



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

12th Sept 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have come to the end of a successful first full week in school. I am really pleased to see students looking incredibly smart and eager to learn.

A gentle reminder that the school day at the college starts at 8.30am. At this point, students should be in their form room, ready for tutor time. We are very pleased that this is the case for the vast majority of our students, but please can you remind your child/ren of the importance of being in school and their classroom before the bell sounds.

We will be running a Macmillian Coffee morning from 9.30am to 10.30am on **Friday 26th September**. This is an opportunity for any parents and carers to come into school and join us for a coffee, piece of cake and a chat, while supporting an incredibly worthwhile cause. Further information will follow but I wanted to let you know the date so that you can put it in your diaries.

If you haven't already labelled your child's uniform, particularly their tie and blazer, please can you do so. This helps to avoid any mix ups when these items are removed for PE and extracurricular activities.

Best wishes for a relaxing weekend.

*Dawn White
Principal*



New Deputy Principal

Dear Parent/Carer,

My name is Stevie Thornton and I am the new Deputy Principal for the school, focusing on Teaching and Learning.

I just thought I'd take an opportunity to introduce myself and to say how excited I am to be joining Sir Harry Smith Community College. I come from a background of school improvement and am passionate about ensuring that both staff and students are provided the very best to reach and exceed their aspirations wherever possible. I look forward to meeting and working with you all in ensuring our college is seen as a beacon of academic excellence for your children.

A quick overview of some of the changes that have occurred in the classroom since I've joined include:

- Making certain that students have clear learning intentions and success criteria in all their lessons.
- A focus on end of lesson routines.
- Changes to tutor time to focus on both numeracy and literacy as well as challenging students with material focusing on supporting their mental health, critical thinking and future careers.

A big thank you to all the students who have made me feel incredibly welcomed here at Sir Harry Smith Community College and I look forward to forming strong partnerships with you all.

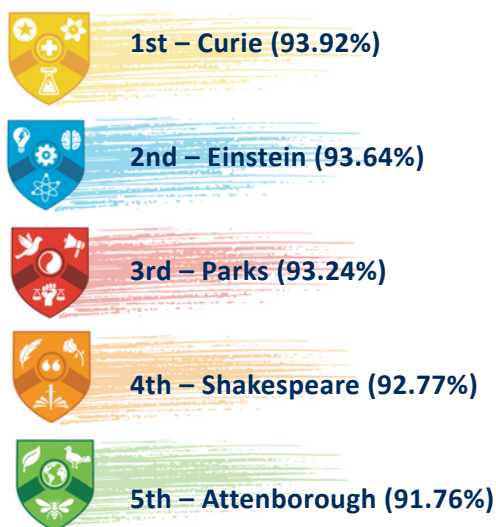
Stevie Thornton
Deputy Principal



Attendance Update

We are delighted to share some fantastic news about attendance at Sir Harry Smith so far this year. Our overall attendance is currently 2% higher than at this point last year, which is a wonderful achievement and a reflection of the positive efforts from students, parents, and carers.

Here's how our Houses are performing at the moment:



With Curie House currently leading the way, the competition remains close, and we look forward to seeing how the leaderboard develops over the coming weeks.

You may have seen in the news that school attendance is a national concern. Against this backdrop, we are extremely proud of the improvements made here at Sir Harry Smith. This success is only possible thanks to the support and commitment shown by our families and, of course, the dedication of our students. Thank you for working with us to make attendance a priority.

Why attendance matters:

Good attendance is essential to a student's success in school and beyond. Every day counts, and here's why:

- Lessons build on each other – missing even a few days can make it harder to stay on track.
- Regular attendance helps students achieve their best possible results in exams and coursework.
- Being in school supports social development, friendships, and a sense of belonging.
- Strong attendance habits prepare young people for future study and employment.
- Participation in school life, from clubs to events, depends on being here to take part.

Together, we can continue to build on this positive start and ensure every student has the best opportunity to thrive. We need to remember that **EVERY DAY COUNTS!**

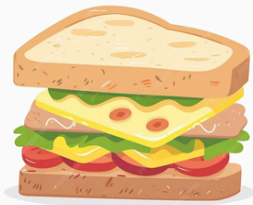
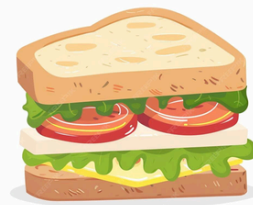
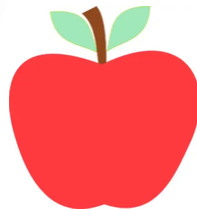
Paul Treliving
Assistant Principal

Menu Options This Term

Please find below the menu options for this term in our school canteen, provided by Caterlink. Items from the canteen can be purchased using students' fingerprint payment account.



Lunchtime at the college begins at 1.20pm and ends at 2.00pm.


Snacks & drinks can also be purchased at break time, which begins at 11.00am and ends at 11.20am.



WEEK W/C 1 st Sept, 22 nd Sept, 13 th Oct	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
OPTION #1	BUTTERNUT MAC & CHEESE With Crunchy Croutons	BEEF CHILLI with Rice and Sour Cream	PORK OR CHICKEN SAUSAGE Roast Potatoes and Gravy	CHICKEN TIKKA MASALA With 50/50 Rice	BREADED FISH with Chips & Garden Peas
OPTION #2	QUORN & VEGETABLE CHOW MEIN	FALAFEL WRAPS with Couscous and Mint & Yoghurt Dip	VEGAN SAUSAGE With Roast Potatoes and Gravy	SWEET POTATO & CHICKPEA CURRY with 50/50 Rice	CHEESE & LEEK FRITTATA with Chips and Garden Peas
ON THE SIDE	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day
DESSERT OF THE DAY	PINEAPPLE UPSIDE DOWN CAKE	CHOCOLATE CRUNCH CAKE	STICKY TOFFEE APPLE CRUMBLE With Custard	WARMED JAMAICAN GINGER CAKE with Ice Cream or Custard	ICED SPONGE CAKE
ALSO AVAILABLE! SOUP OF THE DAY FILLED JACKET POTATOES	CHECK OUT... OUR HOT AND COLD GRAB & GO SELECTION	MENU KEY VEGAN OPTION ADDED PLANT PROTEIN SOURCE OF WHOLEMEAL	ALLERGIES PLEASE SPEAK TO A MEMBER OF STAFF IF YOU HAVE AN ALLERGY AND NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE OUR FOOD DRINKS. THEY WILL ADVISE YOU OF YOUR AVAILABLE CHOICES.		caterlink feeding the imagination

Menu Options This Term

WEEK W/C 8 th Sept, 29 th Sept, 20 th Oct	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
OPTION #1	CHEESE AND TOMATO QUICHE With Potato Wedges	BEEF LASAGNE with Garlic Bread and Salad	CREAMY CHICKEN AND BROCCOLI PIE with New Potatoes	 JERK CHICKEN with Rice and Peas and Pineapple Slaw	FISH IN BATTER with Chips
OPTION #2	CRUNCHY LENTIL PASTA BAKE with Roasted Vegetables	CHICKPEA AND APRICOT TAGINE With Couscous	LEEK, ONION & POTATO TRAY BAKE	CURRIED SQUASH & BUTTERBEAN STEW with Rice and Peas & Slaw	VEGAN BURGER with Chips
ON THE SIDE	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day
DESSERT OF THE DAY	CHOCOLATE SPONGE PUDDING	APPLE PIE With Cream	PEAR & CHOC CRUMBLE With Custard	JAM & COCONUT SPONGE	DATY FLAPJACK
ALSO AVAILABLE! SOUP OF THE DAY FILLED JACKET POTATOES	CHECK OUT... OUR HOT AND COLD GRAB & GO SELECTION	MENU KEY VEGAN OPTION ADDED PLANT PROTEIN SOURCE OF WHOLEMEAL	ALLERGIES PLEASE SPEAK TO A MEMBER OF STAFF IF YOU HAVE AN ALLERGY AND NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE OUR FOOD DISHES. THEY WILL ADVISE YOU OF YOUR AVAILABLE CHOICES.		

WEEK W/C 15 th Sept, 6 th Oct,	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
OPTION #1	CHEESY CHILLI CHICKEN PASTA	CHICKEN SOUVLAKI with Golden Rice or Seasoned Potatoes	ROAST OF THE DAY New Potatoes & Gravy	ENCHILADAS Pork, Beef or Chicken (choose one) with 50/50 Rice	CHIP SHOP FISH / SAUSAGE with Chips, Mushy Peas and Gravy/ Curry Sauce
OPTION #2	SPAGHETTI & PLANT BASED MEATBALLS	SPINACH & CHEESE WHIRL Golden Rice or Seasoned Potatoes	LENTIL WELLINGTON with New Potatoes & Gravy	MEXICAN SOYA CHILLI with 50/50 Rice and Sour Cream	VEGAN SAUSAGE Chips, Mushy Peas & Gravy/ Curry Sauce
ON THE SIDE	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day	Vegetables of the Day
DESSERT OF THE DAY	CHOC ORANGE COOKIE	SUMMER FRUIT CRUMBLE With Custard	FRUIT MUFFINS	PEACH CAKE With Custard	CHOCOLATE BROWNIE
ALSO AVAILABLE! SOUP OF THE DAY FILLED JACKET POTATOES	CHECK OUT... OUR HOT AND COLD GRAB & GO SELECTION	MENU KEY VEGAN OPTION ADDED PLANT PROTEIN SOURCE OF WHOLEMEAL	ALLERGIES PLEASE SPEAK TO A MEMBER OF STAFF IF YOU HAVE AN ALLERGY AND NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S INSIDE OUR FOOD DISHES. THEY WILL ADVISE YOU OF YOUR AVAILABLE CHOICES.		

Netball Success!

U16 & U14 East Regional Youth League Qualifiers

Last weekend students from our college represented Whittlesey Warriors Netball Club. The U16 & U14 performance teams entered the qualifying tournament for the East Regional Youth League in Welwyn Garden City and what a weekend it was! They were up against performance teams from Norfolk, Suffolk, Hertfordshire and London to name a few, the standard was amazingly high!

The girls had some tough matches in their pools but were able to come out with some really good results resulting in both teams qualifying for regionals.

U16 - Division 3

U14 - Division 2

We are so proud of our students that are in both of these squads, massive well done to the girls, they have worked so hard and are the first teams in Fenland to play at this level. They have made history, putting Whittlesey and their club on the map!



Alumni Network

Sir Harry Smith is establishing an alumni network!

We want to build an alumni community to inspire our students and are delighted to inform you that we are working with the education charity Future First to build a thriving alumni community. Amongst our former students is a whole host of talented role models who we want to connect with in order to celebrate their success and inspire our current students. Alumni can be brought back to offer careers and education advice, mentor students, provide work experience placements and much more besides.

We need you!

If you are a former student, we would love to hear what you have done since leaving us. Whether you attended university, completed an apprenticeship, or went straight into work, you are a valued member of our alumni community. From doctors to dancers, pilots to plumbers, we need alumni from a range of careers to open our students' eyes to what's possible. We would love for you to join the alumni network so that we can stay connected and let you know about exciting opportunities to get involved.

There is no obligation to do anything after you have signed up, but you will receive a few emails letting you know about opportunities to get involved. Please feel free to forward this to any friends or family who attended Sir Harry Smith who you think may want to get involved.

**Join our alumni network
today!**



<https://www.futurefirsthub.org.uk/register/sirharrysmith>

Useful Information

Upcoming Opening Evenings

Our Open Evenings for September 2026 are as follows:

Year 6: Tuesday 7th October 6.00pm-8.00pm

Sixth Form: Tuesday 14th October 6.00pm-8.00pm



Careers Information & Guidance Drop-In Sessions are running in the College Library on **Mondays & Tuesdays, 3.00-4.00pm.**

Please come along if you would like help with: Year 9 Options, Post-16 & Post-18 Pathways, Apprenticeship & T-Level Routes, applications and CVs.

A reminder that college will close at 1.20pm on **Tuesday 7th October**, to allow us to prepare for our Year 6 Open Evening.



Useful Information

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about **SCHOOL AVOIDANCE**

School avoidance refers to reduced attendance or non-attendance at school by a child or young person. In 2022-23, more than one in five children in England were found to be absent from school over 10% of the time. This guide focuses on school avoidance with an emotional basis, offering expert mental health advice. However, it's important to remember that school avoidance is a hugely subjective experience which requires a tailored, individual approach.

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

REASONS FOR ABSENCE

School avoidance is sometimes underpinned by several factors rather than one single cause. This could include something going on for the child or young person within the family or at school. A child may have caring responsibilities at home, for instance, or a change in family dynamics; bullying and friendship difficulties at school; pressure to achieve in schoolwork and exams; or moving from primary school to secondary school.

PATTERNS OF ABSENCE

You may notice patterns in regular absences or children regularly expressing that they don't want to attend school (particularly being reluctant to leave home on school days), if a child or young person is neurodiverse, there is some evidence to suggest there are more aspects of school life which can cause distress – such as changes in the environment, changes of routine and sensory stimuli.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

There may be an increase in a child or young person's complaints about physical symptoms, particularly on school days or the evening before school. These could include tummy aches, headaches, or saying they feel ill when there doesn't appear to be a medical cause. Always check with the GP first to rule out medical causes or illness.

IMPACT OF SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

School refusal can negatively impact a young person's learning and development. Attending school on a regular basis not only supports academic attainment but is also important for the development of key life skills and the growth of children and young people as citizens.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

The difficulties associated with school non-attendance can be far reaching and may have a negative impact on long-term outcomes. It may, for example, lead to reduced future aspirations, poor emotional regulation, mental health difficulties, limited academic progress and restricted employment opportunities.

CYCLE OF ABSENCE

Consistent absences may contribute to sustained school avoidance over time. Further to this, the longer a pupil is out of education, the more likely it is that there is a rise in their ongoing need to avoid the activity making them anxious – increasing their desire to stay at home.

Advice for Parents & Educators

WORK TOGETHER

If there's a concern about a child's absence and emotional wellbeing, it's important that there is clear communication and a consistent approach between the child's parents and the school, so you can take a child-centred approach together towards a plan of support or reintegration. This ensures a consistency of approach from both home and school, creating better outcomes for the child.

MANAGE OVERWHELMING FEELINGS

Acknowledge the child's worries, listen and discuss coping strategies together to help them manage difficulties. These could include mindfulness, deep breathing or going for a walk. This helps them understand that you are working together towards a common goal, and that these strategies can be used when bigger feelings arise.

FOLLOW REGULAR ROUTINES

Children can benefit from a regular and consistent routine. This could be a morning routine, from waking up and having breakfast through to getting dressed, packing their bag and leaving the house. A consistent evening routine which is calm and spent away from screens can also give children much needed predictability and familiarity. Schools can help create a timetabled routine for the child's school day, if required.

RECOGNISE POSITIVE STEPS

Drawing attention to a child's successes – be they big or small – can help to give them some much-needed confidence and motivation. Celebrate these daily victories – such as getting out of bed on time or completing school work – and don't hesitate to let the child know when you're impressed or proud of them. Such an approach can go a long way.

Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: nationalcollege.com/guides/school-avoidance

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Key Information

Term Dates

AUTUMN TERM 2025

Professional Day (college closed to students)	Monday 1st September 2025
Professional Day (college closed to students)	Tuesday 2nd September 2025
START OF TERM - <u>Year 7 & 12 students only</u>	Wednesday 3rd September 2025
START OF TERM - <u>All other year groups</u>	Thursday 4th September 2025
Professional Day (college closed to students)	Friday 24th October 2025
Half Term	Monday 27th to Friday 31st October 2025
Last Day of Term	Friday 19th December 2025

SPRING TERM 2026

START OF TERM	Monday 5th January 2026
Professional Day (college closed to students)	Friday 13th February 2026
Half Term	Monday 16th to Friday 20th February 2026
Last Day of Term	Friday 27th March 2026

Contacting Us

Please visit our website to find out the best way of contacting the person you would like to get in touch with. Please do remember that if you are contacting a member of our teaching staff, they will have teaching commitments during the day so please bear with them. If you would like to meet with a member of staff then please do arrange an appointment first.

In any cases of an emergency, please call the school on **01733 703991**.

Social Media

Please be sure to follow us on social media. We have Facebook pages for Sir Harry Smith Community College, Park Lane Primary School, New Road Primary School and the Aspire Learning Trust.

