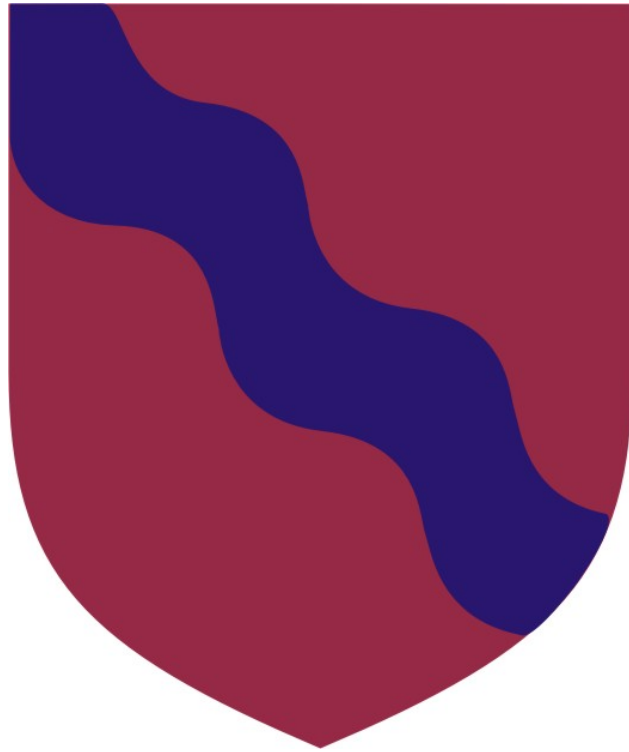


DOWNHAM SCHOOL



HORN LANE, PLYMSTOCK
PLYMOUTH

SCHOOL PROSPECTUS

The purpose of this booklet is to provide some basic facts about the school, its aims, organisation, curriculum and facilities, for the information of parents whose child might attend. It may also be useful to parents of children already attending, as well as visitors and other people interested in our work.

DOWNHAM SCHOOL

Parents considering sending their son or daughter to Downham School are most welcome to visit and appointments can be made by telephone.

Our address is: Downham School
Horn Lane, Plymstock
Plymouth, PL9 9BR

The school telephone number is Plymouth (01752) 403214 ☎

Our fax number is 01752 481539.

Email: downham.school@plymouth.gov.uk

Web: www.downhamschool.co.uk

Downham School is a City of Plymouth Specialist Provision for girls and boys aged from three to sixteen years with severe learning difficulties and often pupils also have communication and/or physical disabilities. Admissions are usually into our nursery group on a part time basis which will be discussed and agreed with parents prior to starting.

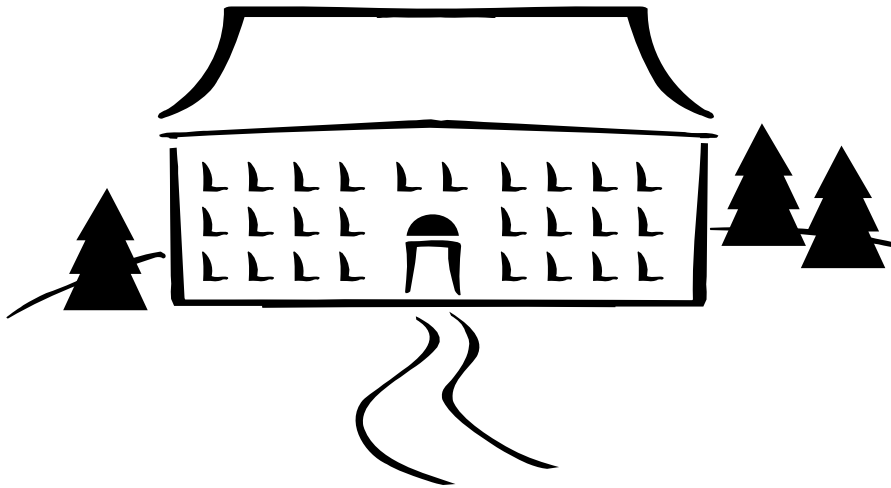
The school prides itself on a friendly and welcoming atmosphere which gives security and confidence to the pupils. In this environment it is possible to assess the pupil's individual needs and then produce an appropriate time table and individual programmes. We aim to provide an appropriate staffing ratio in each class to fulfil the needs identified during assessment.



Downham House

Downham House is a Plymouth City resource for children and young people with severe learning difficulties across the City.

Extended day provision, Monday to Wednesday, and residential respite provision, Thursday to Sunday, is available for appropriate young people through referral to the Children's Integrated Disabilities Service Resource Panel (ChIDS). The purpose built hostel comprises: lounge/playroom, kitchen, ball pool room, dining room, bathrooms, and individual bedrooms. Downham House stands in its own grounds and is less than a minute's walk from Downham School.



The address is:

Downham House
Church Road, Plymstock
Plymouth, PL9 9BG

The telephone number is Plymouth (01752) 401109 📞

SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

Head Teacher:	Michael Loveman
Deputy Head Teacher:	Wendy Fisher
Teaching Staff:	11 members of staff
Teaching Assistant Staff	40 members of staff
School Nurse:	Ms Helen Rose/Ms Sue Hart
Senior Administrator:	Mrs Sonia Eveleigh
Administration Assistants:	Mrs Karen Body Mrs Karen Burbidge Mrs Vanessa Richards
IT Technician	Mr Marcus Adams
Parent Support Advisor	Ms Claire Paddon
Caretaker (Plymouth Direct Services):	Mr Mike Tippett
Cleaners (Plymouth Direct Services):	Ms Helen Fletcher Ms Mary Lowman
Cook Supervisor (Plymouth Direct Services):	Mrs Diane Halfyard
Kitchen Assistant (Plymouth Direct Services):	Ms Georgina Breed
Business and Development Manager:	Mr Mark Tucker
Deputy Manager:	Ms Rosy Pickup Mrs Debra Preen
Residential Care Officers:	There are 13
Residential Cook	Mrs Carolyn Mooney
Residential Cleaner	Mrs Elizabeth Tippett

Visiting Professionals

Educational Psychologist:	Ms Liz Hampton
Speech Therapist:	Miss E Richards
Speech Therapy Assistant:	Mrs R Hills
Physiotherapist:	Mrs C Sutton
Physiotherapy Assistant:	Mrs A Drew
Art Therapist:	Ms D Paisley
School Doctor (Staff Grade Paediatrician):	Dr L Ambler
Advisory teacher for the hearing impaired:	Ms Penny McDonald
Advisory teacher for the visually impaired:	Mr Ian Norton
Audiometrician:	Ms S Finnemore
Orthoptist:	Mrs J Owen
Chiropodist:	Mr T Achilles
Educational Welfare Officer:	Ms B Smith
Careers Adviser: (Cornwall & Devon Connexions Service):	Mrs C Lintern

SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Name

Nomination

CHAIR

Mr C Huitson

Community Governor

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mrs P Holwill

COMMUNITY GOVERNORS

Ms B Badger

PARENT GOVERNORS

Mr J Hayward

Ms S Cox

Mr B Embry

Ms K Laity

Ms C Muir

Ms S Seaman

Ms L Smith

Mr G Devine

AUTHORITY GOVERNOR

Mrs A McDonald

Mr J Byatt

Ms G Jordan

Ms S McSweeney

STAFF GOVERNOR

Ms J Hamlyn

Ms L Hagan

DOWNHAM SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

Ms J Ferrett

Mrs L Gardside

Ms S Conn

Mr M Rowles

Mrs H Knight

GOVERNORS ON THE ADVISORY BOARD

Mr G Devine

Mr J Hayward

Mrs A McDonald

Mr C Huitson

CLERK TO ADVISORY BOARD

Charlotte Roe

Governors are elected to serve for a period of four years. They are responsible for the general oversight of the school and involved in, amongst other things, the curriculum, finance, health and safety, appointment of staff and the maintenance of buildings and grounds. They meet at least once a term and visit the school regularly.

Governors receive a termly report of school life prepared by the Headteacher.

The PTA

There is a Parent/Teacher Association which organises regular meetings of an educational nature as well as fund raising and social events. All parents of children at the school are automatically members and it is hoped that they will support the activities planned by a Committee which is elected annually.

The PTA is very supportive and each year buys a large amount of equipment for the school.

THE PLYMSTOCK AREA ACADEMIC COUNCIL

This school is a member of the Plymstock Area Academic Council (PAAC). Academic Councils are well established in Plymouth as a way of bringing together schools across the full age range. The Academic Council in this area includes seven primary schools, two secondary schools and one special school. Headteachers meet regularly, and other teachers are members of working parties dealing with various aspects of the curriculum.

LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Morning Session	9.15 a.m. to 12 noon (Primary) 9.15 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. (Secondary)
Afternoon Session KS1	1.10 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.
KS2	1.00 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.
KS3 and KS4	1.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.
The length of the taught week is:	22 hours 30 minutes (Key Stage 1) 23 hours 30 minutes (Key Stage 2) 24 hours 00 minutes (Key Stages 3 and 4)



PUPIL GROUPINGS

The school is organised to accommodate the needs of a wide range of children and progress through the classes is largely dependent on age. Classes are broadly grouped into two areas, each being led by a member of the senior management team:-

<p>Class 1 (Nursery)</p>	<p>Many young children referred to the school are admitted initially to the Nursery which seeks to provide a stimulating environment in which the individual needs of pupils aged from 3 to 5 can be assessed and identified. In conjunction with parents, staff aim to help each child to improve his/her learning skills, play and level of independence, through the use of carefully planned programmes of activity. All staff have completed the training course on the curriculum for the foundation stage and the principles on which good early years education are based are incorporated into the class.</p> <p>On Tuesday and Wednesday morning each week mainstream children from the local community attend the nursery, playing and learning alongside our own pupils. These children provide excellent role models for the Downham children.</p>
<p>Classes S1, 2, S2, 3</p>	<p>These classes cater for children aged from 5 to 11 years. Pupils are introduced to basic academic work in maths, English, science, the other national curriculum subjects and RE, whilst at the same time still having time for some structured play.</p> <p>Continued emphasis is placed upon the teaching of communication and in particular the appropriate use of language in a practical context.</p> <p>The classes with the prefix 'S' are located on the site of Goosewell Primary School and are designated as Satellite Classes.</p>
<p>Classes 4, 5</p>	<p>In these classes children aged from 11 to 14 consolidate and extend all the skills they have learned lower down the school. Teaching programmes continue to take into consideration the needs of individual children and include a significant emphasis on the development of social skills. Pupils may be given tasks involving some responsibility around the school and may begin to spend some sessions at Plymstock School.</p>

Classes 6,7

Teaching programmes in these classes are designed to not only consolidate those skills already acquired, but also to extend them into 'real life applications'. Whilst, for example, students continue to experience a full programme of activities to further their literacy and numeracy skills, these subjects are now applied in a more practical way, such as following recipes, making shopping lists, reading timetables and using money in various situations. It is during this time that good working habits and standards are established for adult life, with pupils being encouraged to take responsibility for the management of both their classroom environment and working routines with decreasing adult supervision.

Students have the opportunity to follow nationally-accredited courses offered by ASDAN which lead to certification at the end of Year 11.

The development of leisure skills is considered important, and pupils are introduced to a variety of activities both in and out of school so that they can use their 'free time' positively. Pupils also learn about the post-16 options available to them.

The Curriculum

Across the Curriculum the School uses EQUALS schemes of work as a basis for developing medium term planning appropriate to the learning needs of the students.

ENGLISH

Speaking and Listening

The development of Speaking and Listening skills is of vital importance at Downham. Pupils are exposed to a wide variety of experiences to stimulate their desire to communicate as it is essential for pupils with severe, complex or multiple learning difficulties to develop communication skills in order to access all areas of learning.

Consequently we adopt a total communication system which combines speech, Makaton signs, Rebus symbols and PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System). Work in class is supported by speech therapists who work closely with both children and teachers.

Reading and Writing

At Downham we aim to provide a wide range of reading and writing experiences. Work is planned at appropriate levels in line with the Foundation Curriculum, the National Literacy Strategy and the EQUALS schemes of work.

We expose the children to a variety of texts which includes fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Where necessary we adapt texts to ensure that they are age appropriate for the children but at a level of understanding to match their ability. Work is often supported with symbols, signs and ICT to help pupils begin to access reading and writing activities at the earliest stages.

Opportunities are given for pupils to develop reading and writing skills across the curriculum. The school has a wide range of fiction books (including reading schemes and 'real' books), a large selection and range of big books and a senior school library.

MATHEMATICS

Our aim is to provide an individual programme for each pupil which will develop his or her mathematical ability as far as possible. Whilst giving pupils access to all areas of the mathematical curriculum, we recognise the importance of its use in everyday life and place emphasis on skills such as telling the time and the use of money to increase independence as far as possible.

SCIENCE

Science is a practical subject which seeks to encourage curiosity by providing children with the opportunity to explore, handle things and experiment. Pupils are introduced to the world of life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes through a rolling programme of topic work which ensures continuity throughout the school. The skills of observation, prediction and problem solving are encouraged in all blocks of work. The development of sensory observations are a particularly important part of our work whilst we aim to make the work enjoyable and interesting in order to foster positive attitudes towards learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Children take part in gymnastics, athletics, dance, games, outdoor and adventurous activities and swimming. Some activities take place in our hall and on our playground where there is a good range of large and small apparatus. Our younger children swim in the hydrotherapy pool. An intensive three-week swimming course is undertaken each year by Key Stage 2 pupils. We also participate in the Plymstock Cup.

SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

As a school we encourage the pupils in their sporting endeavours. We participate in sporting events with other special schools and provide different sporting experiences outside the PE curriculum. The school takes part on an annual basis in the Ten Tors Jubilee Challenge.



ICT

This subject is now seen as being integral to the teaching of all subject areas, with pupils being taught specific skills which they can use to enhance their ability to communicate right across the curriculum.

Access to ICT equipment is considered to be of crucial importance, with the minimum provision of computers being in the ratio of one PC to every four pupils. A wide range of switches and interfaces, along with a large and appropriate library of software are available to maximise students' abilities to use computers, and all classrooms have direct broadband access to the internet.

TECHNOLOGY

Design

Students follow a curriculum based upon the content of the EQUALS schemes of work drawn from the appropriate key stages. However, these have been refined to meet the abilities of our students, and enable them, through both the use of appropriate materials and the provision of specially adapted tools, to produce satisfying and age-appropriate results.

Food

Whilst pupils follow schemes of work taken from the EQUALS guidelines, this subject is considered to be fundamental to the acquisition of independence skills. Pupils have regular opportunities to work on developing basic cooking skills, healthy eating habits, storage and hygiene issues, along with learning about the production and manufacture of food items.

HISTORY

In their earliest years at the school the children are encouraged to learn about their position within an extended family and to develop a sense of chronological sequence. Facts and experiences which are already familiar to children e.g. family and school events, are used to help build up an understanding of the past. Older children learn about important events which took place in the past, specific periods in history and some well-known historical personalities.

GEOGRAPHY

Initially, geography is taught by building upon the children's knowledge of the school and its immediate area, learning how to get from A to B. Older pupils learn about the local community, the features of different environments e.g. town, seaside, countryside and places further afield.

CITIZENSHIP

As a strand of PSHE Citizenship is taught in a context particularly relevant to our pupils, involving them in activities such as fundraising for charity, developing strategies for dealing with bullying and electing a senior school council.

MUSIC

The children enjoy a variety of musical activities. They will experience music by listening to and identifying familiar sounds, songs and modern, ethnic or classical music. Much early work is connected with the exploration of sound. We have a range of musical instruments to support this work.

ART

Art and design stimulates creativity and imagination. It provides visual, tactile and sensory experiences, and is a unique way to understand and respond to the world, and to communicate with others. Pupils learn about the place and role of art, craft and design in life today, as well as in different times and cultures.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

At Key Stages 3 and 4 most pupils are offered the opportunity to learn about the French language and way of life. These lessons take place at both Downham and at Plymstock School.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

This is a very wide ranging and important aspect of our work which covers such areas as health education, self care, equal opportunities, relationships, therapies, behaviour management, residential courses and life skills.

SEX EDUCATION

The emphasis of this subject is as much about the teaching of social relationships, and how one relates to others, as it is about understanding sexual development. The basic sex education programme for the primary department includes work on emotions, relationships with friends and family, and personal health and hygiene. In the Senior School this knowledge is both consolidated and extended, so that by Key Stage 4, the programme includes work on the development of sexual relationships, appropriate behaviour for boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, and living with others. This latter work is carried out in line with the policy drawn up for the teaching of sex education, and with full parental consultation.

CAREERS

This subject is delivered to pupils from Key Stage 4 in conjunction with our advisor from the Connexions (formerly known as Careers) service. The two-year programme of study is primarily aimed at preparing pupils for a successful transition to further education at the age of 16. Students visit all local options available to them and undertake link courses as appropriate, equipping them as far as possible to make their own decisions about where they would like to go upon leaving Downham.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We follow the Agreed Syllabus and aim to develop a knowledge and understanding of bible stories, Christianity and other world religions.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

A collective act of worship, broadly Christian in nature, is held in the hall at the end of each afternoon when the school meets together. A planned programme covering a different theme each week centres around religious festivals and special days, annual events and anniversaries, sharing experiences and emotions, Bible stories, celebrating achievements and beauty in the world.

Parents may exercise their right to withdraw their child from religious education or collective worship by contacting the Headteacher.

DISCIPLINE

We believe that the ethos of a school should be such that it demonstrates a commitment to develop attitudes which will lay the foundation to good citizenship. We want our children to acquire and respond to the knowledge that there are social duties as well as social rights and a placement within a calm, happy and structured environment is therefore a crucial part of this aim. A high standard of behaviour is expected from our pupils at all times and they are taught to be courteous and well mannered. However, it is recognised that a few children, through no fault of their own, will require help to overcome problems in this area. We have a Care and Control Policy which parents are encouraged to read.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We are very appreciative of parental support. Liaison between home and school is an extremely valuable and important part of every child's education. Most children, especially if they live some distance from the school, or are not yet able to convey messages home, benefit from the parents and teacher sharing a daily diary which travels from home to school and back each day.

Parents are very welcome to meet the Headteacher on any school day between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. (preferably, but not necessarily by appointment). Parents can be seen at other times by arrangement. In addition to meetings with the Headteacher, arrangements can also be made to discuss the progress of individual children with class teachers.

From time to time meetings of an informal nature are held at which groups of parents can meet "professionals" (including psychologists, therapists and teachers) in order to discuss ways in which parents can aid their own child's development.

Open evenings are held early in the Spring and Summer terms when parents can

discuss their child's progress with his or her teachers. This is in addition to the Annual Review. A "Meet your Child's New Teacher" evening is held in September.

Parents with worries about their child's progress or any other matters should consult the Headteacher.

We welcome parental involvement in school. At the present time parents help with hydrotherapy, administrative tasks, trips out in the mini-bus as well as classroom activities and the preparation of teaching materials.

STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

All children at the school have a formal Statement outlining their special educational needs. This Statement is reviewed annually following the Department of Education and Skills Code of Practice at a meeting to which parents and involved professionals are invited. A written report is sent to parents together with suggested targets for the forthcoming year prior to the Annual Review.

SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICES

An Educational Psychologist, Physiotherapist, Speech Therapist and Music Therapist attend the school to assess and work with individual children, and to plan in consultation with the class teacher, each child's programme. In addition we have a physiotherapy assistant who also works with the pupils.

A Community Child Health Staff Grade Paediatrician holds medicals at the school most weeks. Parents are invited to discuss their child with the doctor, each pupil being seen every year and more often if requested. In addition Consultant Paediatricians hold clinics at school at regular intervals.

A Specialist Nurse is available to visit the school. A Dental Therapist visits and a Clinical Psychologist visits to discuss various aspects of children's behaviour. Advisory teachers visit regularly help children with auditory or visual problems.

SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS

As a school we encourage the pupils in their sporting endeavours. We participate in sporting events with other special schools and provide different sporting experiences outside the PE curriculum.

ATTENDANCE

We hope that children will attend school as regularly as possible. It is helpful if

parents can inform us by message, telephone or post if their son or daughter is unwell or attending a medical appointment. A maximum of ten days each year is allowed for holiday with parents if the dates do not coincide with school holiday.

CHILD PROTECTION

It is a legal requirement that each school should have a named school Child Protection Co-ordinator and in our school it is the Headteacher, Michael Loveman.

The co-ordinator follows the guidance laid down in the City of Plymouth Multi-Disciplinary Child Protection Handbook covering all aspects of child abuse, neglect and non-accidental injury.

SCHOOL MEALS

All children have lunch at school. The meals are cooked on the premises and the children are encouraged to make a choice for both their main and sweet courses if available. All special dietary requirements are catered for. Those parents who wish to provide a packed lunch from home for their child are very welcome to do so.

The cost of a school meal is £1.90. Free school meals are provided for children whose parents are in receipt of Income Support. An official application form needs to be completed, copies of which are obtainable from the school or Education Office.

Children resident in our hostel receive all meals free irrespective of parental income.



TRANSPORT TO SCHOOL

All children except those living close to the school are collected from and returned to their own home by taxi or mini-bus each day. At least one escort is provided on every vehicle. There is no charge for school transport.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Although school uniform is not compulsory, we do like our pupils to look smart.

Royal blue sweatshirts (primary pupils) and navy blue sweatshirts (secondary pupils) bearing the Downham School name are available from school and the wearing of these is encouraged. In addition we also have white T-shirts. Grey trousers and skirts, which are available from many clothes shops and department stores, are recommended.

However, it is important to remember that those children who are learning to dress themselves, or to use the toilet independently, should wear clothes that are easy for them to put on and take off. In this respect we often find that 'jogging bottoms' are the most suitable.

The wearing of jeans, in common with most schools, is not considered appropriate.

CLOTHING FOR P.E. AND SWIMMING

For PE black shorts, white T-shirts and plimsolls are recommended. Swimming days will be notified to parents, and children should bring a costume and dry towel each swimming day.

Please note that P.E. clothing is not required in the Nursery class.

All items of clothing should be labelled with your child's name.

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils' personal and social education.

The Governing Body aims to promote and provide such activities both as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.

CHARGES

The Governing Body reserves the right to make a charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by the school:

School journeys in school hours

The board and lodging element of residential activities deemed to take place within school hours.

Materials used in practical lessons

The cost of materials, ingredients, equipment (or the provision of them by

parents) for the following subjects : (Food Technology, Design Technology).

The Governing Body may charge for materials and ingredients or require them to be provided if the parents have indicated in advance that they wish to own the finished product.

General

The Governing Body may, from time to time, amend the categories of activity for which a charge may be made.

Nothing in this policy statement precludes the Governing Body from inviting parents to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of providing education for pupils.

REMISSIONS

Where the parents of a pupil are in receipt of income support the Governing Body will remit in full the cost of board and lodging for any residential activity that it organises for the pupil if the activity is deemed to take place within the school hours of where it forms part of the syllabus for a prescribed public exam or part of the National Curriculum.

In cases of family hardship which make it difficult for pupils to take part in activities for which a charge is made.

HOME-SCHOOL AGREEMENT

The school has its own written Home-School Agreement which explains the aims and values of the school, the responsibilities of parents and what we expect from our pupils. It was drawn up following consultation with all parents, staff and governors. We hope that parents will sign this form to show that they give their support and encouragement to the work that we do with their child.

LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY'S POSITION ON INSURANCE

"Pupils are insured against injuries caused by building defects, etc. and accidents which occur as a result of negligence by a member of the Authority's teaching and non-teaching staff.

Pupils attending the Authority's schools and colleges are not insured against personal injury or accident while on educational premises or taking part in recognised activities outside the school.

The Council expects all employees and pupils to accept full responsibility for their personal possessions, including



money and to consider taking out insurance themselves to cover any risks."

HOMEWORK POLICY

Whilst we do not set homework on a regular basis in each class, support and continued reinforcement of skills at home for all our pupils is very much encouraged by staff.

IEP's

Through I.E.P.'s, (Individual Education Plans) parents are made aware of the content that a child is to cover in all areas of the curriculum, each term. The I.E.P. objectives are discussed with parents at Parents' Evenings and ways in which those objectives can be carried on at home, for example, through the use of PECS boards or signing is discussed.

Parents may be encouraged to read or play games with their children, but the emphasis is very much on spending time together and encouraging interaction and communication rather than specific subject content.

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FROM SCHOOL

The following documents are available from school. Please refer to the Headteacher for access.

- (a) All Statutory Instruments and Department of Education and Skills circulars and administrative memoranda sent to the school by the D.f.E.S. which relate to curriculum matters.
- (b) Any published H.M.I. reports which relate expressly to the school.
- (c) All schemes of work in current use at the school.
- (d) The Local Education Authority complaints procedure concerning the school curriculum.
- (e) The Governing Body's annual report to parents.
- (f) The school's last reports from Ofsted and the Care Standards Commission.

DOWNHAM SCHOOL

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HOLIDAY DATES 2010/11

AUTUMN HALF TERM 2010	School closes School re-opens	Thursday 21st October 2010 Monday 1st November 2010
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY 2011	School closes School re-opens	Friday 17th December 2010 Wednesday 5th January 2011
SPRING HALF TERM 2011	School closes School re-opens	Friday 18th February 2011 Monday 28th February 2011
EASTER HOLIDAY 2011	School closes School re-opens	Friday 8th April 2011 Tuesday 26th April 2011
MAY DAY HOLIDAY 2011	School closed	Monday 2nd May 2011
SUMMER HALF TERM 2011	School closes School re-opens	Friday 27th May 2011 Monday 6th June 2011
SUMMER HOLIDAY 2011	School closes	Friday 22nd July 2011

Non-Pupil days for staff training

Friday 22nd October
Tuesday 4th January 2011