



8th October 2026

Dear SNHS Families

A very warm welcome to this week's newsletter as we reach the end of another busy week at Sturminster Newton High School. As always, it has been fantastic to see our students embracing the range of opportunities available and put on by our staff, both inside and outside the classroom. From visits and sporting fixtures to practical assessments and enrichment activities, it has been another week demonstrating that *It Takes a Village To Raise a Child* to provide our young people with the very best experiences and opportunities to thrive.

What has happened at SNHS this week?

Learning beyond the classroom

This week has been packed with educational visits. Our Geography students visited Swanage on both Monday and Wednesday to undertake fieldwork activities for their NEA coursework. These visits provided students with the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge to the real-world of the beach and coastline in Dorset, developing their geographical skills, data collection techniques and understanding of coastal processes.

On Tuesday, our Business students visited Longleat, where they attended a business forum and engaged with industry professionals. Experiences such as these help students see the practical application of the theories and concepts they study in lessons. I have heard some fantastic feedback from this event.

Today, our History students travelled to Portchester Castle, where they were able to immerse themselves in a historical site and deepen their understanding of the topics being studied in class. Seeing history first-hand helps students develop a strong appreciation of the past and strengthens the connections between historical evidence and their learning.

These visits provide many opportunities to enrich our curriculum and ensure students experience learning beyond the classroom.

Celebrating Mr Magor's musical achievement

We are really proud to recognise Mr Magor, our Music teacher, who was part of Verwood Concert Brass as they performed at the National Brass Band Championships at the Royal Albert Hall last weekend.

After qualifying for the Championship Section National Finals for the first time in the band's 162-year history, the performance represented the culmination of years of commitment and hard work. To perform at the Royal Albert Hall is an achievement that very few musicians experience, and we are delighted that a member of our staff has reached such an impressive level within their field.

Congratulations, Mr Magor, on a fantastic achievement and for continuing to inspire our students through your passion for music.

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Ten Tors training

A number of our students took part in a fantastic Ten Tors training expedition last weekend, travelling from Buckfast Abbey to Tavistock. Ten Tors provides young people with the opportunity to develop resilience, teamwork, independence and determination while navigating challenging terrain and working together towards a shared goal.

The students represented the school brilliantly and gained valuable experience as they continue their Ten Tors preparation. We are extremely grateful to the staff and SNEG (Sturminster Newton Expedition Group) who gave up their time to support the expedition.

Year 8 Rugby v Shaftesbury School

Our Year 8 rugby team travelled to take on a strong and physical Shaftesbury School side this week. Despite facing tough opposition, every player stepped up to the challenge, showed tremendous commitment and continued to battle throughout the fixture.

Most importantly, the students learned a great deal from the experience and demonstrated excellent sportsmanship, resilience and teamwork throughout. Well done to all involved.

Year 11 Sports and Coaching assessments

Many of our Year 11 Sports and Coaching students completed practical coaching assessments this week. It was fantastic to see students applying the skills, knowledge and leadership techniques they have developed throughout the course.

The assessments provided students with an opportunity to demonstrate their confidence as coaches while putting into practice everything they have learned. We are proud of the effort, preparation and professionalism shown by so many students.

National Attendance Award for SNHS!

I am delighted to share that Sturminster Newton High School has been recognised as a secondary school whose overall attendance improvement from 2024/25 to 2025/26 was within the top 25% of FFT secondary schools nationally.

Attendance has been a significant focus for us over recent years, and this recognition highlights the progress we have made together as a school community. Improving attendance is not something schools can achieve alone. It requires the combined efforts of students, families and staff working together to ensure our young people are in school and ready to learn each day.

Whilst this award provides an excellent opportunity to pause and celebrate how far we have come, we know there is still more work to do. We remain fully committed to further improving attendance because every lesson matters and every day in school counts.

Thank you to all our families for the support you have provided in helping us achieve this improvement.

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Food Technology masterclasses

We were also delighted to welcome Gia into Food Technology this week to support students and provide a series of practical focaccia masterclasses.

Students benefited greatly from the expertise, guidance and specialist knowledge shared during the sessions. We are always grateful to Gia for his support of the school, modelling of his expertise and sharing his passion for all things food.

What's coming up at SNHS next week?

Year 11 and Year 13 Mock Exam Launch

Next week we will be formally launching the Year 11 and Year 13 mock examination and PPE process through a series of assemblies.

These assemblies will outline expectations, key dates, revision strategies and the importance of making the most of the next few weeks. The mock examinations provide an important opportunity for students to practise examination techniques, identify strengths and areas for development, and prepare effectively for their final examinations. More information will be sent to families of Year 11 and 13 to confirm the details and how best to support your child during these important assessments.

Year 10 Relationships and Sex Education Drop Day

On Monday, our Year 10 students will take part in a dedicated Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Drop Day.

The programme has been carefully planned to support students' understanding of healthy relationships, personal safety, wellbeing and important life skills. We look forward to a productive and engaging day of learning and thank the Year 10 tutors for

Attendance Matters

As highlighted above, attendance continues to be one of our key priorities. We know that students who attend school regularly achieve better outcomes academically, develop stronger relationships and are more likely to feel connected to their school community.

Whilst it is pleasing to see the national recognition for our recent attendance improvements, maintaining momentum is crucial. Every day in school provides valuable learning opportunities that cannot always be easily replicated when students are absent.

Weekly Attendance Update

Year 7: 92.1%

A reduction of 1.5% compared to last week. We need to work together to get this figure back up next week. Perhaps some tired students from PGL but we must maximise every opportunity and get Year 7 back into the lead as the strongest Year group for attendance!

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Year 8: 95.3%

A very slight reduction on last week, but still a strong figure and above their overall attendance average for the year and the strongest Year Group this week. Well done Year 8!

Year 9: 92.2%

An excellent improvement of nearly 2% compared to last week and above their current yearly attendance figure. Fantastic effort from Year 9!

Year 10: 91.8%

A decrease of approximately 2% and lower than their yearly average of just over 94%. We need to see improvements next week please Year 10!

Year 11: 86.2%

A decrease of around 1%. As students prepare for their examinations, attendance remains absolutely critical, and we must work together to improve this figure.

A particular well done to Years 8 and 9, whose attendance this week exceeded their current yearly averages. Year 9 deserve special recognition for their significant improvement this week. In terms of the best attending Year Groups, Year 7, 8 and 10 are leading the way this year, all with attendance above 94% since September.

Let's keep building on these positive trends and continue working together to ensure every student is in school, every day, ready to learn.

As we head into the weekend, I would like to thank all of our students, staff and families for their continued support. Weeks such as this are very busy and provide many logistical challenges, but hearing and seeing the student's talk about their trip experiences makes it all worthwhile. I strongly believe these are the days of your schooling that you remember for many years to come, and at SNHS we work hard to ensure as many opportunities are provided as possible for this.

I hope everyone has a restful and enjoyable weekend, and I look forward to welcoming students back to school on Monday.

Warm regards

Mr M Motteram
Headteacher

