wellbeing or exacerbate any existing emotional issues.

UNINTENTIONAL BIAS

AI companions are only as reliable as the information they've been programmed with. The algorithms they use, therefore, may unintentionally promote bias, stereotypes or discriminatory behaviour. As many chatbots originate from the USA or UK, for instance, they can display a distinctly western-centric worldview. This could lead to children developing skewed attitudes and behaviours if they interact with the AI consistently.

COGNITIVE LIMITATIONS

Although many are now undeniably advanced, AI-powered chatbots still have limitations in terms of understanding complex concepts, context and nuance. Depending heavily on chatbots to help with learning or solving problems may stunt the development of a child's own powers of critical thinking, their creativity and their ability to engage in open-ended discussions with other people.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

Chatbots typically collect data about users, including personal information and conversations. This is ostensibly to improve their performance as they gradually learn about our behaviour – but many experts warn that there may be significant risks associated with how this information is stored and used (for instance, the possibility of potential breaches or misuse by third parties).

Advice for Parents & Carers

CHAT ABOUT CHATBOTS

If a child is already expressing an interest in AI apps, then a relaxed, natural chat should help you to discover which ones they're aware of and how they're using them (or are planning to). Discuss these options with children and perhaps do your own research to ensure that you think they're suitable. Once you're totally happy, you could sit and explore the range of AI chatbots together.

CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

If a child is keen to engage with AI chatbots, encourage them to do so in a safe environment: ideally in a shared space, so you can easily keep an eye and ear on their progress. Set up appropriate content filtering measures in advance – and gently remind them that you'll be close by and ready to help with any questions or concerns that may arise.

FIND A BALANCE

Work alongside children to establish the right balance in terms of how they might use AI-powered chatbots – and when it's appropriate. It's important to make sure that children still get plenty of opportunities to learn to solve problems for themselves, as well as building their interpersonal skills through face-to-face conversations with friends, family members and teachers.

TAKE CONTROL

As with any form of app or game, when it comes to AI chatbots we'd strongly recommend that you consider employing parental controls (either on the device being used or within the software itself) to manage which apps children can download and interact with. This is particularly important for younger children, who may be more at risk of being upset or frightened by inappropriate content.

RECOGNISE THE RISKS

It's unlikely that most children will have even considered the potential risks attached to having a virtual companion. So it's probably wise to explain some of the possible hazards and challenges of AI chatbots to them. Emphasise that AI isn't a real person (however much it might sound like one) and may occasionally tell them something inaccurate or skewed by bias.

Meet Our Expert

A Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at a large boarding school in the UK, having previously taught in schools and colleges in Britain and the Middle East. With a particular interest in digital citizenship and cyber security, he believes it is essential that we become more aware of the risks around technology, as well as the benefits.

#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Release date: 21.06.2023 Last reviewed: 30.05.2024

WINGS & WHEELS WEEKEND 2025

| 13TH AND 14TH SEPTEMBER | 10AM TO 4PM |

RAF MANSTON HISTORY MUSEUM CT12 5DF

Climb in the Cockpits

RAF MANSTON HISTORY MUSEUM

CHARITY NUMBER: 1179982

Fire Engine Rides

Loads of Vehicles

Tank Rides

Museum Entry

NO NEED TO BOOK

USUAL MUSEUM ADMISSION PRICES APPLY | RIDE ADMISSION SEPARATE

info@rafmanston.co.uk www.rafmanston.co.uk

What Three Words - remarried.mornings.pave

Refreshments available

Subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances including, but not limited to, weather conditions, mechanical breakdowns and shortage of volunteers and/or exhibitors.

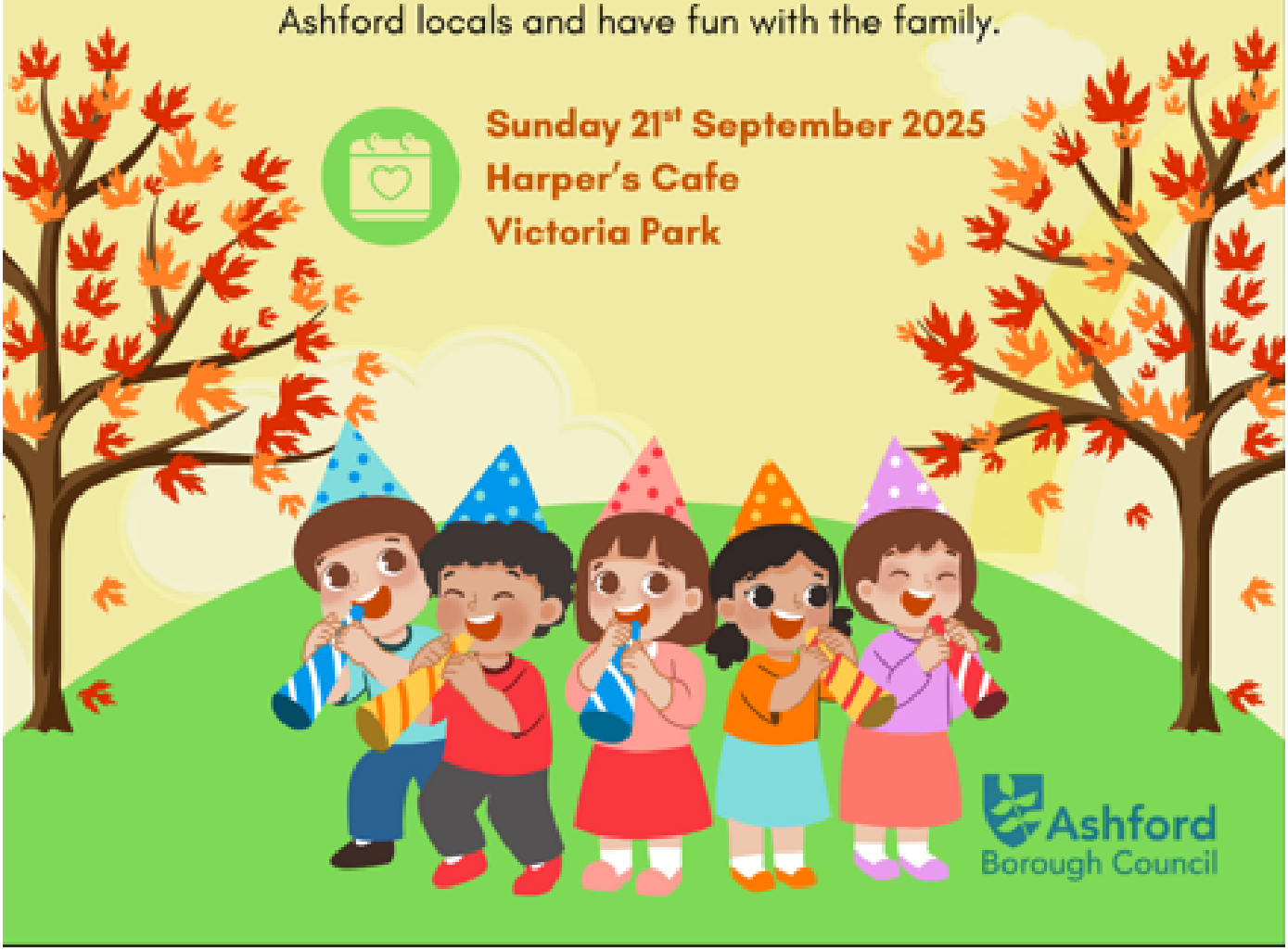
End of Summer

Party in the Park

FOOD | FACE PAINTING | PARTY GAMES

Join us for a lively party, filled with community spirit, laughter, and positive energy! It's a great opportunity to connect with other Ashford locals and have fun with the family.

Sunday 21st September 2025
Harper's Cafe
Victoria Park



Ashford Borough Council

HOLIDAY COURSE

OCTOBER HALF TERM

Fun, engaging, inclusive, safe football activity for Boys & Girls of all abilities, during the school holidays. Book now by scanning the QR code or using the below website and course code.

Course Code	Venue	Date
SS-LA-K-2	Leigh Academy TN9 2PH	21st-22nd October

Timings	Age	Cost
10.00-15.00	School Year 1-8	£72.00

chelseasoccerschools.co.uk

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS/CARERS

We offer face-to-face and online support for parents/carers including...

- Webinars covering a range of topics
- Face-to-face workshops
- Therapy services - speech & language therapy, occupational therapy, counselling
- Outreach support such as de-escalation techniques to be used at home
- Help parents and carers support children with school anxiety

Scan the QR code for more information on our website

If you would like any further information please email:

rmsolutions@r-i-t.org

RIVERMEAD SOLUTIONS

RIVERMEAD INCLUSIVE TRUST

KENNINGTON JUNIORS FC

Saturday Morning Football Coaching - Invite to all Children in School Year Groups 1-5

Kennington Juniors Football Club are again offering the following Football Training sessions, to all children within the Ashford community.

School Year 1 Group - 08.30 - 09.35
School Year 2 Group - 09.45 - 10.50
School Year 3-5 Group - 11.00 - 12.05

A fully qualified Coach, with appropriate Child Welfare certification, will manage the sessions

Cost per session will be £6.00 cash, payable prior to the start of the session.

Sessions will take place every **Saturday Morning, commencing Saturday 13th September 2025,** to be held at the Ashford Hockey Club, Ball Lane, Kennington TN25 4EB.

KJFC ask that your Child wears Football Boots and Shin Pads to each session. The Club will not stop your Child participating if they are not wearing these items, the responsibility / accountability, standing entirely with the Parent/Carer.

If you require any further details, please contact Graham Jordan - Mobile 07934349666 or email him at g.jordan439@btinternet.com

www.yourspacetherapies.org

October Half Term Mindfulness Pony Day for Kids!

Date: Wednesday 29th October 2025
Time: 9am- 2pm
Location: Ponies 'n' Kids, Eaton Thorne Stables, Woodmancote, Nr Henfield, W.Sussex, BN5 9AG

Join us for a magical day designed especially for children ages 5-11! Dive into a world of peace, friendship, and mindfulness, all while experiencing the calming presence of our adorable ponies.

What to Expect:

Mindfulness Time with Ponies: Learn calming techniques and emotional regulation skills while spending quality time with our gentle ponies.

Pony Care: Discover the joys of caring for ponies through grooming, feeding, and building a bond.

Riding and Mounted Games: Experience the joy of pony rides and engage in fun, team-based games that promote confidence and cooperation.

Connect with Nature: Immerse yourself in the tranquillity of our beautiful, quiet stables and serene surroundings.

Make New Friends: Build connections and friendships with other children in a supportive, nurturing environment.

Scan the QR code or click this link to book: Mindfulness Pony Day 29th October 2025

Cost: £140 per child
Spaces limited to 15 children

We are an inclusive team and warmly welcome children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). We celebrate diversity and are committed to providing a supportive environment where every child can thrive.