



## WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Dear Parent/Carer,

13th March 2026

As we have finally experienced a taste of the warmer weather to come, I wanted to remind you that the black jumper which students can choose to wear underneath their blazer is optional only for the colder weather. Once the temperature rises, students will be expected to remove this optional layer and still wear their blazer, which is compulsory uniform. In the event that we experience a heatwave, communication will come from myself, as in previous years, with amendments to the uniform.

Those students who have been on the German trip to Cologne have had a jam-packed couple of days including a visit to the famous Cologne Cathedral and the Lindt Chocolate Museum! I hope that you enjoyed following their adventures on our Facebook page.

We held our most recent Parent Forum meeting this week, thank you to those of you who attended. This forum was set up to enable you, as parents and carers, to have an opportunity to meet, discuss items linked to college improvement priorities and have an opportunity for feedback on other matters. It is a genuine attempt to seek your views and to develop a stronger partnership, by improving understanding through communication. If you are not already involved with Parent Forum and would be interested in joining, please email [office@sirharrysmith.com](mailto:office@sirharrysmith.com) to express your interest.

Following internal and external feedback, I would like to share with parents and carers that we will be reviewing our approach to 'passes' that are currently issued to students for a variety of reasons. The college will also be reviewing further its procedures on students accessing the toilet during lesson time. I would like to reassure parents and carers that any changes made will be in the students' best interest and with safeguarding as the priority. As we have previously communicated, please can I remind you that the school site is not to be accessed for drop off and pick up at the start and end of the day, without a valid parking permit. This ensures that our site is as safe as possible for staff and students during busy periods. There have been some instances recently where school transport cannot get parked as parents have been parked in the bus bay. To ensure that we are courteous to our local neighbours, if you are parking in the side streets near to the college, please do not block driveways. Please can you also remind your child/ren that when travelling to and from school they are still representing the college and exemplary behaviour within the community is expected.

On the subject of safety, I would like to remind you that we are a nut free school. This helps to protect those students with severe nut allergies. Aerosols and sprays (water based or otherwise), are also not to be used in school as these can trigger asthma attacks which can be life threatening. Thank you for your support with ensuring that students adhere to these rules.

Best wishes for the weekend ahead.

*Dawn White*  
*Principal*



# Köln 2026

26 students from Years 11 and 9 went on a language and cultural trip to Cologne in Germany this week. They took part in a range of activities, including a visit to the world-famous Cologne Cathedral, a boat trip on the Rhine, bowling, a 2-hour German language lesson and a visit to the Lindt Chocolate Museum, which included sampling the gorgeous food on offer in the café. The students engaged brilliantly in all the activities and were a testament to their families and the school with lots of comments about how polite and well-behaved they were. Well done to all the students involved.



# Köln 2026



# Primary Circus Skills Festival

The Sports Leaders were amazing last week with the Year 1 students from AJS, putting on a festival of circus skills. The students thoroughly enjoyed the festival and the leaders showed amazing skills in their communication with their groups and the organisation of the equipment. Their enthusiasm was infectious and encouraged so much fun for the young children, who had a great time!

**Mrs Hunt.**



# World Book Day Quiz

To round off our World Book Day celebrations last week, we held a quiz in the library on Friday! The questions were themed around books & authors, with bonus rounds on World Book Day trivia and bookish anagrams. Students entered the quiz in teams and competed over five rounds of questions. Lollipops and goodies were handed out to all participants - first and second placed teams received a brand new book each. Congratulations to the team "Where is Lizy?" who won first prize! Well deserved runners up were Team Jiminasaur!



# Tag Rugby Festival

The leaders braved the biting wind (but were glad I had a multitude of coats they could borrow!) to organise a fun Tag Rugby Festival. They are getting so confident now in their refereeing and also in the running of the event: organising the equipment to setting up the pitches, timing each match and recording the scores on the table. They were great and all primary students had a great time, with AJS being victors.

**Mrs Hunt**



# Happy Delivery!

The school library received an unexpected delivery today - we received a free pack of newspapers from The Happy News! These will be available for students to read at morning break and lunch. Below is some information about The Happy News Team.

'The Happy Newspaper celebrates all that's good in the world; a platform to share positive news and wonderful people. The first issue launched in December 2015 thanks to 73 people who pledged towards a Kickstarter campaign, which ended up reaching the target of £500 in just two days. Since then, The Happy Newspaper has been released quarterly, containing happy news which has been collected over a period of three months.

The newspaper is a 32-page publication organised chronologically, with news articles arranged month by month. Not only is the paper packed with only positive stories from across the globe, it also has an entire section dedicated to our Everyday Heroes. These are people, groups or organisations who YOU have nominated to feature in the paper because they add a little bit of sunshine to the world (or your world).'



# 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 23<sup>rd</sup>, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> & Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> 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.

**Year 8 Progress Checks** were sent home this week via email – these also appear on Edulink accounts.



## 30th June – Art Exhibition

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

# Useful Information

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MENTAL HEALTH MISINFORMATION ONLINE

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

A research study by Ofcom revealed that children aged 9–15 increasingly use online platforms like TikTok for mental health advice, with 50% relying on social media for information. Unverified medical content online is concerning, with the potential to cause confusion, anxiety, or incorrect self-diagnoses. This guide provides expert strategies to help parents and educators tackle misinformation effectively and ensure safer digital experiences for young people.

### POPULAR ONLINE SOURCES

Platforms like TikTok and Instagram are two of the main sources of young people's mental health content. Videos and posts frequently feature unqualified influencers, contributing to misinformation, myths, and oversimplifications. While appealing to young audiences, this unverified content can distort perceptions, and create unrealistic expectations and misunderstandings about mental health conditions.

### RISK OF SELF-DIAGNOSIS

Social media's misleading content encourages young people to self-diagnose complex mental health conditions inaccurately. Misdiagnosis can exacerbate anxiety, cause unnecessary worry, or delay essential professional intervention. This has the potential to escalate manageable conditions into more significant mental health issues requiring comprehensive clinical support.

### LACK OF FILTERS

Social media platforms struggle to filter misinformation effectively, allowing false content to spread widely and quickly. Without proper guidance, young viewers may not discern fact from fiction, potentially internalising inaccurate beliefs about mental health. This can negatively influence their decisions about seeking professional help or managing mental wellbeing.

### IMPACTFUL PAST TRENDS

Historically, online mental health misinformation has led to harmful trends, including inappropriate coping strategies or sensationalised symptoms. For example, past TikTok trends on self-harm or anxiety 'hacks' have spread damaging advice, underscoring the risk when misinformation is not promptly addressed or corrected by knowledgeable adults.

### MISLEADING CLINICAL TERMS

Online trends often include the misuse of clinical terms, such as 'trauma' or 'OCD', making serious conditions seem trivial or inaccurately understood. Such misinformation can diminish empathy, and lead young people to misunderstand mental health complexities, potentially preventing them from identifying real mental health issues in themselves or others.

### REPLACING PROFESSIONAL HELP

Frequent reliance on digital content can deter young people from seeking professional mental health care, substituting expert support with unverified online advice. This substitution can prolong issues, complicate recovery, and reduce the effectiveness of future professional interventions, ultimately impacting overall mental health and wellbeing negatively.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### MONITOR ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Regularly review and discuss a young person's online activity, providing appropriate guidance on discerning accurate content. Tools such as parental controls or co-viewing content can help mediate exposure to harmful misinformation, facilitating safer digital habits and informed critical thinking about mental health.

### SCHOOL-HOME COLLABORATION

Strengthen collaboration with educators to integrate digital literacy into the school curriculum, emphasising misinformation awareness. Jointly delivered education sessions on identifying and responding to misinformation can significantly improve pupils' ability to critically assess mental health content, supporting their mental wellbeing effectively both online and offline.

### IDENTIFY RELIABLE SOURCES

Teach young people to critically evaluate mental health content by checking credentials, source authenticity, and evidence-based information. Encourage them to refer to trusted medical or educational platforms and to consult healthcare professionals for clarification. This reduces young people's reliance on potentially harmful or misleading online sources.

### ENCOURAGE OPEN DIALOGUE

Foster a non-judgemental environment where young people feel comfortable discussing online content. Regularly talking about their online experiences and perceived mental health concerns helps clarify misunderstandings, mitigates misinformation, and builds trust, thereby enhancing their resilience and digital literacy. Model situations where you have sought advice from accurate sources and not solely relied on social media for health advice.

### Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman is Director of Halcyon Education Ltd, Director for Wellbeing and Family Services at Leigh Trust, and lead expert for mental health at The National College. Anna specialises in strategic mental health solutions for schools, supporting educators and families to improve resilience, emotional literacy, and overall wellbeing for children across the UK.



#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.

