

Newsletter Issue 10



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5th February 2026





Headteacher's News

Reading

There are so many benefits to reading including improving our self-esteem, mental health, well-being; being able to be lost in new worlds in our imagination alongside learning facts and understanding other people in the world, cultures, languages and historical events. One of our priorities at Sissinghurst is developing a love of reading and this is evident in speaking to our children about the wide range of books that they enjoy.

This year for world book day, we will be focusing on reading and performing poetry for a change and we hope that this inspires a little more reading for everyone. We see a huge difference in the confidence and speed in the reading of those that read frequently. Please do try and aim for 20 minutes at least three times a week to make a real difference to your child's progress.

Attendance:

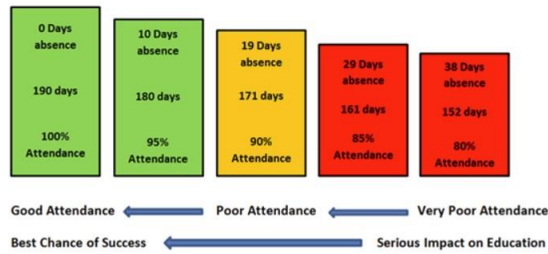
A huge thank you to those who ensure their child(ren) have great attendance. At 94% we are currently just below the national average of 95%. We are through the winter bug season so this should get better and better now. We do have a number of families that our FLO Mrs Ridgway is working with and Mrs Desai to improve attendance as it is critical for good learning and the positive educational experience that all children deserve.

Good attendance means ...

Being in school at least 95% of the time (180-190 days a year)

There are **365 days** in a year and **190 days** in a school year.

This leaves 175 days for holidays, shopping, birthday treats and non-urgent medical appointments.



Have a wonderful weekend when it gets here and a fantastic disco tomorrow if you have a ticket.

Sarah Holman



[Click here for dates](#)

Two Non-Uniform Days next week

Next Wednesday (11/2): Football day – workshops – wear football kit or sports clothing - free

Next Thursday (12/2): Last Day of Term) – Marathon fundraiser – wear non uniform of your choice – donations to <https://www.justgiving.com/page/kate-vanns-1?newPage=true>

Change of management information system – Term 4

Many of you have told us our systems for communication, booking clubs, lunches and trips are clunky to be polite! From Term 4 we are rolling out a phased start to Arbor – the new system that will replace all other apps and portals so there is a streamlined approach to school life. More information and login details will follow in due course.

From the start of Term 4 (after Feb half term) we will begin by using this portal for communicating with you, rather than via Studybugs for quick messages to staff. Note, email via office@sissinghurst.kent.sch.uk is still the best way to communicate longer or private matters.

In school we will use Arbor for attendance so you will see this live in the app or via the portal once Arbor goes live for our school. Over Term 4 we will introduce Arbor for payments too (clubs, FOSS events etc) and booking lunches. This will replace Parentpay. More information on this will follow. Although this will seem a little different for a term, by Easter, rest assured, we will have moved over completely to Arbor so all other systems are discontinued and things will be (we hope!) a little easier!

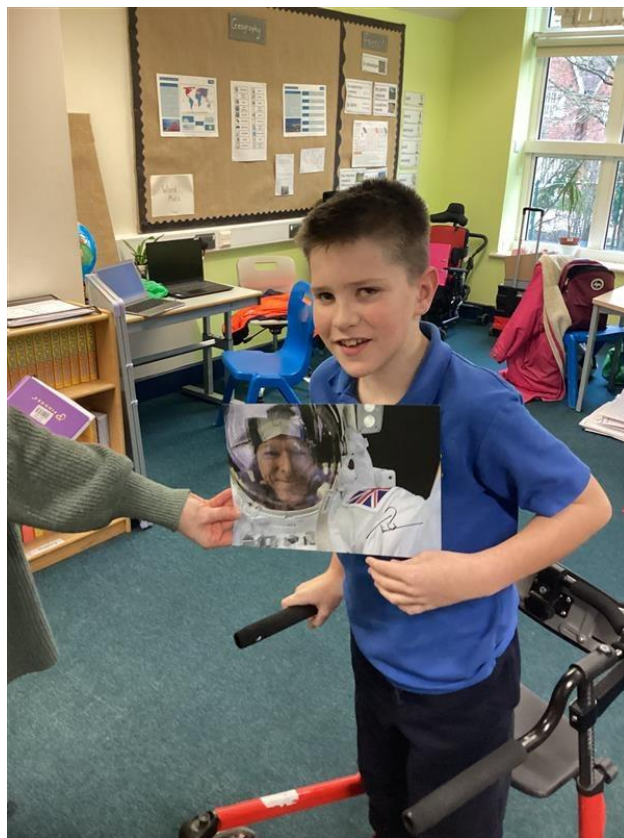
Online Safety

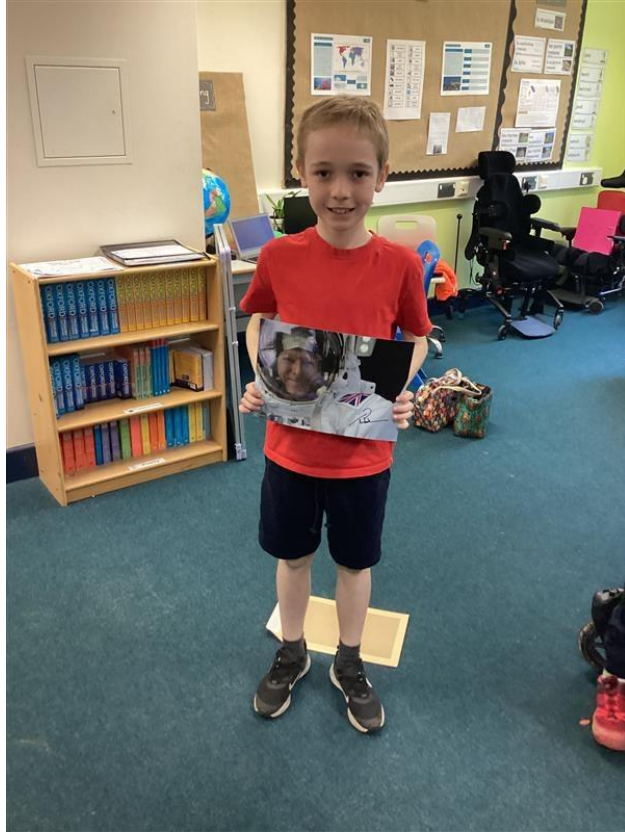
We recently offered a workshop for parents to talk about worries many of you have about your child's online activity and how to keep them safe. The slides can be found here should you wish to read

them <https://www.sissinghurst.kent.sch.uk/page/?title=Need+help+or+advice%3F&pid=73>

Eagle Class - 'Earth and Space' visit

To enrich their Science learning about 'Earth and Space' Eagle Class had a special visit from the UK Space Agency. They tried on space suits, designed and launched rockets, engaged in rich discussion and asked lots of questions. Prizes were awarded for best rocket design (Jesse), best engineering (Arthur) and best launch (Charlie F)! These pupils got a signed photo from UK astronaut Tim Peake. The UKSA visitors commented on the children's super behaviour for learning and their enthusiasm.









Brighton Marathon 2026



Mrs Vanns and Mrs Woods are running the Brighton Marathon on the 12th April and raising money for the charity MIND.

This is an amazing charity. Every year, one in four of us will experience mental health problems. But hundreds of thousands of people are still struggling silently.

Mind believe no one should have to face mental health problems alone. They'll listen, give you support and advise, and fight your corner. This might mean support for you or support for a loved one.

At Sissinghurst Primary School we feel that this is a very worthy charity and recognise the amazing work they do. On Thursday 12th February we shall be holding non- school uniform day to raise money for this charity. Children are invited to wear sports clothes to support Mrs Vanns and Mrs Woods for their run. This coincides with Children's Mental Health Week and in this week, we will be learning about how to do activities to keep a healthy body and mind. If you would like to donate to show your support, please use the attached link below.

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/kate-vanns-1?newPage=true>

Thank you for your support

Mrs Vanns and Mrs Woods

LOOKING FOR FREE PARENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT? 

This service is for adults (18+) only.

12 FREE SESSIONS AVAILABLE

WHERE
Regus, Pluto House
Tunbridge Wells

WHEN
Thursdays, between 10am-4pm

WITH
A Counsellor in Training who has been approved by their education provider and holds an Enhanced DBS Check

THIS SERVICE IS NOT FOR ANYONE WHO HAS ANY OF THE BELOW EXPERIENCES OR WISHES FOR COUNSELLING.

- Whose needs would be better met by a specialist service i.e. eating disorders
- Who are experiencing thoughts of self-harm or thoughts of suicide
- Who are receiving psychological therapy from another service or therapist at the same time as being seen in our service
- Who are experiencing current and active addictions, eating disorders or PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)
- Who have a history or current symptoms of psychosis, hallucinations, and delusion
- Have a diagnosis of bipolar affective disorder / borderline or antisocial personality disorder
- Who are seeking couples counselling
- Who are currently training in counselling and/or psychotherapy
- Have experienced historic or current abuse

SIGN UP FOR FREE PARENT COUNSELLING:

<https://nourgeois.org/how-we-help/family-life/counselling/free-counselling-sessions-for-adults/>



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Once your request has been received, we will be in contact to arrange an assessment call.



Kent Adult Education

Boost Your Confidence in English! Our Functional Skills English courses are perfect for adults looking to improve reading, writing, speaking and listening skills for everyday life, work or further study.

Find out more & enrol: <https://ow.ly/T8a450WRNzw#FunctionalSkills>

Wake Up Wednesday

AI is becoming a big part of young people's online lives — from school tools to entertainment apps. Help children understand how AI works and why it shouldn't be trusted blindly.

Download here >> <https://vist.ly/4qaad>

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, blogs and tips, please visit www.thenationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SUPPORTING SAFE USE OF AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly woven into young people's digital lives. It can offer some educational benefits and day-to-day assistance; however, it also raises concerns about misinformation, privacy, fairness, and safety. This guide provides parents and educators with practical strategies to support young people to navigate AI tools responsibly, and to use them safely and with discernment.

- 1 DEMYSTIFY WHAT AI REALLY IS**

Children encounter AI in most online places, including games, streaming platforms, and school tools. Explain that AI uses patterns from past data to make predictions, but it doesn't think or feel like humans. Use age-appropriate examples like how recommendations are made. Highlight its limits, such as data overreliance and prevent false beliefs about AI being all-knowing or infallible.
- 2 TALK ABOUT RISKS OF MISINFORMATION**

AI can create convincing false information, including deepfakes, videos, photos, and fake text. Encourage children to think critically about what they see and hear. Teach them to check for information using multiple sources, check images and videos carefully, and to ask an adult if something doesn't seem right.
- 3 DISCUSS DATA AND PRIVACY**

Explain that AI systems learn by analyzing lots of data, sometimes including personal information. Help young people to be mindful of what they share online and why protecting personal data matters. Model good habits like checking app permissions together or reviewing what's collected by voice assistants like Alexa or Siri.
- 4 ENCOURAGE CREATIVE USE OF AI**

Support children when using AI tools to explore ideas, make art, or build projects. Foster confidence, imagination, and independent thinking. When creative use is encouraged, rather than just passively consuming it, they are more likely to stay engaged and make thoughtful choices.
- 5 USE AGE-APPROPRIATE AI TOOLS**

Not all AI platforms are suitable for children. Choose tools designed for education or creativity, with clear safety policies. Review terms of use and privacy settings, and help children use them in age-appropriate ways. For example, some school tools require supervision but should only be used with guidance and boundaries in place.
- 6 USE AI TOGETHER**

Exploring AI tools together can help adults understand how they work and spot potential issues. Try co-writing a story with an AI writing assistant or experimenting with an art tool. This encourages curiosity, helps you stay informed about the latest AI tools, and allows you to reinforce safe and respectful use while modeling critical thinking.
- 7 SET BOUNDARIES FOR AI USE**

Establish when, where, and how AI tools can be used, just as you would with any digital technology. For example, you might agree not to use AI to complete school assignments without permission, or to avoid unsupervised use of voice assistants. Consistent boundaries help manage overuse and misuse.
- 8 WATCH FOR OVERRELIANCE**

Some AI tools like homework helpers may be tempting shortcuts. Encourage children to use AI to support their thinking, not replace it. Celebrate effort and process over perfect answers. Reinforce that ongoing effort is part of learning and that relying too heavily on AI can limit your understanding.
- 9 TEACH DIGITAL ETHICS AND LITERACY**

Help children explore how AI works, where things are shared, and why without thinking matters. Building digital literacy alongside ethical awareness ensures children engage with AI critically, not just conveniently. Help young people to understand that not all people use AI for legitimate purposes, some use it for malicious reasons. Encourage questions about fairness, representation, and who benefits from certain tools. Talk about algorithms, echo chambers, and the impact of automation on daily life.
- 10 STAY CURIOUS AND INVOLVED**

AI is developing rapidly, and staying informed helps you support the young people in your care. Follow trusted sources for updates and keep the conversation going. If a child brings up a new AI trend or tool, take the opportunity to learn about it together. Showing interest builds trust and strengthens digital resilience.

Meet Our Expert
Helen is the award-winning chief library for educators. The National College has transformed the way education establishments go about developing their workforce and meeting compliance. Our share memberships help all phases and types of setting raise standards, save time, reduce risk, and build a culture of improvement.

WakeUp Wednesday
The National College

[@wake_up_weds](https://www.wake_up_weds.com) www.thenationalcollege.com [@wakeupwednesday](https://www.wakeupwednesday.com) [wakeupweds.com](https://www.wakeupweds.com)

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 04.02.2025



Space 2 Talk

@ Maidstone Community Support Centre
39-48 Marsham Street, Maidstone, Kent
ME14 1HH

Wednesday 4th Feb
Wednesday 4th March
Wednesday 1st April
10:00 - 11:30

space2beme.org.uk/services/space2talk



Registered Charity: 1140764, Company Reg 07324545



APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN

JUNIOR BAKE OFF

WWW.APPLYFORJUNIORBAKEOFF.CO.UK

AGED BETWEEN 9-15 AND WANT TO GIVE
YOUR BAKING SKILLS A GO?

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



LAST CHANCE TO APPLY 15TH MARCH 2026



APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR
JUNIOR BAKE OFF

Aged between 9-15 and love to bake?
We'd love to hear from you!

WWW.APPLYFORJUNIORBAKEOFF.CO.UK



APPLICATIONS CLOSE 15TH MARCH 2026

Let's
DANCE
Uk

Half Term workshops

When: *Tuesday 17th February*

Where: *Chart Sutton Village hall*

With: **Beth Woodcock**

**KPOP
DEMON
HUNTERS**



K-Pop workshop 1:30-2:30pm (R-Yr3) £5

Musical workshop 2:30- 4pm (Y4- Y8) £6

To Book: email letsdanceuk@live.co.uk

or book on via our app and register



News & Events

For upcoming local events in the parish of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst:

<https://cranbrookandsissinghurstpc.co.uk/whats-on/upcoming-events/>

Sign up to receive 'Be In The Know' emails from the parish council:

<https://cranbrookandsissinghurstpc.co.uk/>

Or follow the Parish Council Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/CranbrookandSissinghurstPC>

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Office opening hours are 08.30am to 3.30pm (term-time only)