



Shilbottle Primary School

Friday Flyer

24th October 2025

Well, we've made it to the end of a busy half term - and what a brilliant eight weeks it's been! A huge well done to all of our children for their fantastic hard work, enthusiasm and smiles every single day. You've achieved so much already this term and we couldn't be prouder.

A massive thank you also goes to our wonderful staff team for their tireless efforts, creativity and commitment in providing such an engaging and inspiring education for our pupils. Every day they go above and beyond and it really shows.

This week has been packed with highlights! Our newly formed PTA hosted a spooktacular Halloween Disco on Wednesday evening - what a night! It was brilliant to see so many children in amazing costumes, enjoying themselves on the dance floor and playing games. A big thank you to the PTA for all their hard work in putting the event together. We're really looking forward to more exciting events throughout the year, so please do keep supporting and getting involved as every bit of help makes a huge difference to our school.

On Thursday, we came together as a school community for our Harvest Festival at St James's Church. It was such a lovely celebration, reminding us all of the importance of gratitude and helping those who may be less fortunate. The generosity shown through donations to the food bank was truly heart-warming so thank you for contributing. The children sang beautifully and performed with real confidence, especially our younger pupils who were taking to the stage for the very first time!

Another special moment this week was our farewell assembly to Mr Dodd. The legendary caretaker, has walked the school corridors one last time after 12.5 years of service to Shilbottle. I have not known Peter too long but I know he will be massively missed by everyone for his caring and fun nature. We wish him a happy retirement, although we are confident he won't be able to sit still for very long!

We rounded off the week with our Celebration Assembly and our much-loved hot chocolate treat, recognising all the incredible effort, kindness and achievement shown this half term.

So, as we head into a well-deserved break, I want to say a heartfelt thank you once again to everyone in our Shilbottle family - pupils, parents, carers and staff - for making me feel so welcome and for such a successful start to the year. Have a wonderful half term, relax, recharge and we'll see you all back in school on Tuesday 4th November (remember Monday 3rd is a Teacher Training Day).

Enjoy your week off — you've earned it!

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 MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING APPS

When looking at options for supporting a child's mental health, the sheer volume can be overwhelming. There are many wellbeing apps available, but unfortunately not all are trustworthy. It's important to evaluate which resources are suitable, reliable and effective. This guide lets you know what to consider before installing such an app, to determine just how useful it's going to be.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- QUALITY & RELIABILITY**
Mental health apps can be a useful starting point when looking for wellbeing advice and strategies and can be a useful addition to the in-person services available. However, they aren't a substitute. Information on the quality of some of these apps is scarce. They may look cute and child-friendly, but how they been designed by a mental health professional? For example, do they have research to back up their content?
- PLACE RESPONSIBILITY ON CHILDREN**
Some apps add the words 'child' or 'children' to their title or add cartoon icons to make them more appealing to young people. When signing up for some of these apps, some will speak to the parent directly, saying something along the lines of "Your child is going to go, let them take it from here". It's important to remain involved in the child's mental health journey, so regular check-ins are recommended.
- DISREGARDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT**
Young people who feel anxious and have trouble sleeping may download a mindfulness app to help. While this is a good strategy initially, it's not addressing the root of the problem. A child could simply try managing these symptoms themselves (as opposed to speaking out and seeking professional help), which could potentially worsen their anxiety in the long run.
- LACK OF PERSONALISATION**
Mental health or wellbeing apps are useful tools for the short term, teaching users several helpful habits to manage their condition – such as keeping an illness diary, improving nutrition and practicing mindfulness exercises. As every person's unique – and children especially will grow and develop in different ways – these apps struggle to tailor them selves to users' individual needs. For example, many apps don't distinguish between the ages of users and can offer extremely generic advice.
- DATA SECURITY**
As with any other app – not just those for mental health and wellbeing – it's wise to check out the privacy policy before downloading it. Some of these applications may share data with third parties for numerous reasons (even be targeted advertising), and if a user is sharing personal and sensitive information within the app, they probably don't want it ending up elsewhere without their consent.
- IN-APP PURCHASES**
Many apps will provide their most basic features for free but will require you to pay for other aspects – such as a more tailored experience or access to additional resources. This could be a one-off fee or a regular subscription. Consider whether this is actually required, is it something the child, or could they receive the same support from a medical professional?

Advice for Parents & Educators

- CHECK THE CREDIBILITY OF THE APP**
Before you download a mental health and wellbeing app, investigate the developer. Have they consulted with qualified mental health professionals to create their resources? After checking whether the app is affiliated with any government or mental health organisations, as these are solid indicators of legitimacy. Review each app for a useful signpost to the app's quality. There are many good apps out there, but there are just as many that miss the mark.
- SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT**
Trusted mental health and wellbeing apps designed by qualified, reputable organisations can be used alongside the personalised advice and support of fully trained professionals. These apps should never be considered a substitute for counselling or other tailored medical help. If you have real concerns about a child's mental wellbeing, you should seek appropriate advice from a suitable source, such as their GP – or Childline, who can be contacted by calling 0800 1111.
- READ THE PRIVACY POLICY**
Look into the app's terms of service – especially its privacy policy – to see if you can find out how the app does it with the child who is considering using the app, to ensure they know what data will be collected and how exactly it will be used. Use all of this information to make an informed decision on whether or not to download that particular app.
- ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION**
Mental health and wellbeing apps can be useful for writing down feelings, tracking your own health and other such activities. These can help if the problem is short-term and temporary – such as a child getting stressed about an upcoming exam – as if you're not ready for professional support. Nonetheless, it is important that children don't solely rely on the app and have a safe space to talk about their feelings and experiences in the real world.



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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.

Our attendance is worryingly low given the fact we are only 4 weeks into the new academic year and the only people who can help stop this are our parents and carers. Our staff go out of their way to make school enjoyable so to give our children the best possible opportunity we need them here every single day.

Current Whole School attendance is 93.4%. Our Whole School Target is 96%

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Mrs Blackhall	95.2%	92.0%
Mrs Kelly	96.6%	93.6%
Mr Phillips	90.6%	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 8.45am as this is when our lessons begin. Anyone arriving after this time is classed as late and will miss valuable learning opportunities which take place immediately after registration, such as phonics.



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Classroom updates - Bluebell Class

Our last week of Autumn 1 has been full and varied. We started our week by celebrating and learning about Diwali. Working together, Bluebell class designed their own Mendhi hand decorations. Since Diwali is marked by a festival of lights, our reception children also sculpted their own Diya lamps from salt dough and decorated them with paint.



Our Key Stage 1 children have continued to compose written work inspired by the book, 'Where the Wild Things Are'. We also tried some drama based on a section of the story where the main character, Max, leads The Wild Things on a "wild rumpus". Based on their performance, I believe the wild things might actually live in our Key Stage 1 classroom!



Midweek was full of excitement for the upcoming halloween disco. The children thoroughly enjoyed it and the costumes were fantastic. Thank you to our new PTA who did a brilliant job of putting together a fun-filled night for the children. They were still talking fondly about it the following day.

demonstrated calm and respectful conduct to help him feel safe.

Thank you parents for your support with your children's learning this half term. They have made an excellent start to this academic year. I'm already looking forward to seeing where our learning journey takes us next half term. In the meantime, I hope you all have a safe and happy Autumn break.

Mrs Blackhall

Welcome to Shilbottle Primary Arthur! On Thursday, Arthur made his first appearance in school and our children were absolutely delighted to meet him. They listened carefully to Mr Shaw's instructions on how to behave around him and





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Classroom updates - Poppy Class

Our last week before half term has been a busy and enjoyable one in Poppy Class. In Maths, we've been building our confidence with subtraction, building up to exchanging numbers in the thousands. This week in English, our creativity truly shone as we wrote our own versions of *The King Who Banned the Dark*, each with a unique and imaginative twist. We began by exploring the key themes and characters from the original story, then used these as inspiration to write our own versions.

In Geography, we explored how Britain has changed over time through immigration and the positive contributions this has made to our society. French lessons focused on classroom rules and routines, helping us practise useful everyday phrases. PE was a real highlight, especially our hockey session with a special guest teacher – a big thank you to Ami (Dougie's mum), an experienced hockey player, for leading such a fantastic lesson!

In Music, we rehearsed our Harvest songs at the church on Tuesday and performed beautifully at our Harvest Festival on Thursday – well done to everyone and thank you so much for attending.

As promised, we enjoyed watching *The Water Horse* after finishing the book last week. We also said a big thank you and goodbye to Owen from NUFC – we've had a brilliant time working with him this term.

Have a wonderful half term holiday! Enjoy your time off and I look forward to seeing you all back next half-term, rested and ready to learn!



Mrs Kelly



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Classroom Updates - Clover Class

Clover Class, or not Clover Class — that is the question!

Well, we've definitely answered that one... we love Clover Class and we love coming to school!



This week, we swapped our Anglo-Saxon helmets for something a little more dramatic — a trip to fair Verona! We've been exploring Romeo and Juliet and the mysterious rhythm of iambic pentameter (try saying that three times quickly!). It sounds fancy, but really it's just a pattern of ten beats — da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM. To help us feel the rhythm, we galloped around the playground pretending to be horses while learning the prologue to Romeo and Juliet. Mr Phillips said it was poetry in motion... we just thought it was hilarious!

On Wednesday, things took a spooky turn... our Halloween Disco! From creepy costumes to scary dance moves, it was definitely a SPOOK-tacular night. Huge thanks to everyone who helped organise it — we had a fang-tastic time!

We've also been feeling thankful this week as we celebrated our Harvest Festival at St James' Church. It was wonderful to share our songs and readings with parents and the community.

Back in the classroom, our maths lessons have been filled with singing, clapping and a lot of "aha!" moments. Our latest hit single, "Factor pairs, factor pairs, we love doing factor pairs!" is topping the Clover Class charts! We've also been exploring the rules of divisibility — tricky at first, but fascinating once you get the hang of it. (Did you know that if a number is divisible by both 3 and 4, it's also divisible by 12? Mind blown!)



As we head into half-term, we've been reflecting on everything we've achieved — from parachute experiments and Anglo-Saxon history, to French conversations, artistic adventures, and more maths than we ever thought possible. We even discovered that the Anglo-Saxons left their mark on Northumberland, with place names like Alnwick, Bamburgh, Ellingham and of course... Shilbottle!

So yes — Clover Class, we're loving every minute. We're still chasing that magical 100% attendance, but one thing's for sure — we can't wait to see what exciting adventures the next half-term brings!

Mr Phillips



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Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
Wednesday 3rd September	12:20	Year 5/6 swimming lesson, last session Wednesday 10th December
Monday 10th November	All day	Odd Sock day
Friday 14th November	All day	Children in Need-non school uniform day wear spots (£1:00 donation)
Saturday 6th December	17.30-19.30	Magical Christmas Evening with Jonny Diggins (see flyer below)
Thursday 11th December	5:30-6:30	Carol Service at St James Church
Wednesday 17th December	9.30-11.30	Alnwick Playhouse Christmas Panto



**Happy Birthday to all those celebrating
this week
Sienna**



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Shilbottle Primary Parents Association
Presents:

A Magical Christmas
Evening with
Saxophonist

Tonny Diggens

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