



13th March 2026

Dear Families

As we move forwards in the Spring Term, it has been another purposeful and positive week at Sturminster Newton High School. Our students continue to demonstrate our values of Respect, Responsibility and Resilience in everything they do, and it has been a pleasure to see these values lived out in classrooms, on visits, and across our community. I wanted to share, as always, what has been going on in the school and what we have to look forward to next week.

What has happened at SNHS this week

French Speaking Exam Practice

This week our Year 11 French students completed their practice speaking exams on Tuesday and Wednesday. They demonstrated excellent effort, confidence and commitment. A huge thank you to Madame Woods for her expert preparation and guidance, and well done to the students for approaching these challenging assessments with such maturity.

School Improvement Partner Visit – Continuing Our Journey

We were pleased to welcome a School Improvement Partner from another Trust this week. They conducted learning walks, spoke with staff, and met with a group of students. Our students represented the school brilliantly - polite, reflective, and showing the respect and responsibility we expect of them.

As you know, we are in a period known as an OFSTED inspection window, meaning that an inspection could take place at any point. This is an important milestone for our school's journey and future direction, and we are keen to show off all the great things we do at SNHS, while recognising the developmental areas in our school. Visits like this help us build a clear picture of where we are, what we do well, and where we want to continue improving. While we want to be fully prepared, our focus is equally on continuous, ongoing improvement, not quick fixes. We are committed to ensuring SNHS becomes the absolute best it can be for every student.

Sixth Form Careers Event – Bournemouth International Centre

Our Sixth Form students attended an excellent careers fair at the Bournemouth International Centre this week. They met universities, apprenticeship providers, employers and training organisations, gaining valuable advice about life after Year 13. The students engaged brilliantly and took full advantage of the opportunity to explore their Post-18 options.

Sports Fixtures – Football vs Gillingham and Shaftesbury

We've had several football fixtures this week, playing against Gillingham and Shaftesbury. The matches were close, competitive and played in great spirit. Our students showed tremendous resilience, particularly as squad changes were required due to illness, meaning several players stepped into unfamiliar positions. Their adaptability and team spirit were a credit to the school.

Emergency Preparedness Training for School Leaders

This week, I attended a county-wide emergency preparedness training day alongside police, fire and ambulance services. The aim was to strengthen how schools plan for rare but serious situations requiring lockdown or emergency response.

We already have a lockdown procedure in place and complete an annual practice. This is a legal requirement for all schools and is designed not to frighten students, but to ensure everyone knows what to do in the event of an intruder on site, a chemical/gas incident nearby, or any situation requiring us to secure the building.

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We are due to run our next lockdown drill this coming term. I will write to families with full details beforehand—especially important for students who have not experienced a lockdown drill at SNHS before, or those that require a more personalised support approach.

Year 10 Mock Exams – One Month to Go

With just over a month until the Year 10 Mock Exams, we held our introduction assembly this week. Students are already beginning revision activities and rehearsal tasks in lessons. These mocks are an important milestone—Year 10 will be sitting their real GCSE exams in just over a year, so building strong habits now is essential.

Attendance Matters

This week's attendance figures:

- Year 7 – 96%
- Year 8 – 92%
- Year 9 – 90%
- Year 10 – 89%
- Year 11 – 87%

Compared to last week, Year 7 continue to lead the way with outstanding attendance—well done! Year 8 and Year 9 also showed steady effort, and for them to hit or go above 90% is definitely a move in the right direction. However, we need all year groups to be aiming for 97% and above. Attendance is one of the biggest factors influencing student progress, wellbeing and long-term outcomes. Every day in school matters.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring students attend regularly and punctually.

What's coming up at SNHS next week

I am really excited to share a wide-ranging set of opportunities for our students next week. It promises to be a very busy but exciting time at SNHS and provide even more reason to be in each day and maximising these opportunities.

Year 8 Careers Trip – Bournemouth University

Students in Year 8 will be heading to Bournemouth University for a fantastic opportunity to explore future study routes, careers pathways and university life.

Business – Grade Booster Course

Our Business students have the opportunity to attend a Grade Booster workshop on Wednesday with Ms Alner—an excellent chance to deepen understanding and maximise achievement ahead of their upcoming exams.

Theatre Trip – The Talented Mr Ripley

Our students will be travelling to see *The Talented Mr Ripley* on Friday as part of their course enrichment in what promises to be a culturally-enriching performance to experience.

Rewards Trips – Aquarium Sleepover & Paignton Zoo

We are excited for our upcoming rewards trips—a unique “sleeping with sharks” experience at the National Marine Aquarium, alongside a visit to Paignton Zoo. These opportunities are well-deserved recognitions for students who consistently model our school values.

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Interhouse Football

Barnes, Hardy, Raleigh and Thornhill will be competing in interhouse football next week. Competition is heating up already and students are eager to bring home the win for their house!

Red Nose Day – Friday

Next Friday is Red Nose Day, and we will be running a range of fundraising activities including stalls, tombola's, a 'sponge a teacher' station, and plenty of cake sales.

Please encourage students to bring in spare change to donate and get involved in the festivities of the day, **Important notice: There will NOT be a non-uniform day.** Students should attend in full school uniform as usual.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement with our school community. As ever, I am incredibly proud of our students—their kindness, effort, and commitment shine through each week. We know that 'it takes a village to raise a child', and we are always thankful for the role that our families play in supporting the school within this village.

We look forward to another exciting and productive week ahead, and I wish you all a calm and relaxing weekend - particularly to all those celebrating Mothering Sunday and hope it is filled with love and joy however you choose to celebrate.

Warm regards

Mr M Motteram
Head of School

