22nd October 2026

Weekly Update



Headteacher update

Dear Parents, Carers and Families,

It was great to see so many family members at our Parent/Carer Consultation meetings this week. We hope that you found these useful and were able to learn more about how your child has settled this academic year. Thank you to everyone who completed our Parent/Carer questionnaire. We will look at the feedback and report on this after half term. It is always useful to hear your views - on both what we are doing well or what could be even better at school - but please don't wait for a formal questionnaire to share this. A quick word to a member of the team on the school gate, or a call into the office, is always helpful.

A big 'thank you' to Aisha and her family for the lovely cakes they sold at their stall after school on Monday. This was a wonderful initiative for Aisha to have led, and the £57.85 raised has been given back to the school to spend on resources. Fantastic entrepeneurialship, Aisha...well done!

The Friday after half term (6th November), a group of Year 6s will be leading another sale on the playground after school. This is a PFA stock sale, the money from which will go towards the Year 6 end of year celebration. Once again, it's fantastic to see our children developing their business acumen to support a project.

Next half term is a busy one, with annual events like Children in Need, the PFA disco and Anti-Bullying Week before the lead up to Christmas. The newsletter after half term will contain more information about these events, with dates, times and details shared for your information. Keep a look out for that on Friday 6th November.

The end of summer seems a distant memory! Children have worked really hard over the last eight weeks, settling in new classes, engaging in new learning and trying their hardest across the curriculum. We hope that everyone has a lovely half term break, and comes back to school well rested on **Tuesday 3rd November.**

Have a lovely week. Thank you, as always, for your support of the school.

Jonathan Clarke and the SPS Team

Meridian Trust

Key Dates – updates in blue

Friday 23rd October - Monday 3rd November	Half Term
Friday 6th November	PFA Year 6 Sale
Monday 9th November	Years 5 and 6 Duxford Visit
Tuesday 10th November	Years 3 and 4 Roman Day
Wednesday 11th November	Flu Vaccinations
Thursday 12th November	Reception (17:00 - 17:30) and Year 1 (17:30 - 18:00) Phonics Workshop for Parents
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

Secondary School applications



A reminder that the deadline for making secondary school applications for current Year 6 children is 31st October. See the poster and QR code below for further information.

Reception and Year 1 Phonics Evening

On Thursday 12th November, Mrs Gifford and Mrs Talbot, our Early Reading Leaders, will be holding a Phonics and Early Reading workshop for parents and carers. This will give detail about how Phonics is taught in school and what you can do to help your children at home. We would really encourage attendance if you are able to. Reception content will be covered between 17:00 and 17:30 and Year 1 between 17:30 and 18:00. Please note that this event is not suitable for children.



MP Christmas Card Competition

Our local MP, Ben Obese-Jecty, is once again asking local children to design his Christmas card. Please see the poster below for more details. It would be great to see some Somersham entrants for this and it would be a nice activity on a rainy half term day!

BEN OBESE-JECTY MP

Christmas CARD COMPETITION

OPEN TO ALL PRIMARY AGED SCHOOL CHILDREN BETWEEN 4-11

COMPETITION CLOSES ON

FRIDAY 6 **NOVEMBER**

PLEASE ASK YOUR PARENT OR CARER TO EMAIL A CLEAR PHOTO OR SCAN OF YOUR DESIGN TO BEN.OBESEJECTY.MP@PARLIAMENT.UK

PLEASE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- CHILD'S NAME
- AGE
- SCHOOL
- PARENT/ CARER'S NAME
- CONTACT EMAIL
- HOME ADDRESS



Reception	Combine	Combine means to put two or more things together to make something new. This week, we have been learning about how we can combine ingredients to make our chocolate crispy cakes. We mixed the ingredients together and watched how they changed as we created our cakes. To extend this learning at home, you could try combining different ingredients when baking or cooking together. Ask your child, "What happens when we combine these?"
Year 1/2	Stable	We built UK landmarks from recycled materials. Children had to make sure the structure was stable. Can they explain what that means and how did they make their structure as stable as possible?
Year 3/4	Rights and responsibilities	In PSHE, we have been exploring the rights we all have and the responsibilities that come with them. Can you share some of the rights you have and explain the responsibilities that go alongside them?
Year 5/6	Innovation	In History this week, Year 5/6 have been learning about the innovations developed during World War II and exploring the impact these inventions had on Britain at the time. They also looked at their continued influence on modern life today.
	French	Years 3&4: Watch a story: Comment ça va, Pierre? Years 5&6: Learn some school words with this video: A l'école! C'est la rentrée!

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

PFA POUND SHOP

SOMERSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL
PFA

TOYS, FIDGETS AND MORE!

100S OF ITEMS FOR JUST £1!

ALL ITEMS £1



FRIDAY 6TH NOVEMBER
AFTER SCHOOL
ON THE PLAYGROUND

SOLD BY OUR YEAR 6 CHILDREN
TO HELP RAISE MONEY FOR THEIR
Y6 LEAVERS T-SHIRTS AND EVENTS!

CASH ONLY


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

SPONSORED BY ALL STARS PERFORMING ARTS

Scouts