16th October 2026

Weekly Update



Headteacher update

Dear Parents, Carers and Families,

A group of our Year 6 children have had a wonderful time this week at Hilltop Residential Centre on the Norfolk coast. They have been engaging in a range of outdoor adventure activities, such as travelling down zip wires, climbing high ropes and working as a team to solve challenges.

Throughout their three days away, the children have shown super respect and behaviour to the adults. They have tried new things, been supportive to their peers and taken themselves out of their comfort zones. And on top of that, they even went to bed on time and allowed the staff to get a good night's sleep! A huge thank you to the staff who have attended the trip and given up their time to enable the children to enjoy this experience.

Those children who didn't attend the trip have had a great week in school, enjoying lots of creative activities led by Mrs Swales. They have made pizzas, created art work and played balloon volleyball. They have taken on lots of jobs around the school and displayed great behaviour and conduct throughout. A big well done to them all.

We are looking forward to seeing you all at Parent/Carer Consultation meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week. If you have not yet made an appointment for these, please contact the school office and they will book one for you.

It hardly seems possible that next week is the last week before October half term! The children have worked extremely hard over the last eight weeks and deserve a rest. A reminder that school is closed to children on **Friday 23rd October** and Thursday 22nd October is the last day of school. Similarly, school is closed on **Monday 2nd November** and children return on Tuesday 3rd November.

Have a lovely weekend. See you bright and early on Monday morning!

Jonathan Clarke and the SPS Team

Meridian Trust

Key Dates - updates in blue

Tuesday 20th and Wednesday 21st October 15:30 - 18:30	Parent/Carer Consultation Meetings
Thursday 22nd October 17:00 - 20:00	Cromwell Community College Open Evening
Friday 23rd October - Monday 3rd November	Half Term
Friday 6th November	PFA Sale on Playground
Wednesday 11th November	Flu Vaccinations
Friday 13th November	Children in Need
Friday 13th November	PFA Glow Disco
Week beginning Monday 16th November	Anti-Bullying Week
Tuesday 17th November	Individual photos
Monday 23rd November	EYFS and Y6 Measures Programme
Friday 4th December	PFA Christmas Fayre
Tuesday 8th (09:20), Wednesday 9th (14:00) and Thursday 10th (09:20) December	Key Stage One Christmas Production
Thursday 10th December	Christmas Lunch and Christmas Jumper Day
Monday 14th December	Reception and KS1 Walk to Church
Thursday 17th December	KS2 Walk to Church

Academy Council

Somersham Primary School is looking to recruit a parent member of the in Somersham Primary School Academy Council. The Academy Council is responsible for local governance of the school.

This Academy Council's role is to:

1. Promote the mission and values of the school within the overall Meridian Trust vision to provide high quality education for all at the heart of the local community
2. Support and challenge the Headteacher and school leaders and act as a critical friend

3. Contribute to the development of strategic priorities and plans for the academy
4. Ensure effective mechanisms are in place to safeguard all pupils
5. Monitor standards within the academy including pupil progress and attainment.
6. Ensure trust policies are implemented and monitor their impact
7. Engage with key stakeholders to improve outcomes for students
8. Ensure that Quality Assurance procedures are effective and moderated.
9. Monitor budgets and help ensure value for money
10. Monitor student attendance, well-being and preparation for their futures and views by analysing a range of data

The Academy Council plays a strategic role and is not involved in operations. Parent Academy Council Members contribute with their experience as parents of children at the academy and other skills they have. The role is voluntary and it is not representative. The commitment at a minimum is attending 5 to 6 meetings a year, with some preparation before and taking on a Champion role in a key area such as student welfare and safeguarding, curriculum and achievement, student experience and others.

Advice and training are available.

Anyone who has parental responsibility for any pupil at the school at the time of the election can self-nominate to become a Parent Academy Council Member, stand for election and can vote in the election. A parent who works for the school for 500 hours or more is not eligible to stand for election but they are permitted to vote. The term of office for an Elected Parent Academy Council Member is 4 years. All appointments are subject to references and an enhanced DBS check.

If you are interested in becoming a Parent Academy Council Member at Somersham Primary school, please complete the attached self-nomination and return it to the school office by Friday 6th November.

On Monday 9th November we will contact all who have expressed interest about next steps and hold elections if needed.

If you would like more information about the governance structure of Meridian Trust, please see https://www.meridiantrust.co.uk/key-information/governance-key-information/governance-overview/ For an informal chat about what the role entails, please contact insert name of Head/Office Manager and contact details.

Thank you for your interest.



Reception	First	First means coming before anything else in a sequence or order. We have been using our visual timetable to help us understand what happens first in our school day. We have also been thinking about what happens first in stories and listening carefully to words to identify the first sound we hear. To extend this learning at home, you could look at a favourite story together and talk about what happens first, or play a listening game by asking, "What is the first sound you can hear in sun?"
Year 1/2	Imperative verb	We talked about these 'bossy verbs' and how useful they are when writing instructions. Can the children give clear, bossy instructions? Perhaps they could lead a game of Simon Says!
Year 3/4	Bridge	This week in PE, we have been creating our own sequence using 3 bridges. Can you explain what a bridge is and create one at home?
Year 5/6	Teamwork	Year 5/6 have experienced different types of teamwork this week. We are really impressed by the way the children have adapted to a different environment at school as well as the children at Hilltop who have worked together in a real variety of ways.
	French	Years 3 & 4: Sing along to this song to practise asking how old someone is: Quel âge as-tu? Years 5 & 6: Sing along to this well-known song to practise school subjects: Les matières

CAKE SALE

Monday19Octoberstarting at 3:20pm

50p percupcakeorslice

Cash only

The moneyraisedwillbeusedtobuy resources for our school

Come along and grab a tasty treat!



Apply now
for a Secondary school place for September 2027

If your child will be aged 11 by
31st August 2027

SCAN ME



Apply by 31st October 2026

For further information please visit
or contact your local School

Contact the Admissions Team by:
Telephone 0345 045 1370
or
Email admissions@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Christmas Fayre POSTER Competition

We need a special poster to advertise our Christmas Fayre and it could be YOUR design!

Your poster should include:

- ☑ The words 'Christmas Fayre'
- ☑ The date & time (4th December 5pm-7pm)
- ☑ A fun, eye-catching design
- ☑ Bright colours and a festive theme!

Open to all children of Somersham Primary School



Great prizes to be won

Hand in your design by:

Thursday 22nd October

Give it to:

Your class teacher

£1 per entry

The Christmas Fayre Poster Competition entry form shall be distributed from school. Prizes available for winner, 2nd & 3rd place designs.


SOMERSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL
PFA
SAVE
the
DATE
GLOW DISCO
Friday 13th November
MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

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. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

AI COMPANIONS

Powered by generative AI models like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, AI companion apps and virtual chatbots such as Character.ai, Snapchat My AI, Replika and Talkie, allow users to create, customise, and chat to synthetic avatars around the clock. While many young people use them for harmless entertainment, creative writing or homework help, these tools are designed to simulate genuine human empathy, emotional bonding and deep friendship.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

AI companions are programmed to be endlessly agreeable, attentive, and available 24/7. Unlike human friendships, an AI companion never disagrees, sets personal boundaries, or gets tired. Young people (especially those experiencing loneliness, social anxiety, or low self-esteem) can quickly develop an unhealthy emotional attachment, viewing synthetic software as their 'best friend' or a surrogate romantic partner.

DISTORTED SOCIAL SKILLS

Navigating real-world friendships can be messy, involving dealing with conflict, compromise, boredom, and awkwardness. If a teenager spends hours interacting with an AI that is tailored specifically to validate and flatter them, they may become impatient with real-world relationships. Over time, this can lead to social withdrawal, heightened anxiety in peer groups, and isolation: a vicious circle of growing online dependency coupled with a heightened sense that relationships in the 'real world' are too challenging to maintain.

DANGEROUS MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE

AI chatbots possess no genuine empathy, professional clinical knowledge, or moral reasoning. While developers state these tools are not therapists, vulnerable teenagers often turn to them in crisis. Chatbots have previously hallucinated unsafe medical guidance, validated depressive spirals, and failed to safely escalate disclosures of self-harm or suicidal ideation to real-world protective services.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT

CENSORED

While most mainstream platforms feature safety filters and guardrails, young people frequently discover 'jailbreak' prompts to bypass them. Some companion platforms subtly nudge users towards mature themes, romantic roleplay, or sexually suggestive conversations. In worse cases, third-party apps with weak safety checks have been found to generate sexually explicit text or intimate images.

DATA HARVESTING & OVERSHARING

Because conversational bots simulate warmth and understanding, children often lower their guard and treat the chatbot as a trusted friend. They may disclose sensitive personal information, including full names, school details, private family problems, or secrets, unaware that their conversations are being logged, may be analysed by third parties (including advertisers), or used to train future AI models.

"FREEMIUM" UPSELLS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many companion platforms operate on a freemium model. While basic chat is free, features like voice calls, uncensored responses, custom avatars, or 'deeper bonding' tiers are locked behind expensive monthly recurring subscriptions or in-app token purchases. This can lead to significant hidden costs and pressure on young people to spend money to maintain the 'friendship'.

Advice for Parents & Educators

TALK OPENLY ABOUT FAKE RELATIONSHIPS

Demystify how these tools work. Explain to young people that an AI companion has no feelings, memories, or consciousness; it is simply calculating the next most mathematically probable word based on its training data. It is helpful to explain to them the mechanics of large language models so that they understand how they are trained and how they are designed to always flatter and be helpful.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Ensure technology habits do not replace face-to-face peer socialisation, sports, hobbies, and family time. Create healthy boundaries at home (such as keeping phones and tablets out of bedrooms overnight) to prevent late-night, unmonitored attachment loops with conversational chatbots when young people are at their most vulnerable.

AUDIT PRIVACY SETTINGS & AGE LIMITS

18 CENSORED

Check which companion apps are installed on your child's phone or tablet. Many dedicated companion apps carry an App Store rating of 17+, while platforms like Character.ai set a minimum age of 13+ (or 16+ in the UK/EU). Review the privacy settings together: turn off data-sharing toggles, disable model training where possible, and ensure location permissions are blocked.

REINFORCE WHERE TO GET REAL HELP

Make sure young people know that a machine can never replace professional pastoral or mental health care. Remind them of the trusted adults they can turn to at school – such as their Form Tutor, Head of Year, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – as well as dedicated youth support services like Childline (0800 1111) or Shout (text 85258).

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is the Founder and Executive Director of Kompass Education, a consultancy specialising in supporting educators, students and parents in making wise choices with AI. His book Ethical AI and Education, co-authored with Clara Hawking, will be released later in 2026 by Taylor and Francis.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

See full reference list on our website

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 09.10.2026

1st EBC Scout Group Presents

BLUNTISHAM BONFIRE & FIREWORKS

Mehew's Field,
Wood End, PE28 3LE

SATURDAY 7TH NOV

GATES 5:30PM ▶ BONFIRE 6PM ▶ FIREWORKS 6:30PM

PLUS FOOD TRUCKS!

ADVANCE PRICE

Adult £8
Child £5

Aged 4 & under FREE

GATE PRICE

Adult £9
Child £6

Aged 4 & under FREE

BOOK ONLINE

TicketTailor

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