



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

19th Dec 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

We have reached the end of a very busy term and I am sure that everyone is ready for a break over the festive period.

I was delighted to meet with 177 students yesterday who have achieved 100% attendance during the Autumn term. This is a great achievement and I hope that it will continue into the Spring term. As always, I cannot stress enough the importance of excellent attendance at school.

244 students had an enjoyable time at the cinema last night. Thank you to those staff who made this possible and to parents and carers for providing a taxi service!

I would like to thank everyone that donated items to Whittlesey Emergency Food Aid as part of our Christmas Jumper Day. Every year I am humbled at how our school community rallies to support those in need. Our Christmas Carol Concert last week also raised a total of £142.60 which will be donated to this worthy cause. Thank you to all those who attended.

We have been very fortunate to receive a generous donation from local company Forterra which has allowed us to purchase a drum kit for our music department. This contribution is greatly appreciated and will hugely benefit our students in lessons and extra-curricular activities.

There will be some changes to students' timetables when we return in January. In the majority of cases these are minimal and may just include lessons taking place at a different time to their current timetable but still with the same teacher. Some students will have a new teacher for some lessons due to new staff joining. These changes will be available to view on Edulink from this evening.

I would like to wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable break and look forward to welcoming students back to the college on Monday 5th January 2026.

With very best wishes,

Dawn White
Principal



Operation Christmas Child: A Shoebox of Joy

This festive season, our school was proud to take part in the Operation Christmas Child shoebox appeal, run by the international relief organisation Samaritan's Purse. The initiative brings smiles to children around the world by delivering shoeboxes filled with small gifts and essentials.

Shoeboxes were thoughtfully packed for a specific child based on age and gender. As a school we were able to get 17 shoeboxes delivered 2 weeks ago. I have received confirmation that they are enroute to a country where there is severe shortages of even the most basic items and that the quality of the boxes was outstanding.

Some were over filled and they have been able to be split to allow even more children to receive a give this Christmas. The organisers asked to pass on their sincere thanks for all the kindness shown by Sir Harry Smith students.

Well done everyone!

Mr White.



Photographs Courtesy of Samaritan's Purse.

Music Makers Christmas!

On Thursday 18th December SHSCC Choir visited local music group 'Music Makers'. This group meets to sing for fun on the last Thursday of the month at Whittlesey Baptist Church.

SHSCC Choir were delighted to be able to join this group for a festive sing and were able to perform some pieces to the group, while also participating in some joint singing.

Students represented the college brilliantly and have been invited back to Music Makers in 2026!



Staff Netball Match 2025

Last Friday evening staff came together for a fun game of netball. We had two teams - The Grinches and The Tiny Tims; it was a closely fought match with both sides showing some great skills!

Everyone was tired by the end having had a good workout but smiling and ready for the next match in the summer. The match ended 10-7 to The Grinches. After medals were handed out to the winning team, everyone enjoyed a mince pie and left in good spirits for the weekend.

Thank you to Miss Lee and Miss Tyson for organising the event and Mrs Phillips for umpiring.



Year 7 Netball Success

On Thursday 11th of December, nine Year Seven students competed in The Peterborough Schools Netball Tournament. This involved our netball team competing against many different schools in a round robin tournament. The girls showed determination throughout their games and resilience when facing some challenging teams.

Communication was a strength for the team and their ability work together to maintain possession and move the ball up the court.

Overall, the Sir Harry Smith team came in 3rd place out of many schools competing, which was a massive success for the girls.

Well done all!

Miss Tyson.



A Level Parliament Trip

On 12th December 2025, Mr Tomlin and Mr Haycock-Ivo took the Year 12 A-level History students for a day out in London to support their study of the 'Early Stuarts and the Coming of the English Civil War' A-level topic.

Students were treated to a private tour of Westminster Abbey, where they got to see the tombs of many of the figures they have been studying, such as Elizabeth I, James I and his controversial favourite George Villiers (one of Mr Tomlin's personal heroes). Students found it fascinating seeing so many layers of history, walking in the footsteps of every monarch who has been crowned in the place from Edward the Confessor to Charles III.

Mr Tomlin then took students on a walking tour of central London, where we got to see where Charles I was executed outside Banqueting House, his former residence at St James' Palace, and the remnants of the once substantial residence of George Villiers. We were also lucky enough to see part of the 'Changing of the Guards' ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

Lastly, we walked over to Westminster Abbey, passing through Westminster Hall, site of the trials of Guy Fawkes, William Wallace and Charles I, before being given a private tour of the Houses of Parliament, including the House of Lords and House of Commons. It's always interesting to see students' reaction, standing in a building they have seen on TV so many times (it's much smaller in real life!) and where the Prime Minister stands.

After buying a few Parliament related Christmas gifts, we headed home, tired but happy after having a great day enjoying so much History.

Mr Tomlin runs this trip every year for his A-level History students and looks forward to running it again.



6th Form Quiz in Aid of the Summer Ball

This week our 6th Form Department held a quiz to raise funds for their Summer Ball. Staff and students had a fantastic evening and raised an incredible £250! Thank you to Claire H & Clare R for organising!



Commando Joe's: Teambuilding

On Friday our Key Stage 3 and 4 PE mentor students took part in a teambuilding workshop, run by our very own Commando Joe.

“At Commando Joe's, we believe every child deserves the tools to thrive, not just academically, but emotionally, socially, and morally. That's why we're on a mission to embed character education at the heart of UK schools.”

Our mentors started the first blackout mission developing character, self-confidence and resilience that are important to these students both in their academic and sporting careers. It was a fantastic to see our PE mentors rewarded for their contribution to the college.

Thank you to Mr Shackleton for running the workshop.

Miss Ponder.



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?



Useful Information

Students in Years 7 to 11 with 100% attendance met with the Principal this week, to congratulate them and have Christmas cookies. This photo shows a selection of the students invited - well done to all students involved!



Year 7 and Year 11 Progress Checks were sent home this week via email – these also appear on Edulink accounts.



Year 11 students have had their Mock Exam Results Day this week. We hope students have found the mock exam process useful as they prepare for their exams in the Summer.

Useful Information

Cinema Reward Trip

On Thursday, 244 students from Sir Harry Smith Community College descended on the Showcase Cinema in Peterborough for a well-earned trip to the movies. Students chose between the latest blockbusters, including *Zootropolis*, *Wicked*, and *Now You See Me, Now You Don't*.

Excitement levels were sky-high and, based on the heroic amounts of refillable drinks, popcorn, sweets, and pick 'n' mix consumed, it's fair to say the cinema snack counters may still be recovering! Many students are expected to remain fuelled by sugar, cinema popcorn, and festive excitement well into the Christmas break.



As the end of the Autumn term approaches, we say farewell to some valued members of our school community. We wish them well for the future. We also welcome some new members to our team for the start of the new year.



Leavers December 2025

Miss Gluch - Teacher of English
Mrs Lancaster - SENDCo
Mrs McGonigle - Teacher of Science
Mr Jackson - Teacher of English
Mrs Weston - Site Team

New Arrivals January 2026

Ms Bowring - Teacher of English
Ms Atkins - Head of Geography
Miss Lynch-Graham - Attendance Administrator
Mrs Zebrowska - Teacher of Maths



Useful Information



Last week the college took delivery of a brand new drum kit, which arrived just in time for the Christmas Music Evening.

Thank you to **Forterra UK** for their sponsorship towards this, for which we are very grateful.

Judy Darby from the **Royal British Legion** was presented with our fundraising cheque from the Inter-House Gun Run Competition and Poppy Bear raffle as part of our Remembrance Day commemorations. **We raised £111.50.**



Our Christmas Choir Concert last week raised a fabulous **£142.60 for Whittlesey Emergency Food Aid**. This was supplemented by amazing donations of food and other products on our Christmas Jumper Day today.

We return to college on **Monday 5th January 2026**. Wishing you all a restful break.



Useful Information

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trained 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 issue of many which we believe trained adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SETTING UP NEW DEVICES FOR CHILDREN

At Christmas, millions of lucky children will be excitedly ripping the wrapping off new phones, tablets, computers or consoles. However, in the rush to let young ones enjoy their shiny gadgets, many parents neglect to set these devices up safely - increasing the chances of children going online and stumbling across adult content, making expensive downloads or installing unsuitable apps. A little time configuring the device properly can save a lot of anguish later. Here are our top tips to ensure that a dream gift on Christmas morning doesn't turn into a nightmare by New Year.

PASSCODES FOR IPHONE/IPAD

If your child's getting their own iPhone or iPad, you can set parental controls that make it difficult for them to access inappropriate content or download expensive apps. Once the device is set up, go to the settings app and tap Screen Time, then select Use Screen Time Passcode and enter a passcode. Keep it to yourself so your child can't switch the protection off.

SCREEN TIME SETTINGS ON IPHONE/IPAD

Once you've set a Screen Time Passcode, you can adjust various safety settings. You could, for example, only allow communication with people from the Contacts app, place restrictions on App Store purchases and apply age limits to movies, music and web content. There are many more protective options available within the Screen Time settings section.

FAMILY LINK FOR ANDROID

Parents can manage Android phones and tablets, as well as Google Chromebooks, through Google's Family Link app. This gives your child some independence (and their own Google account) but lets parents monitor which apps are being used, set limits on content and ensure that parental permission is required to install apps. Look for Family Link in the Google Play Store.

ADD A CHILD TO FAMILY LINK

The easiest way to add a child's device to Family Link is to set it up with its own Google account. It's a good idea to create this before they use their new phone, tablet or Chromebook. Once they're logged in, open the Family Link app on your phone, press '+' in the top right, and add a new family member using their Google account details. Then follow the on-screen instructions.

FAMILY SHARING ON A MAC

Families using a Mac get similar screen time options to iPhone and iPad users. Again, if you're setting up a Mac for a child, make yourself the main admin and add them as a user. This is handled through Apple's Family Sharing service, which not only allows you to put controls on child accounts but share apps and other purchases with them too. Search 'family sharing' at <https://support.apple.com>.

PLAYSTATION PARENTAL CONTROLS

With parental controls for the PS5, you'll need a PlayStation Network account (as the 'family manager') and the child will need their own account, which they should sign in with on the console. This all needs to be set up in advance, so you might want to do it before the big day. Go to PlayStation.com and search 'family account' for instructions.

DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR CHILD

If you're planning to implement any kind of restriction or protection settings on your child's new device, we'd recommend having a discussion with your young one first about what these controls do, and what they are for, if you try to impose parental controls surreptitiously or with no advance warning, don't be surprised if your child tries to find a way around them.

SET AN ADMIN ON PCS

On Windows PCs and laptops, it's important not to let your child share a general user account or be the main admin on the device. If you're booting up a new family PC or a child's own device, set it up using your own account details and you'll become the admin by default. Then set up children with their own separate account: Settings > Accounts > Family & Other Users > Add Other User.

SET WINDOWS LIMITS

Once your child's account has been created, a parent admin can go back into the Family & Other Users menu and apply limits to it. These include restricting screen time, the type of games and apps that can be installed, web filters and more. Microsoft also includes reporting tools which, for example, can email you with a weekly summary of your child's activity on the device.

TREAT AN XBOX LIKE A PC

The same control settings you use for a PC can be used to apply parental controls on an Xbox. Again, once your child is signed into their Xbox with their own account, you can then monitor and regulate their activity from a PC or web browser. Microsoft's dashboard allows you to manage voice communication through the console, so you can limit who can contact your child, for example.

INSTALL XBOX FAMILY SETTINGS

If you don't have a PC, but your child does have an Xbox, it might be easier to use the Xbox Family Settings app for iPhone or Android. Here, you can restrict console screen time (particularly handy if the console is in a bedroom), restrict communication and monitor the types of games being played. There's also a feature where you can allocate spending money for games or in-game purchases.

STAY VIGILANT

It's important to remember that none of these methods is 100% foolproof. Nobody will ever invent flawless filters or parental controls - not least because what's unacceptable to some parents is perfectly acceptable to others. So although devices' parental controls will help to keep your child safe online, they work best side by side with good old-fashioned parental vigilance.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the Sunday Times, Which? PC Pro and Computeractive. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on Newsnight, Radio 5 Live and ITV News at Ten. He has two children and writes regularly about internet safety issues.



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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.

