



Shilbottle Primary School Friday Flyer

5th December 2025

What a lovely week it has been here at Shilbottle! We began on Monday with our very first Open Morning. As this was the first time we've tried something like this, we weren't sure how many families would make it along but we were really pleased to welcome a steady stream of visitors throughout the morning. Many were families currently at Friendly Frogs, which is fantastic to see. Word is clearly spreading about the wonderful things happening here at Shilbottle and we are hopeful that more of our local families will continue their journey with us straight into Reception.

We'll keep working hard to showcase our school and later in the year we'll look to hold another Open Morning - or even an Open Evening - to make it easier for families who may need a time outside of the working day.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated a shoebox for our Christmas Shoebox Appeal. These gifts make a huge difference to children who may otherwise have very little to look forward to at Christmas. Your generosity will bring joy, comfort and a sparkle of magic to a child who truly deserves it. The boxes were dropped off on Friday and will soon be on their way - so thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for supporting this.

This week, as always, we also enjoyed our Hot Chocolate and Celebration Assembly. Well done to all of our winners - it's always such a pleasure to recognise kindness, hard work and moments of brilliance across the school.

We rounded off our Friday with something really special: our visit into the village to decorate the community Christmas tree. It was lovely to see the children taking such pride in decorating the tree and contributing to the heart of their community. For me, it perfectly reflects the spirit of Shilbottle - warm, welcoming and deeply connected.

As we head into the next couple of weeks, things are getting busier (as they always do at this time of year!). Please do take a look at the Christmas events letter sent out by the office so you can keep track of everything coming up. Next week we have our Key Stage 1 Nativity, our school Christmas lunch - which I'm very much looking forward to - and of course our Christmas Fair.

And finally, just a reminder that tomorrow (Saturday 6th) there's a lovely community event in the Village Hall. If you're able to pop along and support it, I know it will be very much appreciated.

Thank you everyone for your continued support - it really is what makes this school and community so special.

Mr Shaw



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Safeguarding

Shilbottle Primary School is committed to keeping all children safe. Our staff regularly participate in safeguarding training and are fully aware of how to keep our pupils safe and what signs to look out for. Our pupils know they can share any concerns and we have robust policies and procedures in place which underpin safeguarding. It is our paramount priority to keep all children healthy and safe.

Remember our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) in school are **Mr Phillips, Mrs Blackhall and Mr Shaw.**

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about IN-GAME CHAT

Video games are continuing to grow in popularity – including, of course, among children and young people – and the emergence of gaming communities has been accelerated by the inclusion of chat functionality across many different titles. While in-game chat isn't inherently a bad thing, it can create some concerns about online safety and the people that children might be interacting with.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHAT

There are a number of ways that gamers communicate with one another online. As the name would suggest, in-game chat happens within the game itself. There's also party chat: a group voice conversation that console users can have with anyone on the same platform. This tends to be more commonly used by players who already know each other. Finally, many gamers – especially on PC – will chat via a third-party app such as Discord.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Whether it's text- or voice-based, in-game chat is frequently open to all players to see. Many games default to making it an opt-in function, but some don't, meaning a child could start seeing messages within the game from people they're playing with, regardless of whether they know these individuals or not. While most strangers won't necessarily have ill intent, there are some who may behave inappropriately when chatting to a child – intentionally or otherwise.

DANGER OF GROOMING

It's been reported that some young gamers have encountered older players online who pretend to be a lower age to manipulate children, sending gifts in exchange for chatting and sending photos. Just as on any messaging platform, it's good to advise young people to avoid speaking to strangers, emphasising that they shouldn't accept gifts from anyone online that they don't know.

BULLYING AND ABUSE

While some in-game chat can turn toxic because of how a match plays out, others turn that way because of people who engage in trolling – in essence, behaving in an offensive and abusive way simply to cause pain or get a rise out of whoever they're talking to. These 'trolls' often lean on racial abuse, anti-LGBT sentiment and other hateful rhetoric; they normally feel most confident playing on younger, more impressionable gamers.

POTENTIAL FOR PRIVATE CHAT

If a player would like a re-match with a stranger after meeting them in the game, they can send a friend request, or use the party chat together in the future. For the most part, this is harmless – but it might lead to messages being exchanged in private. This could then escalate to the sharing of private information, and potentially attempts to manipulate or scam younger players.

COMPETITIVE ATMOSPHERE

Certain games are very competitive, and players can sometimes get upset if they feel a teammate is underperforming, an opponent won unfairly, or they're just a level lower. This can lead to unpleasant messages that stray away from playful 'trash talk' and wander into the territory of bullying. Some players have been known to get incredibly abusive in situations like this, and the impact of this on a young gamer's emotional wellbeing could be severe.

Advice for Parents & Educators

LOCK-DOWN IN-GAME CHAT

In-game chat isn't often disabled in the game's settings. This allows children to play without risk of contact from strangers – but it will need to be done in each individual game. Text chat appears in the corner of the screen in many titles, so it's normally easy to take a quick glance and see what's being said. With voice chat, explain to children what behaviour is inappropriate, so they can spot the strangers themselves.

REPORT POTENTIAL OFFENDERS

Most games offer a robust means of reporting other players, so you can flag an account as potentially harmful. This normally leads to the account not being matched with yours in the future and, if that person's conduct breaks any of the game's rules, they may be banned from playing entirely. This is done within the game itself, so again there's a slightly different process, but these tend to be designed for simplicity.

CONSIDER OTHER CHAT OPTIONS

If a child wants to play with people they know, consider using party chat or a third-party service like Discord. This allows everyone involved to chat in a private server and even enjoy each other's company while playing different games. It's also far more secure, as anyone looking to join will need to request and be granted access – normally by whoever is hosting the chat.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Make sure children understand the difference between being competitive and being abusive. Talk about what constitutes unusual or inappropriate behaviour from strangers online. Be clear that if anything ever concerns or worries them, they should tell a trusted adult as soon as possible. Empower children to identify the risks of in-game chat for themselves and reassure them they won't get in trouble for seeking help if anything goes wrong.



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Attendance

As parents and carers we want to share our attendance figures because it is you who can make the big difference. Our children are entitled to a full and balanced education and at Shilbottle we feel we provide one of the best experiences possible.

Current Whole School attendance is 93.8%. Our Whole School Target is 96%

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Mrs Blackhall	92.3%	92.5%
Mrs Kelly	89.7%	94.5%
Mr Phillips	90.7%	93.7%

Days of school add up to lost learning						
Days in school	190	186	180	175	171	170
Percentage attendance	100%	98%	95%	92%	90%	<90%
	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Caution	Cause for concern	Serious concern

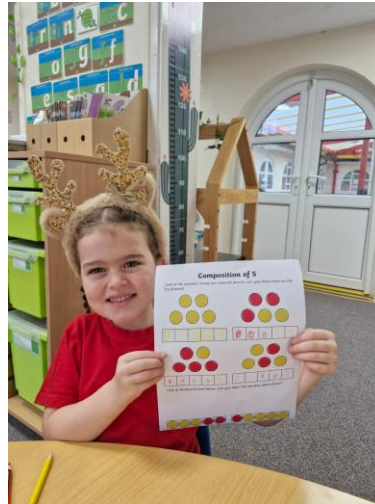
Absence Procedures if your child is ill, please keep them at home until they are well enough to return to school. Please notify us by phone call or email before 9.15am if your child is to be absent, and continue to inform us on a daily basis if they continue to be ill.

We have a continual focus on attendance and punctuality and this is of the utmost importance in your child's education. Please remember that our school gate closes at 8.40am as this is when our lessons begin. Anyone arriving after this time is classed as late and will miss valuable learning opportunities, such as phonics, which take place immediately after registration.



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Classroom updates - Bluebell Class

As we approach the busy weeks before Christmas, it is reassuring that our class continues to work hard in all of their lessons. Reception children have been consolidating their application of building number bonds to 5. We've had many lessons on this over the last week or so. This repetition has supported the children in their use of mathematical language such as 'part' and 'whole'.

Key Stage 1 children are soon to round off their topic on 'Shape'. Their final unit will be all about creating patterns with 2-D and 3-D shapes.

In English, Reception and Year 1 have shared the story 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea'. They drew their own tigers and wrote character descriptions to accompany their illustrations. Our Reception children are continuing to apply their knowledge of initial sounds, with some children beginning to build sounds into short words. Year 1 children wrote short sentences about the tiger.

In Year 2, the children have continued their exploration of the text 'Slug Life'. Many children were surprised to learn that slugs can be fascinating creatures - Did you know that the largest land slug can measure up to 30cm long? The class researched and wrote bullet point lists about how over thousands of years, snails have evolved into slugs. The children also completed careful observational sketches of slugs and labelled the anatomical parts using their own research.



In preparation for our visit to the village Christmas tree, Bluebell class worked collaboratively to create festive star decorations. The children began by stippling coloured dots onto star templates using cotton buds. Once dried, they applied sequins for additional Christmassy sparkle. The children are looking forward to hanging them on the tree.

We've been very grateful for the recent spells of milder weather, as it has made play in our outdoor provision areas



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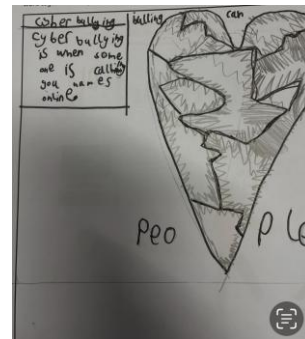
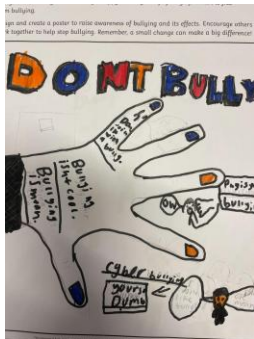
much more accessible. So much so, we were even able to bring our reading outdoors.

Wishing you all a peaceful weekend. **Mrs Blackhall**

Classroom updates - Poppy Class

The countdown to Christmas continues in Poppy class. The children have been busy, cheerful, and full of enthusiasm for their learning (and Christmas!!) In Maths, we have progressively worked our way through the multiplication facts and this week saw us practising the 7, 9, 11 and 12 times tables and their division facts. The children showed great determination tackling these trickier patterns.

In English, we continued our class story and explored letter writing, creating thoughtful letters in role as the grandfather writing to the Snowfather in the magical Icicle Palace. In PSHE, we spent time learning about bullying in its different forms — physical, verbal, social and cyber. We talked about how bullying is repeated, hurtful behaviour that shouldn't be ignored. We discussed what we can do if we see bullying happening, including telling a trusted adult, supporting the person being targeted, and showing kindness even in small ways. The children shared some excellent ideas about how to make our school a safe, caring place where everyone feels respected, reminding each other that we all have the right to feel safe and protected.



In Geography, we learned how settlements change over time and looked at how Cramlington grew from a small hamlet into a large town, as more services, transport links and opportunities have been introduced. We really enjoyed getting outside for PE, building on our invasion games skills and exploring basketball tactics. In Art, we have been making Christmas decorations for the village tree, and this week we visited the tree to hang them and sing carols for our community — a lovely festive event. With Christmas drawing ever closer, we've also enjoyed lots of carol concert rehearsals — the children's singing is sounding great! We are really looking forward to singing for you next week in the church.

Wishing you all a lovely, relaxing weekend.



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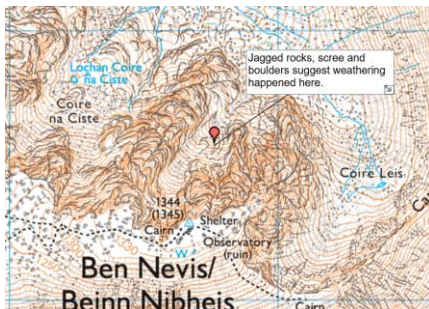
Mrs Kelly

Classroom Updates - Clover Class

There is definitely a festive mood in the air in Clover Class! The decorations are up, the first big KS2 Christmas Carol Concert has taken place, and the stage has appeared in the hall. This has led to much speculation about the Reception and KS1 Nativity—we are all dying to know who is playing Mary and Joseph this year! Even Mr. Phillips is getting into the spirit. After being firmly told by Gracie that he "**does not have the power to cancel Christmas,**" he has actually been heard humming festive tunes around the classroom!



With all the excitement, you might think we would be starting to relax. But NO! Mr. Phillips decided this was the perfect week to teach us Long Division. Nothing says "festive joy" quite like remainders!



However, we did enjoy a lovely treat in English. We watched a heart-warming video about a Robin travelling home for a Christmas mince pie. We used this story to learn a very sophisticated literary technique called **Pathetic Fallacy**. This is when writers use the weather to show different emotions and feelings—Mr. Phillips says all the great writers use it ... and now, so do we!

We wrapped up our Geography topic—which has been a class favourite this half term—by looking at digital maps to find clues about the landscape. We used our knowledge to spot:

- **V-shaped valleys** and rock weathering on **Ben Nevis**.
- **Erosion** at **Old Harry's Rocks in Dorset**.
- **Meanders** along the **River Severn**.



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Our last swimming session of the school year was a "Play Day," and it was officially **BRILLIANT!** And, we also had four of our readers reach 40 Bookworm points - it just goes to show it is definitely worth logging your reading every day. Well done girls.

Finally, we have been busy creating decorations for the village Christmas Tree. On Friday afternoon, we will walk down to place them on the tree and sing a couple of Christmas Carols. It is definitely starting to feel a lot like Christmas, and we can't wait!

Have a lovely weekend

Mr Phillips

Dates for your Diary

Events could be subject to change and will be communicated if required





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Date	Time	
Wednesday 3rd September	12:20	Year 5/6 swimming lesson, last session Tuesday 3rd December
Friday 14th November	All day	Children in Need-non school uniform day wear spots (£1:00 donation)
Monday 1st December	9:00-10:30	Shilbottle Primary's Open Morning
Wednesday 3rd December	Deadline date	Deadline date for the Shoe box appeal.
Friday 5th December	2:00-2.30	Children to decorate the village Christmas Tree & sing carols (opposite village shops)
Saturday 6th December	17.30-19.30	Magical Christmas Evening with Jonny Diggins (see flyer below)
Tuesday 9th December	9:30-10:30	Rehearsal Nativity Performance for Parents with younger siblings
Tuesday 9th December	1.15-2.15	Nativity Performance (Reception, Year 1 & 2) Parent/Carers/Grandparents only
Wednesday 10th December	12 noon	School Christmas Lunch & Christmas Jumper Day
Thursday 11th December	5:30-6:30	Carol Service at St James Church
Tuesday 16th December	2:00-3:00	Reception/Y1 & Y2 Christmas Party
Wednesday 17th December	9.30-11.30	Alnwick Playhouse (whole School visit) Christmas Panto
Wednesday 17th December	2:00-3:00	Year 3 & Year 4 Christmas Party
Thursday 18th December	2:00-3:00	Year 5 & Year 6 Christmas Party
Friday 19th December	1:00pm	School shuts at 1pm
Monday 5th January 2026	8:40	School will resume after Christmas holidays



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Happy Birthday to all those celebrating this week

Rosalee - Clover Class



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Shilbottle Primary Parents Association
Presents:

A Magical Christmas
Evening with
Saxophonist

Tonny Diggins

Noel

MUSIC.FOOD.TREATS

Locally made gifts for sale

Mulled wine and Mince pies

If you would like an opportunity to showcase your
products it's £10 per stall. Enquire at :
katewilliams00@hotmail.com

Shilbottle Community Hall NE66 2XH

Entry: voluntary contribution to Shilbottle Primary

Saturday 6th December
17:30-19:30