



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

12th Dec 2025

Dear Parent Carer,

We are fast approaching the end of term with just one week of term left! Please remember that the college will close to students and staff at 1.20pm on Friday 19th December to start the festive break.

Yesterday we held our coffee and carols morning. It was wonderful to see so many parents and carers attend this event and another great opportunity to hear our talented choir sing!

As mentioned last week, we will be holding our annual Christmas Jumper Day on the final day of term in aid of Whittlesey Emergency Food Aid. Further details can be found within the newsletter.

On Wednesday our Year 8 students received a visit from The Naseby Battlefield Project, who brought to life the English Civil War through re-enactment. This was a fantastic opportunity for students to really get to grips with such a historic event.

Following on from last week's newsletter, I wanted to further reiterate the importance of school attendance. 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.

For those students in Year 9, thoughts will soon be turning towards choosing some of the courses they would like to continue studying into Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4). This is an exciting time for them. A reminder that there will be an information evening for students and parents/carers on 17th December.

Best wishes for a restful weekend.

Dawn White
Principal



Y8 Assembly - Battle of Naseby

On 10th December 2025, Year 8 students at Sir Harry Smith were treated to a special assembly on the Battle of Naseby; one of the most decisive battles of the British Civil Wars, and arguably of British History in general. As students are currently learning about the British Civil Wars, the session was a timely reminder of why the war was fought, how it was fought, and why it matters.

The session was led by Julie Ball and Kareena Gardiner from the Naseby 1645 project - a lottery funded initiative which aims to spread understanding and knowledge of this often neglected period in British History. The two of them were excellent; Julie is an ex-teacher as well as a Civil War re-enactor and enthusiast, and her passion for the subject was evident. She had all of the Year 8s eating out of her hands with her demonstrations of Civil War era weaponry and pike drills, and her engaging stories of the figures involved in the battle (including her Sixth form crush on Royalist commander Prince Rupert, who she described as 'Gorgeous', to general amusement).

All of the staff present were very impressed with the behaviour and attitude of the Year 8s, who listened carefully throughout, and demonstrated excellent knowledge and engagement with the topic. Julie and Kareena went away saying how much the students had impressed them. We will certainly be inviting them back again, and we hope also to get some of our students involved in the battlefield tours that Julie runs on the Naseby battlefield, which is a relatively short drive away near Kettering on the A14.

We hope that the session helped students to broaden their understanding of this pivotal moment in British History.

Mr Tomlin.



Straw Bear Festival Inter-House Competition!

Help Us Create the Best Straw Bear at Sir Harry Smith!

Sir Harry Smith Community College is delighted to announce that we will be taking part in this year's Straw Bear Festival—and to celebrate, we are launching an exciting inter-house Straw Bear Creation Competition!

Each house will be challenged to design and create their very own miniature Straw Bear, inspired by the famous Whittlesey festival tradition. We are asking families, students, and friends of the school to donate **clean, dry barley straw**, which will be used by the houses during the creative process.

What We Need

To help bring each house's creation to life, we are kindly requesting donations of barley straw. This must be:

- Clean
- Dry
- Suitable for crafting (no hay or wheat straw, please)

Please contact reception if you have some to donate so that we are able to organise a suitable drop off time.

The Challenge: Each house will use the donated barley straw to create their own unique Straw Bear. Creativity, craftsmanship, tradition and teamwork will all play a part as our students work together to produce something truly special.

A panel of judges will review the finished bears, and the winning house will be awarded house points and a special certificate—not to mention bragging rights for the year!

Why Barley Straw?

Barley straw has long been used for the traditional Straw Bear costume thanks to its golden colour and strength. By donating, you are helping our students take part in an important cultural event and continue a much-loved local tradition.

Thank you in advance for your support and generosity.

Let the creativity begin—who will craft the most impressive Straw Bear of 2026?



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.



County Cross Country Competition

A huge congratulations to the students who represented Sir Harry Smith Community College at the County Cross Country competition last Friday. All participants successfully completed the course and demonstrated outstanding commitment and effort throughout.

Notable performances include:

Bentley A, who came 2nd in a highly competitive field.

Ethan L, who showed outstanding determination, finishing 4th place.

India L, who achieved an impressive top-10 finish in a highly competitive field.

Junior Girls (Year 8 and 9), who worked superbly together and secured one of the highest team rankings of the day, with 3 members going through to the next stage.

A special mention goes to our Minor Boys and Minor Girls teams, who successfully completed their first cross country competition with fantastic effort and determination.

A huge well done to all runners—you did the school proud with your effort, attitude, and sportsmanship.

Miss Ponder.



Important Update on Medication in School

We are writing to update you on our procedures for non-emergency medication in school, including paracetamol and ibuprofen.

Over recent weeks we have seen a significant increase in the number of students leaving lessons to request medication for non-urgent reasons. This interrupts learning and makes it harder for staff to manage medical needs safely and efficiently.

New procedure for non-emergency medication

From now on, paracetamol and ibuprofen will only be issued at:

- Breaktimes
- Lunchtimes

This allows us to manage requests more safely and reduce disruption to lessons.

Important Notes

- Emergency and time-critical medication is **NOT** affected by this change (e.g. inhalers, EpiPens, diabetes, seizure medication etc.)

Migraine Medication

We are seeing a high number of students reporting migraines or severe headaches, but there is no medical information on record for many of them.

To ensure we support students appropriately and safely we require written confirmation from a medical professional (e.g. GP, paediatrician, nurse practitioner) if your child has:

- A diagnosed migraine condition
- A condition requiring regular pain relief

This information allows us to make sure each student receives the correct support and that medication is administered safely and in line with medical guidance.



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).

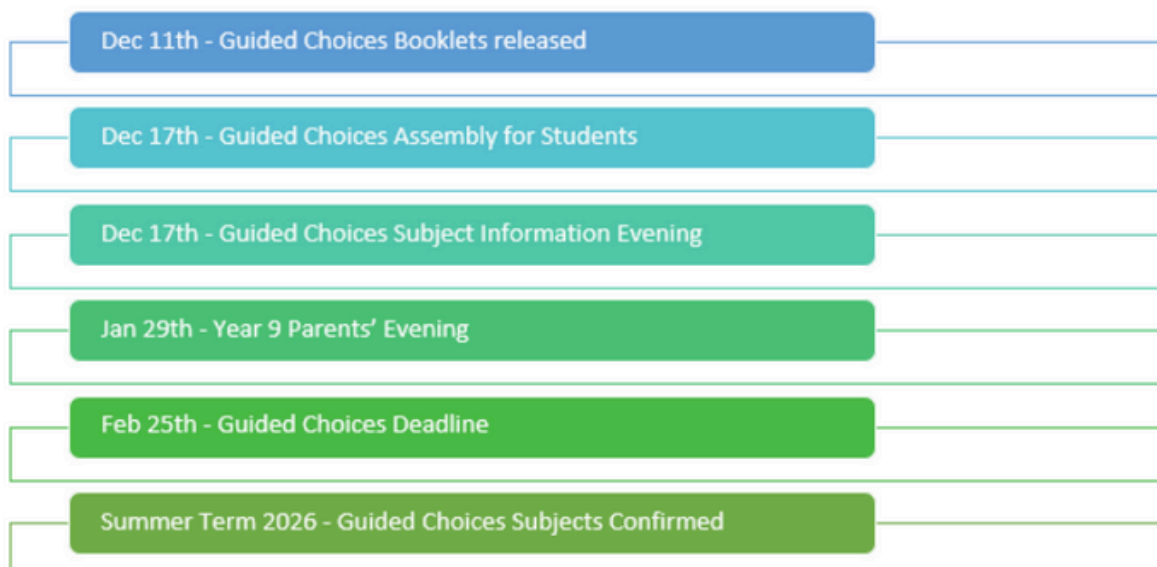
The evening is in addition to the information your child will receive in a Guided Choices assembly and the Guided Choices Student Information Booklet which will be sent electronically before the evening (this will also be available on the College website). The evening will commence with a short presentation 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



Police School e-Scooter Information

Police are continuing to advise that the use of non authorised e-scooters on public roads are not lawful. The only e-scooters that are permitted to be used are the official council schemes that are unavailable to under 18 year olds.

e-scooters are classified as motor vehicles and need to be fully compliant with those riding having a driving licence and insurance. As you are unable to obtain e-scooter insurance they are not to be used on public roads or areas. Official schemes do have insurance in effect and check driving licences.

We are seeing an increasing number of collisions involving e-scooters and provide this information to safeguard the public. Private e-scooters are generally black with low level lighting with the rider standing still. This narrow silhouette makes you very difficult to be seen.

Children are often at increased risk as they don't have the understanding of roads, lack experience, susceptible to peer pressure, carrying passengers and unnecessary risk taking. If stopped they could face a fine, penalty points and seizure of the e-scooter.

We advise parents and carers to consider the risks involved in e-scooter use and protect their children through prohibiting their use. With Christmas in some minds, they are not suitable presents for use in public spaces.

The risk of fire during charging of private e-scooters can also cause serious human and physical harm.

Your support and assistance with this is greatly appreciated.

PC 1854 BODDINGTON

Casualty Reduction Officer | Partnerships and Prevention

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

adrian.boddington@cambs.police.uk



The Importance of Calculators in Maths

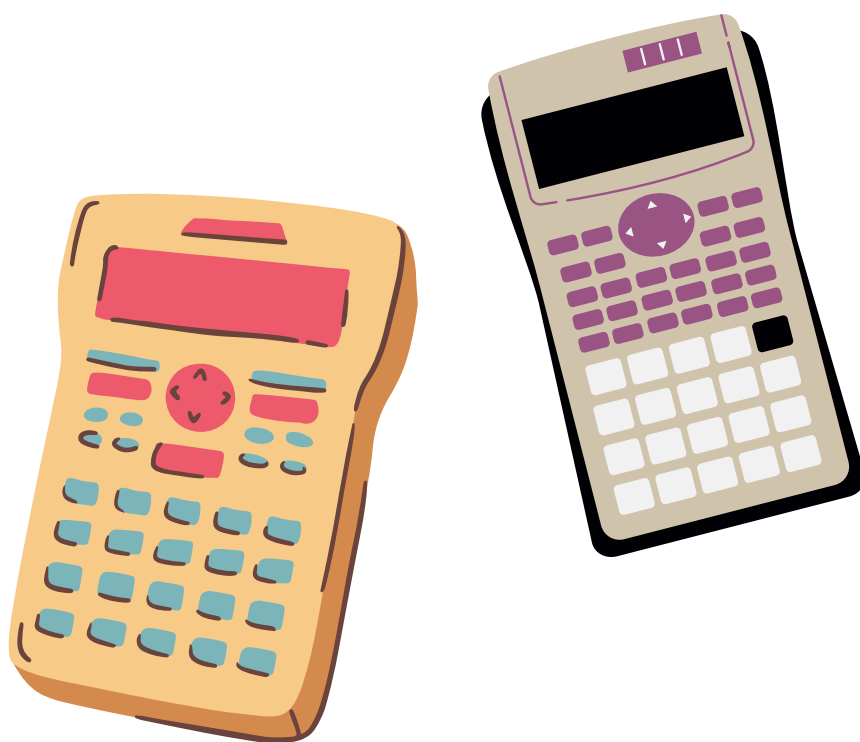
Calculators play a vital role in helping students succeed in maths. While mental arithmetic and written methods are essential skills, many topics in the curriculum—such as trigonometry, statistics, and complex algebra—require the accuracy and efficiency that a scientific calculator provides. Using a calculator allows students to focus on problem-solving and understanding the underlying concepts rather than getting held back by lengthy or complicated calculations.

Not having a calculator in lessons, homework or exams can put students at a real disadvantage. It can slow them down, increase the chance of errors, and make certain tasks unnecessarily difficult. A reliable scientific calculator supports confidence, independence and success in maths.

To help ensure every student is equipped, **we sell the Casio FX-83GT X at Reception for just £10**. This is the model recommended for school use and is suitable all the way through to GCSE.

With the festive season approaching, it could also make a **useful and affordable stocking filler** for any budding mathematician!

Mr Treliving.



Passport to Prom – 2025/2026

Date of Prom: Friday 26th June 2026

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

We would like to thank Compare The Market for their kind donation to our Art Department. They have provided a display board which we will use to display wonderful pieces of art.



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 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 SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, topping Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>

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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.

