



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

5th Dec 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are aware, as we enter the winter period, that there are seasonal illnesses circulating and that therefore some absence may be unavoidable. However, there are clear links between high levels of attendance and high levels of attainment and achievement.

Sir Harry Smith Community College promotes and celebrates school attendance and expects all students to strive for 100%. If your child is going to be absent from school, please either call 01733 703991 or email studentabsence@sirharrysmith.com before 8.30am. Please ensure that you provide a reason for the absence, otherwise it might be recorded as unauthorised absence.

If you require further support on attendance, this is available from our Attendance Officer, Mrs Maddy, as well as your child's Student Support Assistant.

Thank you to all those parents and carers that attended our Christmas Concert on Wednesday evening. What a wonderful start to the festive season! We really are lucky to have so many musically talented students. A big thank you also to our staff members who put in many hours of planning and preparation for such a fantastic event.

As we approach the Christmas period, our thoughts turn to those within our community who may require a helping hand. We will, as we have done for the last few years, be holding a Christmas Jumper Day on the last day of term in return for donations of food items for Whittlesey Emergency Food Aid. Further details are included within the newsletter. I know that the donations we have made in previous years have made a valuable contribution to the Christmas hampers distributed to those who have needed it and have been very gratefully accepted.

I would like to provide a polite reminder that students should not be bringing energy drinks such as Red Bull, Monster etc. into the college. These are not appropriate for school and are also an age-restricted product. Thank you for your support with this.

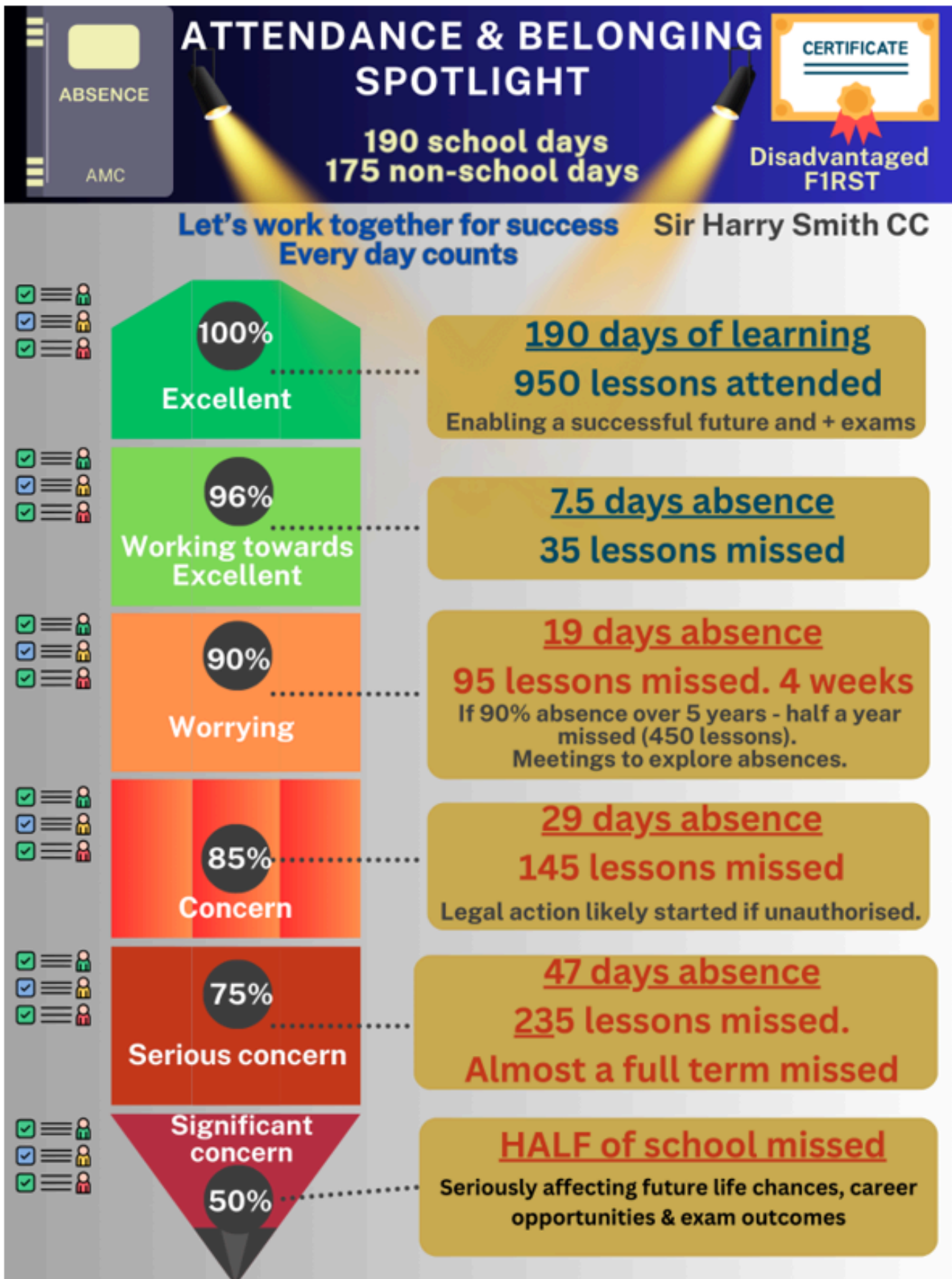
We now only have 2 weeks left of this term. A reminder that we will close at 1.20pm on Friday 19th December and reopen on Monday 5th January.

Best wishes

Dawn White
Principal



Attendance & Belonging



With 190 school days, there are 175 non-school days to take family holidays, arrange non-urgent medical appointments, for visiting family. Support is available across all % bandings.

Christmas Jumper Day

Following the overwhelming success of previous years, the College is pleased to be offering all students (and staff) the opportunity to participate in a Christmas Jumper Day on **Friday, 19th December**, in support of Whittlesey Emergency Food Aid, which is based at the Manor Leisure Centre.

This is an optional event; students who participate are asked to make a donation in exchange for wearing a Christmas jumper instead of their school blazer/jumper. If students don't wish to wear a Christmas jumper but would still like to donate, it would be very much appreciated. Your donations play a valuable part in the Christmas hampers that are prepared and delivered to those in need within our community. We appreciate that this has been, and continues to be, a challenging year for many of us but if you are able to, we ask that students donate a tinned/packet item, personal hygiene item, cleaning material or something seasonal such as mince pies, Christmas cake, chocolate treats etc. Collection boxes will be positioned at the entrance to the College for students to drop their donation(s) into.

All Year 7 to 11 students should otherwise attend in full school uniform, the only part of the uniform that should be different is the blazer/jumper option.

A reminder also that the college will close early to staff and students on this day at 1.20pm for the start of the Christmas break. Education Transport have been informed of this and those students who travel to and from the college by Local Authority transport will be collected at 1.20pm.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our charity fundraising activities for our community.

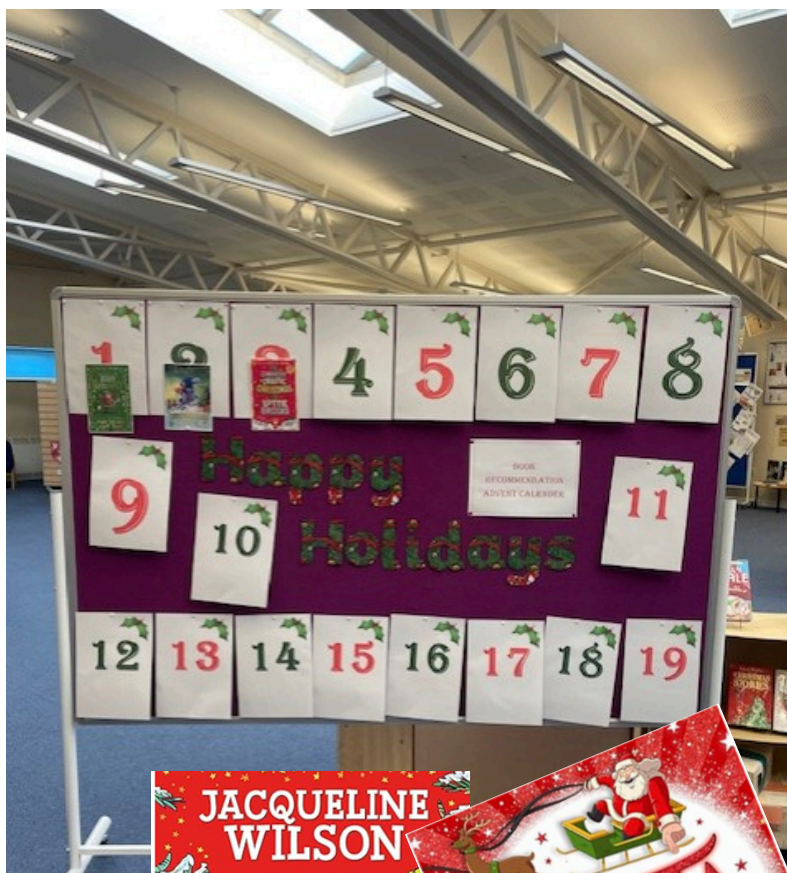


Library Christmas Activities

In the lead up to Christmas in the library, we have a couple of fun activities for our students to enjoy. We have a Book Recommendation Advent Calendar, which reveals a different Christmas story each day. We also have a message board, where students and staff can leave messages of kindness to each other for the festive season!

Come along to the library, collect a template and send your festive message! This could be a kind Christmas wish, something you admire about someone, congratulating someone on an achievement, thanking a member of staff for something or just a simple "Happy Holidays" message!

Come to the library and leave a positive message on our board for someone to find!



Computer Science Interhouse Competition



The Computing department will be releasing a series of delightful Python coding challenges - one for each day across the final weeks of term.

Successfully solving each challenge will reveal a special code word. Keep track of these codes, as they are the keys to lighting up the Christmas tree!



Check your **Computing Teams Group (Assignments Section)** daily to dive into the journey, unlock the codes, and bask in the festive spirit.

Good luck!

Mr Crane.

Year 9 Guided Choices

Year 9 GCSE Guided Choices Subject Information Evening: Wednesday 17th December

As part of the GCSE Guided Choices process at Sir Harry Smith Community College, we are holding our Subject Information Evening on **Wednesday 17th December**.

For those students whose surname begins with A-K, the evening will run from 6pm-7pm and for those students whose surname begins with L-Z, the evening will run from 7pm-8pm.

The evening is an opportunity for students and their parents/carers to find out more information about the GCSE and equivalent courses available and how students can opt to continue their study into Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4).

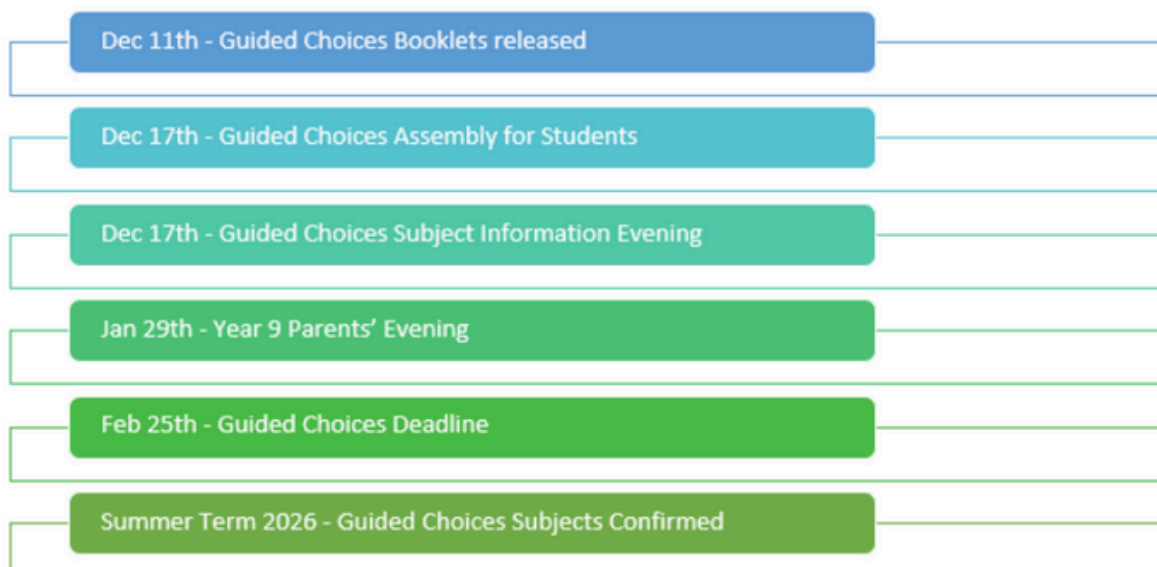
The evening is in addition to the information your child will receive in a Guided Choices assembly and the Guided Choices Student Information Booklet which will be sent electronically before the evening (this will also be available on the College website). The evening will commence with a short presentation in the main hall at either 6pm or 7pm (dependent upon surname), after which students and their parents/carers will be able to meet Curriculum Managers to discuss in more detail the range of courses we have on offer. There will also be an opportunity to discuss any additional queries you may have with our pastoral, support and careers staff.

Please note that Year 9 Parents' Evening will take place on Thursday 29th January. This will be an opportunity to talk to individual subject teachers about your child's progress and achievement this year and their suitability for the range of GCSE or equivalent courses, before submitting your son/daughter's final choices online by **Wednesday 25th February**.

Year 9 Progress Checks will be sent home before the Parents' Evening to help inform your discussions with subject teachers.

Mr Holland.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS



Why Wearing a Bike Helmet Matters More Than You Think

At Sir Harry Smith, we love seeing students staying active, independent and environmentally conscious by choosing to ride their bikes. But safety must come first—both on the roads and on the cycle paths. A properly fitted bike helmet is one of the easiest and most effective ways to reduce the risk of serious head injury.

Helmets Save Lives: A Real Example

A well-known case shared by British cycling safety organisations involved a 14-year-old student who was cycling to school when he was struck by a car turning out of a driveway. He was thrown from his bike and landed head-first on the pavement.

Doctors later confirmed that the helmet absorbed most of the impact and likely saved his life. He left the hospital the same day with minor injuries—something that would have been far less likely without proper head protection.

Stories like this are not rare; national statistics consistently show that helmets significantly reduce the risk of severe head trauma. They truly do make the difference between a scary accident and a devastating one.

Why Helmets Are Essential:

- Head injuries are the most serious risk in a cycling accident. Helmets reduce the risk of severe brain injury by up to 70%.
- Protects against unexpected hazards—loose gravel, potholes, sudden stops and even low-speed falls can cause major head injuries.
- Helmets are now lighter, cooler and more comfortable than ever, so wearing one doesn't need to be a burden.

Tips for Parents and Students:

- Choose the right fit: A helmet should sit level on the head and feel snug but comfortable.
- Buckles matter: Always fasten the chin strap—an unbuckled helmet offers little protection.
- Replace after any major impact: Even if damage isn't visible, the protective foam inside might be compromised.
- Lead by example: Parents who wear helmets encourage their children to do the same.

Our School Community Commitment

We are working to keep all students safe on their way to and from school. Staff will continue reminding students to wear their helmets, and we encourage parents to support this vital habit at home. Together, we can reduce preventable injuries and help every young cyclist stay safe.

Thank you for helping us make cycling safer for everyone at Sir Harry Smith. Stay active, stay alert, and always wear a helmet.

Mr Treliving.



Passport to Prom – 2025/2026

Date of Prom: Friday 26th Friday June 2025

Venue: Holiday Inn, Thorpe Wood, Peterborough

Criteria based as of Monday 24th November 2025 – 1st June 2026

Criteria - The Prom is by invitation only.

Attendance – Not less than 96% from Monday 24th November 2025.

Punctuality – No more than 4 late marks – a student is deemed late if they arrive at school after 8:30. All students must be in form time before 8.30.

Behaviour – No suspensions, no truancy from lessons, no issues with uniform, less than 8 negative points.

Exams – Must attend all exams including mocks and demonstrate exemplary behaviour during exam and mock period.

The following circumstances will mean immediate, non-attendance to the Prom – from Monday 24th November 2025:

- **An external suspension.**
- **Bringing the school's reputation into disrepute.**

Each student will be monitored closely throughout the year and deposits will be able to be paid via ParentPay from January 2026, providing they have met the criteria.

If students fail to meet the criteria during the set time period, then any invitation to the prom will be at the college's discretion.

If the school feels that a student's behaviour, attitude, or attendance falls below expectations, we reserve the right to withdraw their invite to the Prom at any time during the year.

Miss Wahlandt.



Useful Information



Don't forget to leave your Christmas messages for your friends on the noticeboard in the library - this can be a kind Christmas wish, something they have done to make you thankful they are your friend or just a simple, Happy Holidays!

Christmas Jumper Day is on **Friday, 19th December**, in support of Whittlesey Emergency Food Aid. This is an optional event; students who participate are asked to make a donation in exchange for wearing a Christmas jumper instead of their school blazer/jumper.



A reminder that college will close for the Christmas break on **Friday 19th December**. College will close at 1.20pm on this day.

Useful Information

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

Top Tips for a TECH-FREE CHRISTMAS

It can be difficult to stay away from technology and devices, and sometimes this means that people – of any age – can find it hard to be present in the moment. As a period when families are able to spend some quality time together and enjoy each other's company, Christmas is the perfect opportunity to step away from our phones, laptops and consoles and concentrate on the things that really matter. Follow our top ten tips for a tech-free festive period and make the most of this holiday season. Merry Christmas!

1. BOARD GAMES CAN BE FUN (HONEST)

OK, no one wants a repeat of that incident when your youngest had to pay triple rent on Mayfair, but going back to basics with a card or board game can be a fantastic bonding experience. Choose a game that even the youngest members of your family can enjoy and have a fun tech-free time.

2. MAKE YOUR OWN DECORATIONS

Spending time on arts and crafts is a brilliant way to relax and spend some productive time offline. Making your own Christmas decorations can become a wholesome tradition and leave you with some treasured mementos, too.

3. GO FOR A WINTER WALK

Not much beats wrapping up warm on a crisp December day and taking a stroll. Whether alone or with the family, a walk is a fantastic way to clear your head and relish the break from hectic normal life. As an extra festive treat, why not make a flask of hot chocolate to take with you?

4. BAKE SOME FESTIVE TREATS

Not all Christmas cooking has to be a stressful chore that's timed with military precision. Baking some simple festive treats like cookies doesn't have to take hours – and will make sure you're stocked up on tasty things to offer any friends or family members who pop round.

5. READ A FAMILY STORY TOGETHER

Turn story time into an event. Make the living room or bedroom into a tech-free space, light some candles, make some hot drinks and reach for a classic Christmas tale. It's a fantastic way to relax before bed, and the right story will help to get the whole family into the festive spirit.

6. TURN OFF NOTIFICATIONS

It sounds obvious, but turning off email and app notifications can give you more control of your relationship with technology. Getting into the habit of checking your phone periodically – rather than reacting every time a notification arrives – helps you to stay present in the moment.

7. FEED THE BIRDS

Food's hard to come by for wildlife in winter, so helping our feathered friends is a very worthwhile reason to put down those devices and reconnect with nature. Fill a bird feeder in the garden or take a snack for the ducks in your local park (but ditch the bread in favour of oats, rice or birdseed).

8. SET DAILY LIMITS

Many apps and devices let you set reminders to let you know how long you've used them for that day. Setting daily limits puts you firmly in charge of your time and will help to ensure you don't miss out on any family Christmas memories because you're engrossed in your phone or laptop.

9. GET ON YOUR BIKE

Exercise, such as going for a run or a bike ride is an excellent way to burn off some of those Yuletide calories while giving your brain and eyes a break from screen-based activity. Physical exertion also helps reduce anxiety and releases endorphins which can improve your sense of wellbeing.

10. MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

There can be a lot of pressure to meet up with friends, make video calls and check in with people at Christmas – but remember that you need time to relax as well. Don't feel guilty about not replying to messages and emails immediately – the holiday is your chance to drop down a gear or two.

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.

