



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

26th Sept 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who helped to support our Macmillan Coffee Morning today. It was a great opportunity to mingle and share a cup of coffee and a piece of cake together while supporting an incredibly deserving cause. We are very grateful to Caterlink, our catering provider, who donated a large number of cakes and cookies.

A group of our GCSE Drama students enjoyed a trip to the theatre to see 'The Play That Goes Wrong' last night, which will also aid them with their GCSE exams. Students and staff had a thoroughly enjoyable evening, despite the late night!

Please can I remind you all about the importance of attendance. It is essential that all students have excellent attendance. In particular, students in Year 11 and Year 13 cannot afford to have any time off school. Success at GCSE and A level examinations correlates with excellent attendance. Children with strong attendance get the better grades and these good habits need to start in Year 7. If you require any support with your child's attendance, please do contact us so that we can help you with this.

For those of you who are looking ahead in terms of term dates and booking holidays etc. the dates for academic year 2026/27 have now been published and can be accessed via our website [Sir Harry Smith Community College - Term Dates](#).

With best wishes for a relaxing weekend.

*Dawn White
Principal*



Welcome From Our New First-Aider

Hello everyone,

My name is Mrs Gosling and I am really pleased to introduce myself as the college's First Aider. I have many years of experience in First Aid and extensive knowledge to help keep our students, staff and visitors safe, healthy and supported during the school day.

Any minor aches or pains can usually be treated with appropriate medication. If medication is not available in school, I will contact parents or carers to arrange for it to be brought in so students can continue to attend lessons. Students will not be sent home for minor aches or pains. If your child needs to take medication at school, please make sure it is in its original packaging, clearly labelled and that we have the correct consent form. Please be aware that we will not issue medication at school before 11am.

If your child has a medical condition, injury or anything that might affect their participation in lessons, trips or clubs, please let me know – this helps us put a risk assessment in place so they can join in safely wherever possible. Working together will help keep everyone safe, supported and to make the most of their time at school and ready to learn.

Mrs Gosling
First-Aider



Inter-House Photography Competition

We're excited to launch an interhouse photography competition, celebrating the incredible talent and creativity of our student photographers. This is a fantastic opportunity for students to showcase their skills, represent their house, and compete for top honours.

Important Guidelines:

- Photos must be taken outside of school grounds.
- Images must not feature any students.

Competition Categories:

- Nature & Environment
- Emotions in Motion
- Culture & Traditions
- Black & White Storytelling

Judging Criteria:

- Creativity & Originality – 30%
- Composition & Technical Skill – 25%
- Relevance to Theme – 25%
- Impact & Emotional Appeal – 20%

Students should submit their entries to their Head of House (HOH). Each HOH will select three standout photographs to represent their house in the final round.

Rewards:

- Every participant will earn 3 house points for their contribution.

Further details will be shared during form time.



Get your cameras ready and let your creativity shine!



College Book Fair

College Book Fair: Thursday 2nd October - Tuesday 7th October.

The College Library is excited to be hosting its annual Book Fair from Thursday 2nd October to Tuesday 7th October. The Book Fair is always an exciting event on the college calendar, where students can purchase books, posters & stationery, knowing that their purchases help to fund new books for our school!

The easiest way to purchase books is to pay cash at the fair. Stationery items start at just 50p, with books starting at just £2.99. Examples of the types of books on offer at the fair can be found here: <https://bookfairs.scholastic.co.uk/bookcases/tt>

If you would prefer to pay online, students can take home a book “wishlist” which will contain details of the books they would like to purchase, along with information about how to pay using a credit/debit card. Once their items are paid for, students can collect them from the College Library the following day. Alternatively, information on how to pay can be found by scanning the QR code:

The Book Fair will also be open to prospective students and their parents/carers at the College Open Evening on Tuesday 7th October.

Every item purchased at the Book Fair helps to fund new books for our school, which in turn helps us on our journey to create a reading culture at SHSCC!



Scan the QR code to pay for your books online or visit bookfairs.scholastic.co.uk/pay

88% of students surveyed in a national study, said they were far more likely to finish a book if they had chosen it themselves, so let your child make their choice from our amazing Book Fair!



Year 6 Open Evening

**We would like to invite you to attend our
Year 7 Open Evening for September 2026**

Tuesday 7th October 2025 - 6:00pm - 8:00pm

The Principal, Miss D. White, will give a brief presentation at 6:10pm and again at 7:00pm. You will be welcomed by our teaching and pastoral staff and our students who will be showcasing lessons in all subject areas across the College.



*"The school has a well-planned and ambitious programme of learning. The school has ensured that the curriculum reflects the diversity of modern life."
"Pupils trust the teachers who have developed positive relationships with them. They work hard for these teachers and produce high quality work."*

Ofsted 2024

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Macmillan Coffee Morning – Friday 26th September 2025

We would like to thank all parents/carers for attending our Macmillan Coffee Morning.

This was an opportunity to support a cause that affects many of us in one way or another, while having a cup of tea/coffee with a piece of cake.

We would like to say a big thank you to Caterlink, our catering provider, who very kindly donated some cakes and cookies for this charitable event.

Thank you for supporting this hugely worthwhile cause!



Share Your Stories: WW2

Do you have Battle of Britain story to share?

In honour of the 85th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, we are keen to hear your World War Two family stories, especially if a member of your family served in the RAF or was involved in the Battle of Britain in any way.

- *Was someone in your family a pilot or a parachutist?*
- *Did someone in your family work as an engineer or in a munitions factory?*
- *Do you have a Land Girl or an evacuee in your family?*
- *Or does someone you know just have a memory of growing up in World War Two that they would like to share?*

We think this would be a really lovely way to connect our college to our local community and share experiences of what it was like to live through this momentous period in history.

Send your stories to positivenews@sirharrysmith.com and we will put them on our Battle of Britain Memorial Display in the college library, share them to our college news screens and on our social media pages.



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



We will be hosting a **Book Fair** between **Thursday 2nd October & Tuesday 7th October**. The Book Fair will be held in the College Library - every book purchased will help to fund new books for our school! Cash payment in school, but students can create a "wishlist" and pay online at home - please see the guide in this newsletter for details.

Just to update you that unfortunately, Mrs Luck has left the college. We are currently reviewing the requirements of the Geography Department to meet the needs of our students and are working on a permanent replacement from January. In the meantime we will ensure that students continue to access the curriculum and specialist geography provision will be put in place.



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

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

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading pens can assist by scanning and reciting words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in Settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press Play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–16 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowri is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, Neuroteachers, which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Key Information

Term Dates

AUTUMN TERM 2025

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| 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

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| 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.

