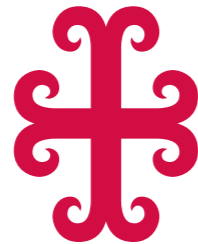


GENERAL INFORMATION

DOWNSIDE SCHOOL

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THE DOWNSIDE MOTTO

Apud bonos iura pietatis

For good people, loyalty is the lawgiver

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In partnership with families, led by the Gospel and guided by the Rule of St Benedict, the monks and staff of Downside aim to educate each of the young persons entrusted to their care so that they should achieve the highest academic and personal standards and develop all their gifts to become more fruitfully committed to Christ, his Church, and the service of others.

AN INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in Downside School.

Downside is an independent, co-educational boarding and day school for boys and girls aged 11 to 18, and one of England's oldest and most distinguished Catholic schools. Founded in 1606 in Douai, Downside today is a school of four hundred and thirty pupils, housed in magnificent buildings set in a 500 acre estate at the foot of the Mendip Hills, twelve miles south of the city of Bath.

Downside is a Catholic School which has been run by the Benedictine monastic community of St Gregory the Great for over four centuries. Through the sacraments, prayer, catechesis and example, in the classroom and out of it, both monks and lay staff at Downside seek to inspire pupils to love God and to serve others. Whilst Downside welcomes families and children from other faiths, we ask them to recognise our distinctively Catholic and Benedictine character.

Downside is an Academic School which works with families to ensure that pupils have the highest academic expectations, are successful in public examinations, and discover intellectual interests that will stay with them for life. The School has a thriving academic life to stretch the brightest pupils, and provides structured support for the less able. However, pupils who perform to a high standard outside the classroom, in the arts, sports, or community service, will be still more happy and successful. The breadth of co-curricular opportunities at Downside is exceptional.

Downside is a Boarding School where almost all the boys and girls are seven-day-a-week boarders, although day pupils are also welcomed. Weekends for boarders are full, busy and purposeful. Downside is proud of its outstanding levels of pastoral support for all pupils and has long been known for its strong sense of community.

The opportunities open to boarders and day pupils alike at Downside - academic, sporting, in music, drama and co-curricular activities - are exceptional. This prospectus can only give you an impression of our life and work; there can be no substitute for coming to visit us in person.

I hope to see you at Downside.

Dom Leo Maidlow Davis
Head Master

ACADEMIC LIFE

Outstanding examination results are the priority and nothing in the school day is more important than what happens day-in and day-out in the classroom. Everyone is encouraged to aspire beyond their academic expectations and at Downside our aim is that every pupil should achieve more than was originally anticipated. However, the quality of our thoughts is in the end the quality of our lives and a love of learning for its own sake is fostered in every pupil.

In order for this to happen, the highest levels of motivation are expected. Systems are in place to ensure that both pupils and staff perform to their utmost. If pupils are considered to be under-performing at any stage, they have to discuss their academic work with their Tutor and their House Master/House Mistress. A range of measures (including academic detention) is used to encourage pupils to succeed.

Year group Academic Societies, subject societies, field trips and overseas tours all encourage the pupils to develop interests far beyond the restrictions of the examination curriculum. Weekly academic clinics are held to assist pupils who might experience difficulties in individual subjects.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The Tutorial System provides individual support for the pupils throughout their Downside career. Each pupil, whatever their age, has a Tutor to supervise and guide his or her academic progress. Tutors are attached to particular houses where they work in conjunction with House Masters/Mistresses and they are in regular contact with parents.

Pupils see their Tutors at least twice a week, once during lesson time for Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship, and in the evening during Prep (homework) time. As well as making sure that his or her tutees are not falling behind or producing unsatisfactory work, a Tutor may give advice on how to work, how to organise time or how to choose subjects and options. He or she will also encourage and support those who are struggling. Tutors will also see their tutees informally throughout the week and weekends and will often invite them for meals or organise outings.

Learning Support is offered to all pupils at Downside. All new pupils follow a course designed to develop independent study skills and the Tutorial system builds on this foundation for the senior years. Pupils with specific learning difficulties are monitored and receive specialist teaching by the Head of Learning Support and a small team of dedicated teachers. Individual support is arranged at times convenient for the pupils. Extra English and Mathematics lessons are also offered and each Academic Department runs weekly support clinics for all ages. The School will arrange diagnostic tests for pupils with specific learning difficulties. English as an Additional Language is also available. There is a charge for all special tuition.

Very able pupils are offered additional teaching to inspire and nourish their enthusiasms and are especially encouraged to attend weekly Academic Society Meetings.

Higher Education advice and planning enables the pupils to choose the right courses at every stage of their life at Downside and beyond. Downside has a well-resourced Careers and Higher Education Library run by a full-time member of the teaching staff. Pupils follow a structured careers course from the Third Form (Year 9) upwards, receiving external guidance from ISCO (Independent Schools Careers Organisation), COA (Cambridge Occupational Analysts), and Somerset's 'Connexions' careers advisory service. In the Sixth Forms (Years 12 and 13), all pupils receive thorough and focused advice on UCAS applications from Tutors, House Masters/Mistresses and by the UCAS Co-ordinator. Pupils are encouraged to attend university open days and taster courses and are given interview practice. Help is always available after A Levels and in subsequent years.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments systems for pupils and staff alike are in place to ensure the highest standards are maintained. In terms of the pupils, this involves the following:

- regular internal monitoring by House and teaching staff
- weekly meetings with the Tutor and/or House Master/Mistress
- monthly academic summary reports to parents (effort and achievement grades plus comments by the Tutor and House Master/Mistress);
- detailed end-of-term reports to parents (including full subject reports);
- monthly academic staff meetings to discuss pupils' progress;
- a system of merit and distinction awards for high quality work.

Members of staff are encouraged to maintain and develop their professional expertise by means of a carefully-designed system of professional review, coordinated by the Director of Studies and the Head Master. Regular lesson observation forms part of this process, as does the monitoring of academic results and Inset (In-Service Training).

EXAMINATIONS

Internal examinations are an important part of the assessment procedure and progression from one academic year to the next is partially dependent on satisfactory results.

First Form pupils sit formal examinations in every subject during the Summer Term. Academically-able pupils in the First Form will be encouraged to sit 11+ scholarship examinations in the Lent Term.

Second Form pupils are currently prepared for the 13+ Common Entrance examinations held in May. Whilst it is expected that all pupils who have been admitted to Plunkett will pass directly into the Senior School, it is expected that their academic attainment will surpass the Common Entrance examination threshold (a minimum of 50% across all subjects); the results are used for setting purposes in the Third Form. Academically-able pupils in the Second Form will be encouraged and prepared to sit 13+ Common Scholarship examinations held at Downside in the Summer Term.

Third Form and Fourth Form pupils sit examinations in every subject at the end of the Michaelmas Term and at the end of the Summer Term.

Fifth Form pupils sit mock examinations at the end of the Michaelmas Term which give an opportunity for the candidates to appreciate the conditions under which they will be sitting the real papers. They also help to determine finally which examinations, and at what level, the students should be entered for. A failure to perform at a reasonable level at this stage may mean that the School is not prepared to enter a pupil for a subject, or that he/she is entered at a lower level, which has a ceiling of maximum grade that can be achieved. Parents are kept informed of any decision not to enter a pupil for any subject. Progression to the Sixth Form is also partially dependent on satisfactory results. The results of the mock examinations are sent to parents at the end of the Michaelmas Term and the pupils sit the GCSE or IGCSE examinations in the Summer Term.

Sixth Form pupils sit either AS Level or A2 Level examinations and at the end of the Summer Term. Pupils will regularly answer past papers, under examination conditions, during lesson or Preparation time. They sit A Level examinations in the Summer Term.

A full breakdown of the latest GCSE and A Level examination results is available on the School website or on request from the Registrar.

ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

There are seven academic year groups at Downside:

First Form or Year 7 (Age 11-12)	Fifth Form or Year 11 (Age 15-16)
Second Form or Year 8 (Age 12-13)	Lower Sixth Form or Year 12 (Age 16-17)
Third Form or Year 9 (Age 13-14)	Upper Sixth Form or Year 13 (Age 17-18)
Fourth Form or Year 10 (Age 14-15)	

The First and Second Form (Years 7 and 8) pupils are taught by specialist subject teachers in the Senior School and use all the Senior School academic facilities. Downside prepares the boys and girls for the Common Entrance and Scholarship Examinations taken at the end of the Second Form at age 13. Lessons last for thirty-five minutes and the curriculum includes:

Art	French	Mathematics
Biology	Geography	Music
Chemistry	History	Physics
Design	ICT	Physical Education
English	Latin	Religious Studies

Pupils are set half an hour's Prep (homework) in two subjects every weekday evening. Prep is done in individual classrooms between 4.45 pm and 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday, and is supervised by a member of staff. Day pupils may join boarders for Prep, if their parents wish.

The Third Form (Year 9) is a year of foundation building for the boys and girls who have come from a wide range of schools. Taught by subject-specialist teachers, pupils follow a broad academic curriculum to allow the pupils as wide a choice of GCSE options as possible. The curriculum includes:

Art	German	Personal Social Health Educ. (PSHE)
Biology	Greek	Physical Education
Chemistry	History	Physics
Design	ICT	Religious Studies
English	Latin	Spanish
French	Mathematics	Geography
Music		

Pupils are set half an hour's Prep (homework) in three subjects every weekday evening. Prep is between 7.30 pm and 9.00 pm Monday to Friday, and is supervised by House staff. An hour's Prep must be completed over the weekend. Day pupils may stay for Prep if they wish.

The Fourth and Fifth Form (Years 10 and 11) pupils follow courses leading to the award of normally eleven GCSEs or IGCSEs. Subjects available at GCSE or IGCSE include:

Art	Geography	Music
Biology	German	Physics
Chemistry	Greek	Religious Studies
Design	History	Spanish
English	Latin	French
Mathematics		

The compulsory curriculum is made up of Religious Studies, English, Mathematics, and either IGCSE Triple or Dual Award Co-ordinated Science taught by individual subject specialists. The top English sets sit GCSE English Literature and GCSE English Language. Pupils choose another four subjects in different option blocks that vary from year to year.

All pupils are expected to study either Geography or History (or both) and at least one modern language. Pupils who have difficulties with English or Mathematics may be advised to choose only three optional subjects, to leave room in the timetable for extra assistance.

Pupils are set forty-five minutes' Prep (homework) in two subjects every weekday evening. Prep is done under supervision in Houses between 7.30 pm and 9.00 pm Monday to Friday. An hour's Prep must also be completed over the weekend.

The Lower and Upper Sixth Forms (Years 12/13) pupils normally prepare for four AS levels in the Lower Sixth Form (Year 12) and may carry all four subjects through to A Level (Year 13), if they wish. More able pupils may sit up to five or even six A Levels.

Option blocks vary from year to year to accommodate the combinations and initial preferences of pupils in each Year Group. Downside concentrates only on the properly academic subjects that are recognised by the leading universities. Other interests are encouraged through the co-curricular programme. Subjects offered at A Level include:

Art	French	Mathematics
Biology	Further Mathematics	Music
Business Studies	Geography	Physical Education
Chemistry	German	Physics
Design	Greek	Psychology
Economics	History	Religious Studies
English	Latin	Spanish

Pupils continue their Catholic education with a non-examined Religious Studies course throughout their Sixth Form. In addition, all pupils attend one period of General Studies. Those hoping for entry to Oxbridge are given special classes, as well as being invited to join the Knowles, a discussion group specifically for the most academically able.

Each pupil is expected to complete at least five hours' Preparation in each subject every week during term time.

DAILY LIFE

Downside is proud of the outstanding level of pastoral care it provides. The school is well-known for its strong sense of community and for the supportive relationships between the age groups. The House system has been developed to provide the best possible support for the pupils to allow them to develop true Christian values.

Each house at Downside is run by a House Master or House Mistress, and his/her Deputy, with the assistance of a dedicated team of Tutors and a House Mother; all of whom take a close interest in each pupil's welfare. Downside is a notably small, tight-knit community and all the pupils are expected to support each other.

The House Structure has been designed to provide the best possible support for the pupils at every stage of their life at Downside. Boarders and day pupils are integrated together in all the seven houses at Downside.

First and Second Form boys and girls join Plunkett House (divided into Ramsay and Ullathorne). Boys and girls come together for meals, recreation time, prayers and activities, but retain private areas within their own houses.

Senior School boys join one of three senior Houses: Barlow, Roberts or Smythe, for four years after having spent the Third Form (Year 9) in a separate house, Powell House. Being in a single house for the first year enables the boys in the Third Form to settle into the School and to form lasting friendships outside their destined Senior House.

Senior School girls join either Caverel or Isabella House for all five years. Experience shows that Third Form girls are able to integrate more easily and readily into the Senior Houses and the wider school than some of the boys.

All the houses at Downside have undergone extensive refurbishment and are equipped with modern kitchens, private changing and showering areas and comfortable common rooms. Younger boarders share rooms or small dormitories; all boarders have individual rooms from the Fifth Form.

Boarding at Downside is both enjoyable and purposeful. Pupils of all age groups learn to live alongside and to support each other with the true Christian spirit of compassion and understanding. Downside School is committed to remaining a traditional full boarding school, not a flexi-boarding or weekly boarding school. More than 85% of Downside pupils are full boarders. Downside is also a national boarding-school; many boarders live in the South and West of England but a significant number come from London, East Anglia, the Midlands and even further afield.

10% of the pupils at Downside are from overseas, most coming from the Catholic countries of Western Europe, and some from South America and Asia.

Day Pupils are as much part of life at Downside as the boarders. He or she belongs to one of the boarding houses, and may join in all the co-curricular, evening and weekend activities available to boarders. Many day pupils stay in School for Prep (homework).

Day pupils may also choose to stay occasional nights in the School, for which there is a charge, but the School cannot guarantee that a place will always be available. Pupils who are occasionally required to stay in the School overnight for co-curricular activities are not normally charged.

Downside offers a minibus service (according to demand) to and from Bath, Shepton Mallet, Frome and surrounding villages, details of which may be obtained from the Registrar.

Weekends must be as busy as the week and as much fun – if more relaxed. The School's Weekend Co-ordinator works with the pupils to create a stimulating programme of weekend activities. Barbecues, concerts, clubs, dances, movies, musicals, plays and a huge range of outings and visits ensure that there are plenty of positive reasons to board on the weekend.

Parents are always welcome at Downside and are encouraged to come to the School whenever they can to support matches, plays, concerts and other events. Many parents attend Mass on Sunday and are welcome to take their children out afterwards. A full seven day programme means that boarders are expected to be in School at the weekend but Downside also has a series of weekend breaks (exeats):

Whole School Exeats where all pupils depart from Friday afternoon to Sunday evening (held twice a term for Plunkett House and twice in the Michaelmas Term for the Senior School pupils)

Closed weekends where all pupils are expected to remain in school on weekends nominated by the School (usually four per term)

Open weekends where pupils can choose to go home, with permission, after School commitments on Saturday afternoon, until Sunday evening.

Transport is arranged by the Travel Secretary for all exeats. The School runs buses to and from Bath Spa railway station every Open weekend and to Heathrow Airport and Central London when required. The Travel Secretary can also arrange individual transport for pupils going to other destinations.

Good Food is a must at a boarding-school; it should be fresh and tasty. The boys and girls at Downside are provided with a nutritionally sound and balanced diet that is varied and appealing.

All the staff and pupils eat together at meal times in either the Weld (Plunkett) or Main Refectory which is served from central kitchens on a cafeteria system.

There is always a vegetarian option as well as meat and fish dishes from the hot counters, a self-service salad bar and fresh fruit available, and also 'theatre cooking' serving while-you-wait specials. Individual diet requests are catered for by arrangement. The Downside Café, providing hot and cold snacks and takeaways, is open every evening, and the boys and girls are given fresh fruit and snacks each day and evening in the boarding houses. All the boarding-houses have their own kitchens.

The Health Centre, situated in its own building at the heart of the School, is staffed 24 hours a day by a team of fully qualified nurses who deal with all aspects of primary care. Doctors provide weekday surgeries with appointments possible at any time when necessary.

Each pupil is given a medical examination and is provided with routine check-ups and immunisations. Regular advice and support is offered by the Health Centre and pupils are also encouraged to use the services of external counsellors if necessary.

The School Shop supplies every Downside pupil's uniform, new and second-hand, and official sportswear. It also stocks stationery, toiletries and a large range of other items that pupils may need. The shop is open throughout the week and also on Saturday mornings. There is a small supermarket in the neighbouring village and pupils also have weekly access to all the shopping facilities of the city of Bath.

CO-CURRICULAR LIFE

Co-curricular activities provide vital experiences and opportunities and Downside offers an exceptionally wide choice to its pupils. All boys and girls are expected to participate; there are extended time slots for activities, clubs and societies, drama, music and sport on every weekday afternoon and a huge range of activities also take place outside the formal co-curricular times.

ACTIVITIES

The Activity clubs and societies aim to develop and meet the interests of every pupil at Downside; there are more than seventy different clubs and societies. The range of activities available is constantly changing (and may be age-specific) but the following are expected to be on offer in the School during the academic year 2010/11:

Art	Art History	Aviation	Badminton
Ballet	Band	Basketball	Beekeeping
Bridge	CCF	Chanter	Chess
Choir	Climbing	Community Service	Computer Aided Design
Cookery	Cricket	Debating	Design
Dining	Drama	Duke of Edinburgh	Environment
Fencing	Film	First Aid	Fly fishing
Gardening	Golf	Hebrew	History of Art
Horse riding	Indoor football	Jazz	Jewellery Design
Journalism	Justice and Peace	Kayaking	LAMDA Speech and Drama
Lepidoptery	Life Drawing	Lifeguard	Local History
Mandarin	Martial Arts	Model United Nations	Music Catalogue
Orchestra	Philosophy	Photography	Pipe band
Poetry	Politics	Polo	Rugby Sevens
School Council	Scrabble	Scuba-diving	Shooting
Songwriting	Sports Leadership	Squash	Swimming
Table Tennis	Tarantula	Tennis	Theatre
Trampolineing	Tutoria	Weight training	Woodwork
Vintners	Yoga	Young Investigators	

Each year group in the Senior School has its own Academic Society, and the Abingdon and Court of Earls Debating Societies, the Bede History Society, the Knowles, a society for Oxbridge pupils, and the Conspirators, a society of Catholic thought, all flourish at Downside.

CCF, Community Service or **Enterprise** is compulsory for all Senior School pupils on Tuesday afternoons. The Third Form are organised according to a carousel and follow activities that include the CCF, Drama and Study Skills. The Fourth and Fifth Form are also organised according to a carousel and either opt to join the CCF full-time or participate in rotating series of activities that include Cookery, First Aid, Journalism, Lifeguarding, and Justice and Peace. Sixth Form pupils are required to offer support for State-maintained primary schools, and for the elderly, the disabled and the homeless in the locality, or participate in other charitable, community or environmental projects.

ARTISTIC LIFE

The Performing and Visual Arts are an essential part of a Downside education. Downside is justifiably proud of the range of opportunities and the quality of productions at the School. All boys and girls explore the arts either by studying the academic subjects of Art, Design, Drama or Music or by participating in the lively co-curricular Arts activities and events. Downside has a purpose-built 600 raked-seat theatre which is used for small and large productions alike, and for art and photography exhibitions.

Drama is enormously popular and well-supported at Downside. All pupils are expected to involve themselves in drama, whether on or behind the stage. The School aims to hold a junior school play, a middle school play, a whole school play and/or musical, and six House Plays during each academic year. Individual Houses provide a 'House at Home' which consists of an afternoon of drama and music organised by the pupils themselves. Drama also give pupils the opportunity to work backstage with sound, lighting and stage management. Touring companies with productions that support the curriculum regularly perform in the School Theatre. Drama lessons are included in the lower school curriculum and specialist teaching is available for those taking the LAMDA examinations.

Recent school drama productions have included *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, *Brave New World*, *Dr Faustus*, and *Unman, Wittering and Zigo*.

Musicals at Downside include large and enthusiastic casts. They are produced annually, often being produced and directed by pupils in the Sixth Form. Plunkett House pupils would also normally put on a musical during the year. School musical productions in recent years have included *Oliver!*, *Grease*, *Guys and Dolls*, *High Society*, *Anything Goes*, *Crazy for You*, *The Boyfriend* and *The Sound of Music*.

The Visual Arts are an essential part of a Downside education. Downside is proud of the range of opportunities and the quality of work produced at the School.

Set in its own buildings, the Art Department is busy and buzzing. Freedom of creativity is the norm: 2-D or 3-D? Textiles or oils? Figurative or abstract? Landscape or portrait? Pupils are encouraged to explore as many styles and media as possible. An Artist-in-Residence and regular visits to exhibitions, galleries and museums provide the pupils with extra inspiration. There are also regular tours overseas.

Photography is hugely popular at Downside. Downside boys and girls learn the art of photography with renowned professionals and, as well as producing many of the photographs for the Downside publications and website, also hold private commercial exhibitions of their work.

MUSICAL LIFE

The School is renowned for the quality of its music and aims to stimulate a life-long enjoyment of music by encouraging as many pupils as possible to participate in both choral and instrumental musical performances. Pupils at Downside have a remarkable success rate in the Associated Board of Royal School of Music Awards, GCSE, AS Level and A Level examinations. Many go on to read Music at university. Each year the School awards a considerable number of music and choral awards and scholarships at 11+, 13+ and 16+.

MUSIC ENSEMBLES

The Schola Cantorum, founded over a century ago, is the oldest Roman Catholic school choir in the United Kingdom. Richard Terry, its founder, later went on to found the choir at Westminster Cathedral and was knighted for his services to music. The Schola Cantorum is made up of boys and girls, including trebles from Plunkett and the Third Form, choral exhibitioners, Music Scholars and volunteers. The Schola Cantorum gives concerts of sacred music throughout the year. Recently it has performed Schubert's Mass in G, Vivaldi's Gloria, Haydn's Nelson Mass, Handel's Messiah, Mozart's Requiem, Bach's St John Passion, Haydn's Creation and Verdi's Requiem.

The Chamber Choirs are smaller than the Schola Cantorum, typically numbering sixteen singers, boys or girls. There are four chamber choirs at Downside: a boys' choir, a girls' choir, a mixed choir, and a junior choir. They specialise in *a cappella* performances, sacred and secular, and rehearse weekly. Membership is by invitation only. The Chamber Choirs sing Mass on some Sundays and are much in demand for concerts. The mixed chamber choir tours regularly; most recently, the choir performed a series of concerts and Masses in France and Bavaria.

Orchestral Music is performed regularly. The Orchestra meets once a week to prepare for concerts during the School year, such as the St Cecilia's Day Concert, the Charity Showcase Concert and the annual Concerto Competition.

Chamber music also flourishes at Downside. A string orchestra, and brass, woodwind and string groups meet once a week, and often perform at chamber recitals given by the pupils on weekday evenings.

Jazz and Rock are also enormously popular and several groups perform throughout the year. Each year, Downside hosts a spectacular charity variety concert in conjunction with local schools.

The CCF and Pipe Bands are much in demand. The CCF Band numbers between 30 and 40 players. The band plays for the annual CCF inspection, and accompanies the Remembrance Day service. It also represents the School at the annual Remembrance Day parades in Bath and Warminster, and at other events. The Pipe Band, comprising several bagpipers of all ages, regularly performs at School concerts and parades, as well as at private functions. When not marching the CCF Band members perform as a Concert Band.

MUSIC TUITION

All new pupils are encouraged to learn an instrument and time for lessons is provided within the School timetable. There is a supplemental charge for music lessons. Tuition is typically available in the following instruments:

Bagpipes	Electric Guitar	Piano	Bassoon
Flute	Saxophone	Cello	Harp
Singing	Clarinet	Horn	Trombone
Classical Guitar	Oboe	Trumpet	Double Bass
Orchestral Percussion	Viola	Drums	Organ
Violin			

MUSIC FACILITIES

The School has extensive facilities for music teaching and performance and the Music School is available for teaching and practice throughout the day and during the evening. The Music Department has Bluthner and Bosendorfer grand pianos, Sibelius music technology equipment, audio equipment, and numerous individual practice/teaching rooms. The School Theatre also has a large band room, percussion room and further practice rooms. The Gasquet Hall, School Theatre studio and Abbey Church are all used for concerts and recitals.

Organists have the use of the four-manual Compton organ in the Abbey Church and a two-manual tracker-action instrument by Sweetland in the Old Chapel as well as two electronic instruments. The School also owns a spinet and a magnificent two-manual harpsichord.

SPORTING LIFE

SPORT

Organised games form an integral part of the curriculum at Downside. All boys and girls of all ages are expected to participate in sport at least three times a week and the School aims that as many pupils as possible should represent the School in mid-week or weekend inter-school fixtures. Fixtures are carefully balanced so that all pupils, whatever the skill levels, are able to play competitively. Each sport runs its own practice sessions on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Some practice sessions are given over to inter-House matches, which mean that many pupils have an opportunity to represent their House in various sports at an appropriate age level.

PE is an integral part of the curriculum for the junior year groups.

For boys rugby is the major sport in the Michaelmas Term, hockey and football in the Lent Term, cricket and tennis in the Summer Term.

For girls hockey is the major sport in the Michaelmas Term, netball in the Lent Term, tennis and rounders in the Summer Term.

Amongst other sports available are: athletics, badminton, basketball, cross-country, eventing, fencing, golf, kayaking, polo, squash, swimming and trampolining.

SPORTS FACILITIES

The School has extensive sports grounds and facilities. The School has some 100 acres of playing fields, providing cricket, rugby, football and rounders pitches, and a running track, as well as all-weather hockey pitches and twelve recently-refurbished tennis and netball courts.

There is a fully modernised heated indoor swimming pool and a sports hall complex which includes fitness rooms, and facilities for indoor cricket nets, tennis, netball, basketball, badminton and volleyball, and also a gymnasium and glass-backed squash courts.

Mendip, Orchardleigh and Farrington golf clubs are nearby and there are local facilities for fishing, polo, riding and sailing.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

The Catholic faith is central to a Downside pupil's education not only in terms of the knowledge he/she acquires, but also in terms of his/her personal and spiritual life. Whilst Downside welcomes children and families from other faiths, we ask them always to recognise our distinctively Catholic and Benedictine character.

THE CHAPLAINCY

The Chaplaincy comprises a full-time team of Chaplains who lead the pupils in prayer, and, as necessary, instruct, reassure and comfort. The Chaplains are regular visitors in the Houses and lead retreats and House Masses and Reconciliation Services. Together the Chaplains support the Head Master and House Masters/Mistresses, act as points of reference for families and Old Gregorians, and offer comfort to the sick. The Chaplains have rooms in the centre of the School for both pupils and staff to see them on any matters of concern.

Downside's monastic community prays formally five times a day, and endeavours to teach pupils the importance of prayer. Houses make their own arrangements for prayers in the morning and evening and pupils and parents are welcome to join the monks at the Divine Offices. The Old Chapel and the Abbey Church are always open for those who, as St Benedict says, just want to go in and pray.

THE SACRAMENTS

The Sacraments lie at the heart of the School's life. Mass is celebrated on Sundays and Feast Days in the Abbey Church and all pupils in School are expected to attend and parents are most welcome to join their children. In addition, there is a voluntary weekday morning Mass celebrated in the Old Chapel. Pupils are invited to serve at Mass as members of the Sacristy, or to read or sing in the Schola Cantorum (choir). Through preaching and reflection on the Liturgy of the Word, Mass is made an experience where pupils grow both in holiness and in their understanding of the faith. House Masses and Reconciliation Services are held every term. Confessions are heard before all School Masses in the Abbey Church, and on Thursday evenings.

Catechesis is offered to all who wish to receive it. To prepare them to share in the sacramental life of the Church, pupils may, if they wish, receive instruction for Confirmation. The Bishop of Clifton celebrates the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Abbey Church during the Summer Term. Pupils are encouraged to discuss Confirmation with their parents and to come forward when they feel ready to undertake full responsibility for their faith. Most pupils are confirmed in the Third Form, although some wait until later on and may be confirmed in any year during their time in the Senior School. Instruction is also available for those pupils who, for whatever reason, have not made their First Confession or received their First Holy Communion before arriving at Downside.

RETREATS

Retreats and Sodalties are offered to all the pupils during the year. Every year pupils go on retreats tailored to the needs of their year group and intended to help them focus on their understanding of God.

Fourth and Fifth Form pupils are invited to join the Sodality of St Benedict in which they practise some simple skills in meditation and lectio divina (the meditative reading of scripture) under the guidance of a monk. Since the seventeenth century, Sixth Form pupils have been invited to join the Sodality of Our Lady, under the Head Master's care. This meets regularly for guided meditation or prayer. A system of Tutoria is being established to encourage older pupils to become spiritual mentors to the young.

Pupils and their families are invited to attend the annual Easter Retreat at the school and Sixth Form pupils are invited to join the Order of Malta Volunteers' pilgrimage to Lourdes every summer.

LIFE BEYOND

Higher Education advice and planning enables the pupils to choose the right courses at every stage of their life at Downside and beyond. Downside has a well-resourced Careers and Higher Education Library run by a full-time member of the teaching staff. Pupils follow a structured careers course from the Third Form (Year 9) upwards, receiving external guidance from ISCO (Independent Schools Careers Organisation), COA (Cambridge Occupational Analysts), and Somerset's 'Connexions' careers advisory service. In the Sixth Forms (Years 12 and 13), all pupils receive thorough and focused advice on UCAS applications from Tutors, House Masters/Mistresses and by the UCAS Co-ordinator. Pupils are encouraged to attend university open days and taster courses and are given interview practice. Help is always available after A Levels and in subsequent years.

Careers advice and assistance is available on a wide range of possibilities and is co-ordinated by the Head of Careers. Pupils are encouraged to undertake work experience and the Careers Department works with parents and Old Gregorians (alumni) to find suitable placements. Close contacts are maintained with industry, commerce and the Services. The Forces Liaison Officer visits regularly and each year careers talks are held by experts in their fields.

St Gregory's Society is the thriving association for past pupils. Former pupils of Downside School are known as Old Gregorians (OGs) who, on payment of a subscription, become Life Members of St Gregory's Society. The first recorded meeting of St Gregory's Society was in a London hotel in 1843; today the Society comprises around 5,000 Old Gregorians and it is thriving.

The centrepiece in the Society's calendar is the Easter Retreat held at Downside each year from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday and attended by many OGs, both young and old, and their families. There are a great many dinners and gatherings held all around the world, some of which have become annual events while others are more of the 'one-off' variety. Sport also flourishes under the auspices of the Society through its support of the Downside Wanderers Cricket Club, the OG Golfing Society and more recently OG Rugby Club.

St Gregory's Society also operates a benevolent wing, known as the Bruised Reeds, to help Old Gregorians in distress.

BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

BURSARIES

The Abbot and community of Downside have established a bursary fund from which grants can be made to those parents who may need financial assistance to enable their children to attend the School. All bursaries are means-tested and are available to pupils entering the School at all age levels. Bursaries can also be awarded to parents of current Downside pupils whose financial circumstances may have changed unexpectedly. Bursaries are normally subject to a limit of 50% of the school fees but awards to the amount of 100% of the school fees can be awarded in exceptional circumstances.

Bursary applications are also accepted from the holder of a Scholarship or Exhibition, if the award is insufficient to enable a place at the School to be taken up. Grants are normally subject to a limit of half of the total fees.

Bursary application forms can be obtained from the Registrar. All applications are treated in the strictest confidence. Fee-concessions are also available for siblings and for children of Old Gregorians (alumni):

Siblings: second and subsequent siblings are eligible for a 10% concession on the school fees once they have joined the School.

Old Gregorians: a concession of 2½% on the school fees is available for each child of an Old Gregorian (alumnus).

A non-refundable fee of £100 is payable to register a pupil for Downside Senior School. The registration fee is not refundable. A deposit of £900 as confirmation of a guaranteed place of entry to the School is payable in the academic year before a pupil starts at Downside. £450 is returned against the first term's fees; the remainder against the final bill on leaving Downside.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Downside School offers a substantial number of Entrance Awards (scholarships and exhibitions) for pupils hoping to enter the School at the principal ages of entry of 11+, 13+ and 16+. The number and size of awards in any particular year are at the discretion of the Head Master. A scholarship or exhibition is a recognition of exceptional ability and promise and is usually accompanied by a financial reward. In cases of need, the Trustees will consider applications to supplement an award with a means-tested bursary to enable the award and place at the School to be taken up.

The bestowal of any award carries with it privilege and responsibility, as well as financial reward. Every award holder is expected to set an example for other pupils in their approach to academic study and participation in the fuller life of the School. The tenure of any award is intended to be for the duration of a holder's education at Downside, provided that the holder's academic progress and general conduct remain satisfactory and provided that the holder continues enthusiastically to fulfil the obligations associated with the award. Awards are reviewed annually.

Further details of the awards are available in the Admissions and Awards booklet and application forms can be obtained from the Registrar. The Head of an applicant's current school will be asked to submit a reference.

The Director of Studies and the respective Heads of Department are also happy to speak informally to applicants and their parents; music pre-auditions are particularly encouraged.

FEES

The deposit is refunded in full if the pupil fails the entrance assessments but will not otherwise be refunded, except in exceptional circumstances.

Downside School boarding and day fees for the academic year 2010/11 are as follows:

Senior School Boarding	£8,409
Senior School Day	£4,556
Plunkett House Boarding	£6,679
Plunkett House Day	£4,095

All the costs incurred in the usual course of the education by the School of a pupil shall be met by the fees unless otherwise notified by the School. Co-curricular activities such as private music lessons, trips, House accounts, and public examinations shall be deemed to be supplemental to items met by the fees and charged for accordingly.

EXTRA TUITION

Fees for the academic year 2010/11 are as follows:

Music

9 x 35 minute individual lessons	£210 per term
Group lessons	£105 per term
Instrument charges	£31 per term

ESL/EAL	£210 per term
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Literacy

35 minute individual lessons	£20.40
30 minute individual lessons	£17.50

Overnight charges for day pupils

Senior School (per night)	£44.00
Plunkett House (per night)	£34.50

SCHOOL CONTACTS

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Registrar

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School Shop Manager

Mr Paul Burcham
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'An Alma Mater, knowing her children
one by one, not a foundry, or a mint,
or a treadmill.'

J.H. Newman

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