



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

6th March 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

Another week has flown by!

Last Friday I held my first Principal's Reward Breakfast with a group of well-deserving students. This was a great opportunity for students to meet with me to be congratulated on their efforts in school and also share their views on various key topics, whilst enjoying pastries and hot chocolate (with cream and marshmallows, of course!) This will be a fortnightly event, so I look forward to meeting many more students over the coming weeks.

I am proud to report that our Year 7 girls' football team won their first match, beating Stanground 5:1! Well done girls! I would also like to say a huge thank you to Mark and the team at Chroma Sports who very kindly donated the football kit to us. Our Sports Leaders have been busy this week too, running a Hockey Festival and Circus Skills Festival for local primary school students.

Students have been taking part in the abundance of World Book Day celebrations that we have had on offer this week, including the Year 7 event, 'Breakfast and a Book'! Selected students enjoyed an hour with their favourite books, while also devouring the various breakfast treats on offer. Thank you very much to Miss Timms and Mrs Phillips for organising this.

We have also had a couple of trips this week with a group of students visiting the National Space Centre in Leicester and Cambridge University. Next week sees students in Years 9 & 11 set off to Cologne for a jam-packed couple of days practising their German language skills. You will be able to follow their adventures via our Facebook page.

Best wishes for a restful weekend.

*Dawn White
Principal*



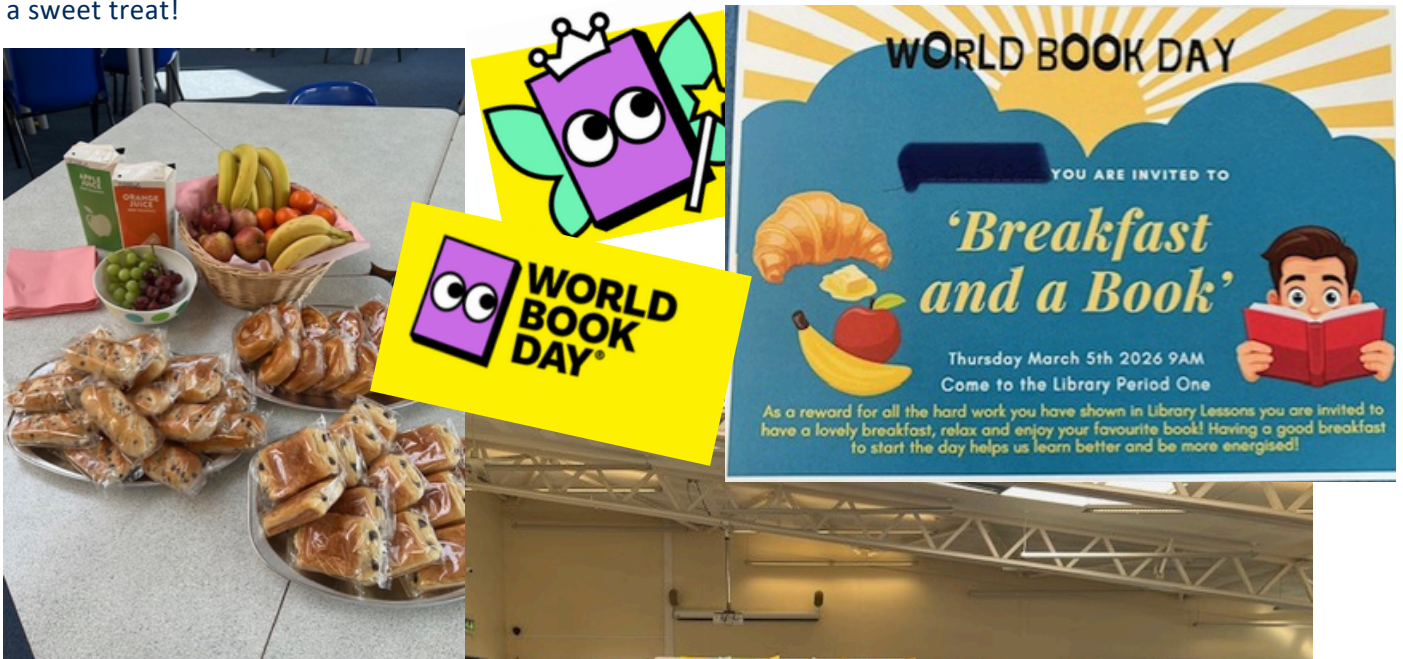
World Book Day Celebrations

The college has been celebrating World Book Day and National Year of Reading this week, with a range of different activities on offer. Students started the day with World Book Day themed assemblies led by Dr Swannell. Year 7 students then had themed library lessons where we enjoyed reading our favourite books and entering World Book Day competitions.

On Thursday morning, selected Year 7 students came to the library for our 'Breakfast and a Book' event. This was in support of the national "Magic Breakfast" initiative where children who are fed well at breakfast time, learn better. The college provided pastries, fruit & hot chocolate to the students who used books from the library, to have a little read to start their day! We chose to reward some of those students who have made a really positive start to their library lessons in Year 7 and who continue to work really hard.

Thursday lunchtime saw the return of our popular Reading Cafe, where students booked a table in the library to eat their lunch and enjoy some reading. Tables were themed to different genres of books, so students could be introduced to some new books around themes they enjoyed, and meet some new people with the same reading interests!

On Friday, we held a World Book Day Quiz in the library where students competed in teams to win prizes of books and a sweet treat!



World Book Day Celebrations

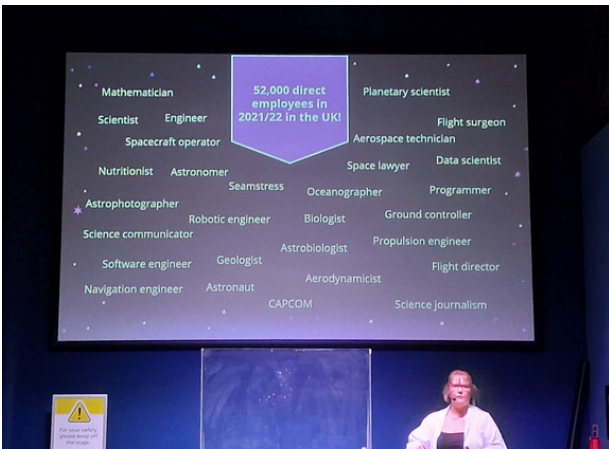


World Book Day Celebrations



National Space Centre Trip

This week, selected Year 7 & 8 visited the National Space Centre in Leicester. Students attended a 'This is Rocket Science' presentation, and watched a Planetarium show learning about constellations, stars, galaxies and planets. This was an immersive Planetarium experience, where students journeyed together through the Wonders of the Universe. They were guided around the current, seasonal, night-time sky before venturing into space for a unique perspective of Earth and other more distant celestial objects. Students then had the opportunity to walk round the Space Centre before leaving for the journey home.



Year 9 Visit Cambridge University

Yesterday a group of Year 9 students visited Downing College at the University of Cambridge. During the morning, students had an introduction to universities, finding out about what subjects are available to study, the different types of university and life as a student.

They then walked to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology where they took part in a 'Museum of Me' workshop, looking at the role of museums in society, how museums use objects to represent other cultures, and how objects can construct and display identity.

After lunch on the college green in glorious weather, students went on a tour of Downing College Campus, before having a Q&A with an Admissions Officer and current students.



Sporting Successes!

Congratulations to our newly formed Year 7 girls' football team. They had their first match Monday night against Stanground Academy and won 5-1! What a brilliant start to their season!

Mr Smith



Our sports leaders were excellent in the organisation of a hockey festival last week: setting up the pitches and the score table and whilst umpiring and scoring the games. The primary school students played some great hockey and despite the drizzle everyone had a fantastic time. Well done all!

Mrs Hunt



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:



We are pleased to announce that tickets are now on sale for our upcoming production of Oliver JR. Tickets can be purchased via ParentPay or directly through our reception.

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

Tickets:

- **Adults: £10.00**
- **Students/ Concessions: £6.50**
- **Family Ticket (2 Adults/ 2 Children): £32.50**

The production will begin at **7:00pm**, with doors opening at **6:30pm**. Refreshments will be available before the show and during the interval.

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 Saggors – 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

Whittlesey Concert Band
Presents

Spring Charity Concert

IN AID OF

MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT &

 Peterborough
Cancer Wellbeing Service

Saturday 21st March 2026

Time: 5 - 6pm

**Venue: Whittlesey Baptist Church,
Gracious Street, Whittlesey**

Refreshments: Tea and cake available after



Donations only:
Donate via QR code
or cash on door



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.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI-GENERATED VIDEOS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AI-generated videos are increasingly difficult to spot and easy to share. From fake news clips to deepfake abuse, children and young people face new risks every day online. These videos can imitate real people, spread false narratives or even generate harmful content from scratch. Understanding these dangers is crucial for schools and families who want to protect children in a fast-evolving digital world.

DEEPIFAKE ABUSE CONTENT

Shockingly, artificial intelligence is now being exploited to create child sexual abuse material (CSAM). These synthetic images and videos are a form of digital abuse, often generated by manipulating real children's photos, including ones shared innocently online. Worryingly, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has identified a sharp rise in this disturbing trend. Whether real or AI-generated, this content causes lasting trauma – and its creation or possession remains a criminal offence under UK law.

BLURRED REALITY

Regular exposure to fake content can erode a child's trust in real-world evidence. If everything can be faked, they may begin to question genuine videos – including actual abuse or injustice. This is known as the 'liar's dividend', where real harm is dismissed as fake news. It can discourage victims from coming forward or speaking up.

USED FOR BULLYING

Deepfake technology is already being used by peers to create embarrassing or explicit clips of classmates. These videos can be edited to appear as though a child said or did something they never did. Once shared, they are almost impossible to delete completely. AI-generated bullying adds a new layer of harm that is deeply personal and difficult to prove.

EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION

AI-generated videos can be used to provoke strong emotions, including fear, anger or guilt. False footage of crying children, injured animals or burning buildings may be created purely for clicks, donations or political influence. Children may feel upset or powerless, unaware that what they are watching has been digitally invented to manipulate their reaction.

DISINFORMATION

AI-generated videos can spread fake news, making it harder for children to separate fact from fiction. False clips may include deepfake interviews, hoax disasters or fabricated health claims. AI is already being used to produce misleading or persuasive material that appears authentic. If they don't develop media literacy, children may accept false content as truth.

IMPERSONATION AND SCAMS

With just a few photos or voice clips, AI tools can imitate someone's appearance or speech. This makes it easier for scammers or bullies to create fake videos of children, teachers or celebrities. These impersonations can be used for fraud, harassment or humiliation – and can spread quickly through social media or group chats, due to the viral potential of video, in particular, on social media.

Advice for Parents & Educators

TEACH HOW IT WORKS

Explain to children that videos can be faked – and show them how. Demonstrating side-by-side examples of real vs AI-generated clips helps to build awareness. Discuss how faces, voices and even movements can be copied by machines. Understanding the technology reduces fear and builds confidence in navigating digital content safely.

TALK ABOUT TRUST

Always keep lines of communication open. If a child sees something upsetting or unbelievable, they should feel safe discussing it without judgement. Create an environment where they know they will not get in trouble for asking questions. This also helps you step in quickly if harmful content has been shared; trust is vital and needs to be nurtured.

ENCOURAGE CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Help children question what they watch. Who made this? Why was it made? Is it trying to persuade me? These habits encourage digital thinking, especially when videos seem too shocking or convenient. Reinforce that not everything shared by friends or influencers is true, even if it looks convincing at first, and that the initial approach should always be one of speculation.

STRENGTHEN PRIVACY SETTINGS

Advise children not to share voice notes, selfies or personal videos on public platforms. AI tools often scrape content from social media to create deepfakes. Use privacy controls to limit who can see their content and turn off facial recognition where possible. Fewer public images means fewer opportunities for misuse.

Meet Our Expert

Brendan O'Keefe is a headteacher and digital education consultant with over a decade of experience in education. As Director of Digital Strategy across multiple schools and an advisor to The National College, he specialises in digital safety, PREVENT, and pastoral care.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

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.

