



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

27th February 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that students had an enjoyable half-term break and have returned rested ready for the remainder of this term. The lighter days and milder weather has certainly been welcome!

Year 11 students have started their next set of mock exams in preparation for the summer exams which are fast approaching. It is important that students are prepared and equipped for their exams. We do have clear pencil cases filled with the necessary stationery and also GCSE specification calculators for sale. These can be purchased through ParentPay and then collected from Reception.

World Book Day is next week and we have a full week of library activities planned! Students will also be receiving a book token which can be redeemed in participating bookshops, supermarkets or high street retailers.

Two of our Sixth Form students took part in a daytrip to Auschwitz where they represented the college on a visit organised by the Holocaust Educational Trust. It was a very long day, but one that they will always remember. They were excellent ambassadors for the college and I am very proud of them. I am also proud to be able to introduce our new Head Boy and Head Girl – Ashley & Jasmine – who will be leading a team of senior prefects.

Best wishes for a hopefully sunny weekend.

Dawn White
Principal



New Senior Prefect Team Elected

Last half term, Sixth Form students and teachers voted for the college's new Head Boy, Head Girl and senior prefect team. The team have six key priorities that they will work on over the year, as well as overseeing 'Student Voice'. We also elected 55 student ambassadors from Years 7-11 who will work alongside our senior prefects, contributing to Student Voice, supporting school initiatives, welcoming visitors to the school and representing us in the wider community. We are delighted to have this fantastic team of students with outstanding character and commitment making a difference at Sir Harry Smith in our priority areas.



Head Girl, Head Boy & The Senior Prefect Team:
oversee our 6 student voice priorities.

Student Ambassadors:
Take part in weekly meetings with senior prefects on our 6 student voice priorities and feedback ideas or concerns from peers.

All Students:
Speak to our student ambassadors about any issues or ideas. Take part in our priority focus groups. Welcome to join any of our student voice clubs.



"Hello, I'm Ashley P, and I applied to be Head Boy because I am keen to work with my peers to embed a sense of community, respect and ambition throughout the college. Collaborating with the ambassadors in Years 7-11, we aim to use Student Voice to ensure Sir Harry Smith remains an inspiring, inclusive and welcoming place for all. We as a team aim to work with our student ambassadors to improve the opportunities that are provided to students to assist their growth as both young adults and hardworking students. We want to motivate students to think about their future as they get ready to leave school and enter the world of work or higher education."

"My name is Jasmine M, and I am pleased to introduce myself as Head Girl. Being chosen for this role is a privilege I am extremely grateful for. This school has given me many amazing opportunities, and I'm excited to give back by representing students' voices and making the school an even more positive and inclusive environment. This year, I hope to focus on student wellbeing and encouraging leadership in younger students, as I believe every student should feel valued and inspired to achieve their full potential. Most importantly, I want everyone to feel heard and included and I am really looking forward to working alongside the senior prefect team and young ambassadors to help make the school a better place for everyone."



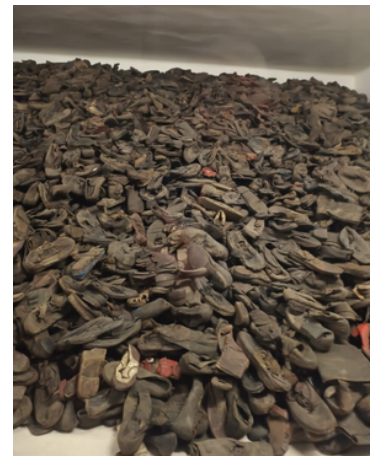
Auschwitz Visit

Visiting Auschwitz is an experience that's hard to put into words, but it's something I feel everyone should do if they have the chance. The sheer scale of the place is shocking, and walking through the grounds, you can't help but feel the weight of history. It's a stark reminder of the atrocities that occurred there and the millions who suffered.

The trip was organised by Lessons from Auschwitz, which is run by the Holocaust Educational Trust. They do incredible work in educating young people about the Holocaust and its contemporary relevance. The programme involves a one-day visit to Auschwitz I and Auschwitz-Birkenau, preceded and followed by seminars. These seminars help to prepare you for the visit and then reflect on what you've seen and learned. It's not just about the history, but also about understanding the dangers of prejudice and discrimination today.

Being there in person brings home the reality of what happened in a way that reading about it in books simply can't. Seeing the piles of shoes, the gas chambers, and the barracks where people were crammed together is deeply affecting. It's a life-changing experience, which has personally altered my view on life. It reinforces the need to remember the past and stand up against hatred and intolerance in all its forms. The visit with Lessons from Auschwitz is thoughtfully structured to ensure you get the most out of it, both educationally and emotionally.

Eloise M (Photos by David M)



World Book Day - National Year of Reading

Next Thursday the college will be proudly celebrating World Book Day, a day designed to promote reading for fun, offering every child and young person the opportunity to own a book. Students will each receive a World Book Day token, which will enable them to purchase a specially selected book, free of charge. Children can swap their World Book Day £1/€1.50 token for any of the [World Book Day £1/€1.50 books](#) or get £1 off any full price book or audiobook (as long as the book or audiobook costs at least £2.99) at participating booksellers and supermarkets.

In college, we will be hosting a number of events in our college library throughout next week, including a World Book Day Quiz, book themed crafting sessions, and a Logic & Puzzles session. On World Book Day itself (5th March), we will be holding a Reading Cafe over lunchtime, where students will be able to “book a table”, based on their favourite book genre, enjoy eating their lunch in the library, whilst having the opportunity to get involved in different activities based on enjoying books and reading for pleasure.

The World Book Day mission reads: “Our mission is to promote reading for fun, offering every child and young person the opportunity to have a book of their own. Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child’s future success – more than their family circumstances, their parents’ educational background or their income. We want to see more children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a life-long habit of reading for pleasure and the improved life chances this brings them.”

We are so looking forward to using our fantastic library space to promote World Book Day and to encourage and support our students to read independently.

**GO
ALL
IN.**

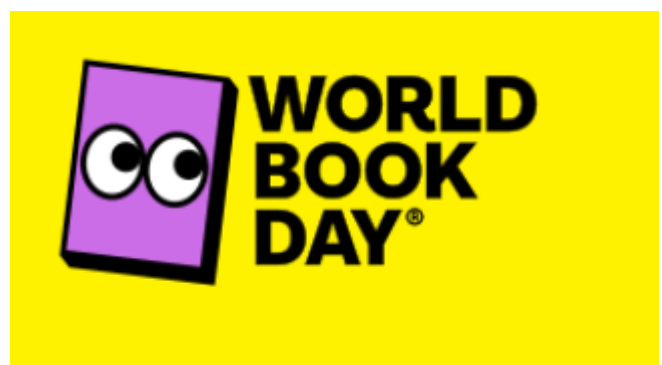
National
Year of
Reading
2026

Go all in for World Book Day

World Book Day will be bigger and better than ever during the National Year of Reading, 2026. World Book Day is a proud delivery partner of National Year of Reading

Go All In – The National Year of Reading campaign to get more people reading, by bringing reading to where culture is.

If you're into it, read into it.



Mr Tomlin rewrites GCSE Textbook: Medicine Through Time

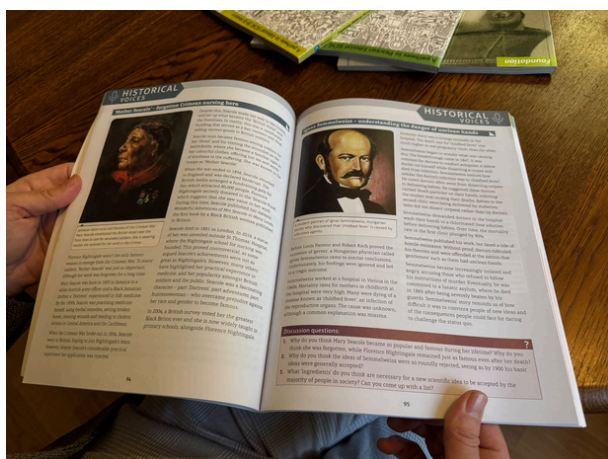
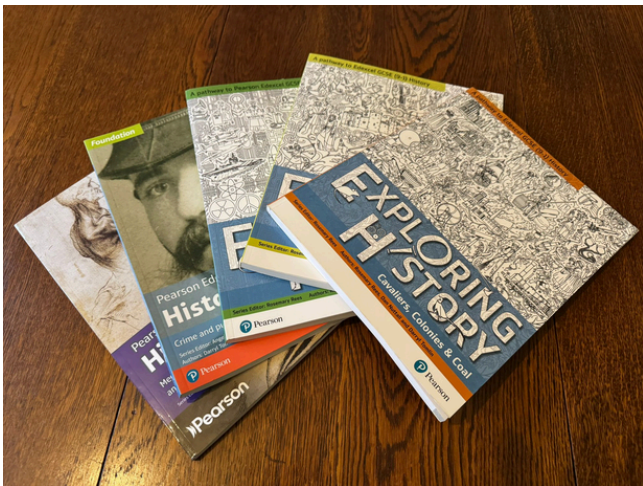
Mr Tomlin, the Curriculum Manager for History at Sir Harry Smith, was recently asked by major publisher Pearson to rewrite the GCSE Medicine Through Time textbook. As this is one of the most popular GCSE topics across the country, the book is likely to be used by thousands of students.

Mr Tomlin said: "I feel extremely honoured to be given the opportunity to write a textbook and to reach such a wide audience. I always wanted to be a writer, even at school, but I never thought writing History textbooks was an option for someone like me.

Pearson tasked me with rewriting the entire textbook, which I did over a few months in 2025, but also with inserting major new sections on historical figures that had been overlooked in the original textbook as part of the 'Historical voices' feature. This is something that was close to my own heart, as I always wondered why Florence Nightingale was in the old textbook, but not Mary Seacole, who in her day was just as famous as Nightingale and was very popular with British soldiers in the Crimean War. I also wondered why the role of 'Cunning Folk' and women healers were completely absent from the original textbook. Therefore, it was with great pleasure that I researched these topics and was able to include them in the final draft."

Mr Tomlin has been involved in writing textbooks for around ten years now. He wrote major sections of the popular 'Exploring History' series which is widely used at KS3, and also wrote the foundation textbook for Crime and Punishment.

We are very proud of him and his fantastic achievements!



Baker Perkins: National Apprenticeship Week

As part of National Apprenticeship Week, selected students visited Baker Perkins / Coperion to investigate their apprenticeship opportunities, talk to current apprentices, take a tour of the workplace and find out about the application process.

Josh Dolby, an ex-student of Sir Harry Smith Community College talked about his apprenticeship experience at Baker Perkins and answered student questions.

National Apprenticeship Week ran from 9th - 15th February and was “a week-long celebration that brings together businesses and apprentices across the country to shine a light on the positive impact that apprenticeships make to individuals, businesses and the wider economy.” (Source: NAW Website).



baker perkins
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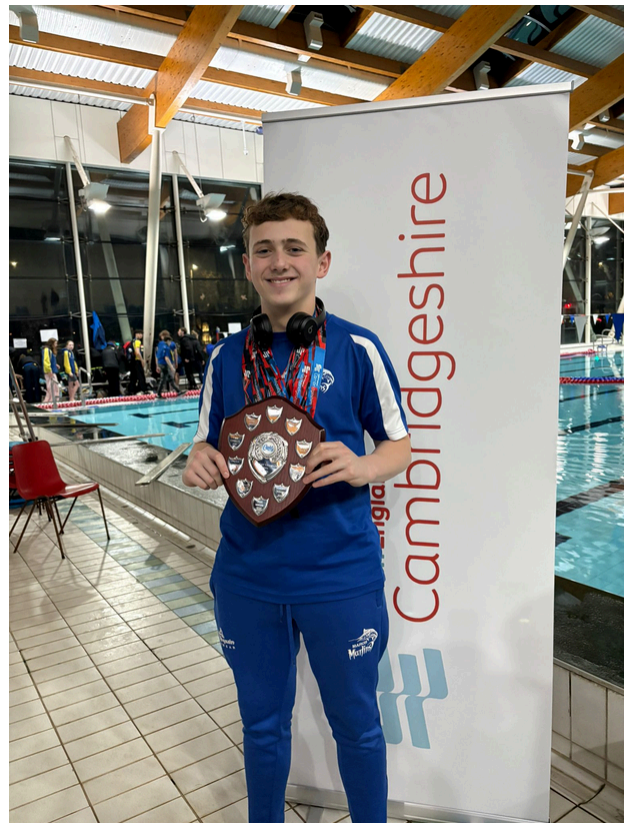
Swimming Success at County Championship

Huge congratulations to Jacob U & Mia J, who delivered an outstanding performance over two full weekends at the Cambridgeshire County Championships 2026 🏊🏆

All the early mornings and hard work truly paid off as Jacob achieved an impressive 7 Gold Medals, 4 Silvers and 1 Bronze. Mia has worked incredibly hard, and it really showed in competition. Mia qualified for 12 events, achieved 10 personal bests, and came home with five medals across Gold, Silver, and Bronze. She is now ranked 2nd overall in the county for 100m Breaststroke and has secured qualifying times for the Regional Championships.

Jacob's consistency and determination throughout the competition saw him named Joint Top 14-year-old Boy Performer of the Meet, sharing with a close friend. This is a fantastic achievement and a reflection of Jacob's commitment to his sport. We are incredibly proud of what he has accomplished. A special mention to March Marlins Swimming Club whose coaching and guidance has played a key role in his journey as Jacob takes the next step in his swimming journey with COPS.

Well done, Jacob & Mia—we can't wait to see what comes next! ❤️🏆



Equipment for Mock Exams

As we move closer to the Year 11 mock examinations and the upcoming final GCSE exams, we would like to remind you of the importance of students being fully prepared with the correct equipment for their examinations. Having the correct equipment helps reduce unnecessary stress on the day and ensures students are able to perform at their best.

To support this, we are offering the following items via ParentPay:

- **Exam Pencil Case – £2.50**
 - A clear pencil case containing all required equipment:
 - 2 × pens
 - 2 × pencils
 - 1 × compass
 - 1 × 15 cm ruler
 - 1 × protractor
- **Scientific Calculator – £11.25**
 - Please note that **2 out of the 3 GCSE Mathematics papers require a calculator**, so it is essential that students have a suitable calculator that they are familiar with.

We strongly encourage parents and carers to check that students have the correct equipment well in advance of their exams. Purchasing through ParentPay ensures students have equipment that fully meets exam board requirements.

Thank you for your continued support as we approach this important period for our Year 11 students.

T Holland
Assistant Principal



Donations Needed For Our Oliver JR Musical

For our upcoming Oliver JR musical, we are looking for donations of old clothing items that could be used for costumes. We would be very grateful for any of the following:

- Shirts in white, brown, beige, dark blue, dark green, dark red or other dull striped colours or patterns
- Trousers and shorts same colour palette as the shirts
- Waistcoats any colour
- Flat caps

Items can be in any size — all contributions are welcome! Please be aware that we will be adapting the items of clothing so please don't donate anything that you would like returned to you.

A large collection box will be placed near College Reception, for you to drop off any items you'd like to donate.

Thank you so much for your support.

**Best regards,
The Performing Arts Team**



Useful Information

Dates for your diary:



Tickets for our college musical production of Oliver Jr. will be available soon.

Performances will be on Monday 23rd, Tuesday 24th & Thursday 26th March.

Keep an eye out for further updates!



30th June – Art Exhibition

Our fabulous Art Exhibition will showcase our students' wonderful artistic achievements from this year.



7th July – Sports Awards

A celebration of sporting success at Sir Harry Smith this year, with guest speaker **Mark Sagers – former England hockey player, talkSPORT presenter and BBC broadcaster.** Mark has interviewed some of the very best, including Muhammad Ali and Tiger Woods, and is a wonderfully entertaining and knowledgeable speaker. He has covered all of the major sporting events worldwide including several World Cups, International Cricket and won a Sony Award for his work on the Grand National that never was.

8th July – Summer Concert

Our musicians will showcase their talent one final time this year.



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

EXAM-DAY READINESS

The lead-up to exams can be an emotionally challenging time. As the date approaches, nerves can become harder to manage. From nutrition to emotional support, this guide offers 10 practical strategies to reduce stress and enhance performance. Whether at home or in school, these tips encourage focus, resilience, and wellbeing – giving every student the best opportunity to approach exam day with clarity and self-belief.

1 FUEL THE BRAIN

Encourage students to eat a balanced breakfast and hydrate before exams. The brain is around 80% water, so even mild dehydration can reduce memory and concentration. Provide water, cereal bars, or fruit on exam day – especially helpful if anxiety affects appetite. A little fuel can go a long way towards better performance.

2 PROMOTE POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Support young people to challenge negative thoughts. Help them replace "I'm going to fail" with "I've worked hard; I can do this". Positive affirmations boost confidence and reduce anxiety. Practise these together at home or in school settings.

3 PRACTISE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Encourage daily use of calming techniques, such as diaphragmatic breathing, guided muscle relaxation, or mindfulness. These techniques help regulate stress responses. Consider running short morning sessions before exams, or practising together at home to promote calm focus.

4 CREATE FAMILIAR COMFORT

Ensure a supportive adult is visible and available before exams. The calm presence of a parent or teacher can offer a sense of safety. Schools can provide 'calm zones'; parents can support with consistent routines and reassuring conversation.

5 ENCOURAGE VERBAL EXPRESSION

Invite students to talk about their exam worries. Whether it's a quick check-in with a teacher or chat with a parent, open conversations reduce emotional pressure. Active listening is often more powerful than immediate problem solving.

6 ORGANISE EXAM-DAY LOGISTICS

Prepare exam-day essentials in advance. Schools can coordinate staff to greet students and manage pre-exam spaces. Parents can prepare clothes, equipment and transport the night before to prevent stress.

got this!

7 BUILD A COPING TOOLKIT

Teach students simple 'in-the-moment' coping strategies. These include calm breathing, focusing on what they can control, and using grounding techniques. Practise these together so they become easy to recall under pressure.

8 EMBRACE A BALANCED ROUTINE

Reinforce healthy routines: regular sleep, nutritious meals, movement and time to unwind. Families and schools can support students by encouraging outdoor time, screen breaks and restful evenings before exams.

9 NORMALISE EXAM NERVES

Let students know that feeling anxious is normal and doesn't mean they're unprepared. Reassure them that a certain level of stress is natural – and can actually improve focus and performance when managed well. A calm, understanding tone – at home and at school – helps build confidence and resilience.

10 KEEP SPACES CALM

Reduce pressure in exam-day environments. Whether in the school common room or family kitchen, avoid last-minute cramming. Instead, use soft lighting, gentle music, and quiet time to support a composed mindset.

Meet Our Expert

Stefan Fusenich is a teacher educator and DfE subject learning coach (advanced practitioner). Stefan has extensive management and teaching experience across various posts in education, and is a qualified lecturer with Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

REVISION

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/exam-day-readiness>

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Key Information

Term Dates

| 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 |

| SUMMER TERM 2026 | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| START OF TERM | Monday 13th April 2026 |
| May Day Bank Holiday (college closed) | Monday 4th May 2026 |
| Half Term | Monday 25th to Friday 29th May 2026 |
| Last Day of Term | Friday 17th July 2026 |
| Professional Day (college closed to students) | Monday 20th July 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.

