



Newsletter

Respect, Compassion, Responsibility, Courage

Term: Spring 2026

Issue No: 8

Date: 2nd January

Dear Parents, Carers and Children

Firstly, a Happy New Year to you all! I hope you have all had a wonderful Christmas break.

It was such a super end to the term, with our Festive Christmas Carols under the stars and spectacular FONDS Christmas Fair. Thank you so much to our amazing FONDS team who worked so hard to put such a great event together...such a fun way to end the term and we were so lucky with the weather too. Thank you **Team FONDS** for all of your hard work on our behalf. We will share details of funds raised soon after our return to school next week.

In the meantime there are just a couple of updates we wanted to share with you, prior to the start of term, primarily some upcoming changes to the way our **classroom support staff** will be deployed across the school and an update regarding our **Restorative Practice and Behaviour Policy**.

As you know, our priority is always to ensure that every child receives the best possible support for their learning and wellbeing. To achieve this, we regularly review how our resources are allocated. Following our latest review, we have decided to redeploy some of our teaching assistants and support staff so that their skills can be used most effectively across different year groups and subject areas.

This means that:

- Some staff members will be moving to new classes or year groups.
- Support will be targeted where it is most needed.
- All children will continue to benefit from high-quality support, though they may see new faces working alongside their teachers.

We understand that children and parents may feel attached to familiar staff members, and we want to reassure you that these changes are being made thoughtfully, with the needs of pupils at the centre of our planning. Staff will work closely with teachers to ensure a smooth transition, and we will continue to monitor the impact of these changes carefully. Please see the staffing for January below:

Class	Support Staff
Kestrels	Mrs Dillon, Mrs Baker, Miss Olney
Eagles	Mrs Clark, Mrs Munroe, Mrs Clinging, Mrs Wright
Nightingales	Mrs Clinging, Mrs Sanders, Miss Lennon, Mrs Wright
Skylarks	Miss Lennon, Mrs Dibble
Macaws	Mrs Nelson, Miss Gahan
Parrots	Mrs Edwards
Toucans	Mrs Appleton, Mrs Mann
Flamingos	Mrs Haimes
Kingfishers	Mrs Lucas, Miss De Almeida
Woodpeckers	Mrs Wilson, Miss Gahan, Mrs Gregory
Penguins	Mrs Bladen, Miss Lennon, Mrs Bolster, Miss Coles
Puffins	Mrs Ogston, Mrs Smith
Robins	Miss Taylor, Miss Reed, Miss Smith
Owls	Miss Jones, Mrs Tennent, Mrs Smith

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Deeks. We value your partnership and appreciate your understanding as we make these adjustments to strengthen our provision for all pupils.

Relational and Restorative Practice Update

I am sure you recall that at the end of the summer term we shared with you, via our Newsletter and at new parent and Meet the Teacher sessions, our Behaviour Blueprint, along with our School Handshake:

<https://www.northdowns.surrey.sch.uk/page/?title=School+Policies&pid=76>

<https://www.northdowns.surrey.sch.uk/page/?title=Partnership+with+Parents&pid=57>

We have been embedding Relational and Restorative practice for over a year. Working alongside the Local Authority Specialist Teaching Team and Mark Finnis, a leading UK expert in Restorative and Relational Practice, all staff have undertaken comprehensive training. Relational Practice is grounded in well-evidenced approaches. It focuses on repairing harm and rebuilding trust when things go wrong rather than simply punishing mistakes. It isn't about just "being nice." It involves professional boundaries, consistent expectations, and emotional containment.

At North Downs, we view every interaction as an opportunity for growth, learning and building strong relationships. This approach supports children in developing positive and appropriate ways of interacting with others, while helping them to recognise the logical consequences of their actions. Through consistent, compassionate guidance, we aim to nurture self-awareness, empathy and responsible decision making in every child.

Alongside our high nurture and support, staff set high boundaries, to regulate pupil behaviour and apply sanctions or consequences when expectations are not met. Behaviours that affect the rights or safety of others are unacceptable. All incidents are managed in a Restorative way either by adults in the classroom or by members of the leadership team as appropriate.

Why Restorative Practice?

Restorative Practice puts relationships at the heart of everything we do, creating a culture where everyone feels they belong and where everyone has a voice. Our restorative approach helps pupils:

- Understand how their actions can affect others.
- Develop characteristics they can use in and out of school.
- Understand themselves and each other better
- Learn why it's important to see another person's point of view.
- To see that it's okay to make mistakes.
- Learn how to move through conflict creatively, taking responsibility for their own behaviour and being part of deciding what happens next.

Restorative conversations are used to address conflict and to repair relationships, questions will be used to:

- Engage (what happened from your perspective?)
- Explain (who has been affected and how?)
- Expect (what is needed to make things right?)

Pupils get the right challenge and support at the right time. We challenge in a healthy, non-blaming way. The underlying premise of Restorative Practice rests with the belief that children will make positive changes, when adults work with them rather than doing things 'to' or 'for' them. A restorative approach requires a high level of **challenge** (e.g. setting limits, boundaries, expectations and consequences) with a high level of **support** (e.g. encouragement, nurture, compassion, empathy and listening).

Over the past year, staff have worked on numerous INSETs on what Relational and Restorative practice looks like at North Downs. We are proud of our Restorative Practice and Behaviour Policy, as well as our Behaviour Blueprint and Handshake. The Restorative Practice and Behaviour Policy now replaces our traditional behaviour policy and is linked to policies such as the Anti Bullying Policy and the Complaints Policy.

Later this term we will be sharing information about our relational approach with parents and carers in many ways, which will include holding workshops held over several occasions so that we can support the community as a whole to be part of our relational approach. Look out for more information over the next week or so. For more information, please click on the following link [L30 The importance of relational practice](#)

Diary Date Reminders

Monday 5th January - Children return to school

Tuesday 10th & Thursday 12th February - Parent Teacher Consultations

Friday 13th February - Break up for half term

Monday 23rd February - Children return to school

Friday 27th March - Break up for Easter: Infants finish at 1.00 & Juniors finish at 1.15pm

Monday 13th April - Children return to school