



Shilbottle Primary School

Friday Flyer

3rd October 2025

It has been another busy and exciting week here at Shilbottle Primary and we are so proud of how classrooms have been full of energy, curiosity and enthusiasm and it's lovely to see the children showing such pride in their learning and in our school community.

Next week we are looking forward to welcoming families into school for our Parents' Evenings on Monday and Tuesday after school. These are such an important opportunity to sit down with your child's teacher, share how they have settled into their new class and talk about the progress they are making and the next steps in their learning journey. If you haven't yet booked an appointment, please do so as soon as possible.

I want to take a moment to thank everyone for the positive way you have embraced our new PE uniform days. The children have looked so smart but also relaxed and ready for their sporting afternoons and it has been wonderful to see them approach PE with confidence and enthusiasm. Having a consistent approach has really helped create a sense of pride and belonging and we are delighted with how well it has started.

This half-term has also seen the return of music lessons for all our pupils on Monday afternoons. Our specialist music teacher has already been working with the children to develop their skills and enjoyment of music and it has been fantastic to see every class so engaged. We know that music is such a powerful subject for building creativity and confidence and we are thrilled that every child gets this opportunity each week.

We would also like to raise a really important reminder about attendance. Every day in school counts. Regular attendance makes a huge difference not only to your child's progress in reading, writing and maths, but also to their friendships, confidence and sense of routine. We know that sometimes absence cannot be avoided but our expectation is that all children attend school every day unless they are unwell. Improving attendance is a team effort - we need the support of every family to make sure our children get the very best from their education. Thank you for working with us on this.

Our week has been wrapped up with the Celebration Assembly and Hot Chocolate treat. Another great range of worthy winners this week, it is always a pleasure to recognise the hard work that is going on on a weekly basis.

As always, thank you for your continued support. It makes such a difference to know we are working in partnership with our families to give the children at Shilbottle the very best start in life. We look forward to seeing you next week at Parents' Evening. Have a great weekend!

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 TECHNOLOGY ATTACHMENT

In today's digital age, children are increasingly forming emotional and habitual attachments to their devices. With 96% regularly accessing the internet and nearly half engaging in live streaming or content sharing, their online presence is greater than ever. This guide explores the phenomenon of technology attachment in young people and offers expert advice on fostering healthier digital habits.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

WIRED FOR REWARD

Children's brains are particularly sensitive to reward-based stimulation, and some digital platforms, especially those offering quick-hit content like short-form videos, are designed to exploit this. The instant gratification of likes, comments, and rapid scene changes triggers dopamine releases, making these interactions highly addictive. Over time, this may contribute to changes in attention patterns and a reduced inclination towards activities that involve prolonged focus or delayed gratification, such as reading, problem-solving, or creative play.

NIGHT-TIME TECH HABITS

Screen use late into the evening can disrupt natural sleep patterns by suppressing melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep. Children engaging with stimulating content may experience delayed bedtimes, lower sleep quality, and increased fatigue during the day. Additionally, fear of missing out (FOMO) or online interactions can cause anxiety and resistance to logging off, creating a cycle of late-night engagement and tired mornings.

SHAPED BY SCREENS

For many children, digital spaces have become a key arena for identity exploration and expression. Social media encourages them to curate their image carefully, with likes, comments, and shares serving as social validation. This environment can tie self-esteem to online feedback, making children vulnerable to comparison, self-doubt, and pressure to present a perfect version of themselves, even when it doesn't reflect reality.

DIGITAL WORLD DANGERS

The internet can expose children to unfiltered content, some of which may be inappropriate, misleading, or harmful. Cyberbullying, exposure to idealised lifestyles, and online predators are all risks children face, often without fully understanding the consequences. Misinformation can shape distorted worldviews, while constant comparison to others can erode self-confidence. Without guidance, children may internalise these digital dangers, impacting their emotional and mental health.

DIGITAL DEPENDENCY BUILDS

Devices often become digital comfort blankets. In moments of boredom, anxiety, or loneliness, children may instinctively reach for screens to self-soothe. This reliance on digital distraction limits their ability to develop healthy coping mechanisms, such as mindfulness, conversation or physical activity. As the habit builds, their dependency may displace real-world experiences and emotional resilience.

FRIENDSHIPS & FILTERS

Technology transforms how young people socialise, often replacing face-to-face interaction with text-based or image-based communication. While messaging apps and social media enable connection, they may also limit emotional expression and the development of essential interpersonal skills, such as tone recognition, empathy, and reading body language. As a result, some children may become less confident with exchanges in person and more reliant on digital personas to navigate friendships.

Advice for Parents & Educators

READ THE ROOM

Pay attention to behavioural changes that may signal unhealthy tech attachment. This includes mood swings, increased secrecy about online activity, withdrawal from family time or hobbies, and visible distress when separated from devices. These cues can indicate deeper emotional reliance or even exposure to distressing content. Early recognition allows for proactive support and meaningful conversation.

DON'T WAIT, REACH OUT EARLY

If a child's relationship with technology starts affecting their emotional wellbeing, school performance, or social connections, don't hesitate to seek help. Open up discussions with teachers, pastoral staff, or digital wellbeing professionals. Early intervention is key, and a supportive network can provide tools, resources, and reassurance for both children and adults navigating this evolving digital landscape.

SHAPE DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

Create a balanced digital environment with clear guidelines on when and how devices can be used. This includes screen-free zones (e.g. bedrooms, dining tables), app restrictions, and time limits. More importantly, involve children in these decisions and explain the reasoning behind them, even reflecting upon your own digital use so they can see it's something we all have to manage. Turning boundaries into a dialogue, not just directives, helps build trust and encourages self-regulation.

SET THE STANDARD

Children often model the behaviour they see. When adults demonstrate healthy digital habits, such as prioritising face-to-face conversation, balancing screen time with other activities, and using devices with purpose, children are more likely to follow suit. Share your own positive uses of technology and invite children to do the same. This collaborative approach helps demystify tech use and encourages responsible engagement.



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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 92.0%. Our Whole School Target is 96%

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Mrs Blackhall	85.3%	92.4%
Mrs Kelly	85.2%	92.1%
Mr Phillips	89.6%	92.5%

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 Reception children have had a busy week of learning new letter sounds. The children are now strongly into a routine of bringing in their 'Sound Folders' and reading books every day and are so proud and excited to tell us that they have been reading and practising letter formation at home. Thank you parents for your ongoing support with your children's learning at home. It really does make a difference to their progress and engagement.

In maths, Reception children have just started a new unit on building patterns. The children have made up their own dance moves to match musical patterns and yesterday, they used physical objects to build and continue repeating patterns.



In Key Stage 1, our science lessons about the human body have progressed onto learning about the five senses. On Wednesday, the children took part in a taste test which involved sampling 'sweet', 'salty', 'bitter', 'sour' and 'savory' flavours. I was proud of our children for all taking part, especially as one of our food samples was a wedge of lemon! Well done for embracing different flavours everyone.



Mrs Blackhall



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Classroom updates - Poppy Class

Year 3 and 4 have had another busy and exciting week packed with learning and lively discussions!

In Maths, we've been exploring the challenge of Roman numerals and have now moved on to addition and subtraction, building on our place value knowledge. The children have also continued practising their speedy multiplication facts each day – it's great to see their confidence growing!

In English, we've continued reading *The King Who Banned the Dark* and we have been developing our speaking and listening skills through debates and balanced arguments – including the topic: *Should school uniform be banned?* The children shared thoughtful and well-reasoned opinions on both sides. We then moved on to a discussion as to whether the ban on the dark should be lifted in the story.

In Science, we've continued to learn all about the human skeleton, and this week we extended our understanding by exploring animal skeletons and comparing them to our own. We have also looked at the function of joints and muscles and how they help us move.

Our PSHE lessons have focused on jobs and careers, discussing how gender should never limit our ambitions or opportunities. These sessions have led to some really inspiring and mature conversations. Lots of the children already have an idea of the career path they wish to take in the future.

In PE, the children have loved their session with Owen from NUFC. The weather restricted us from continuing our hockey practice so we played games in the hall instead.

We have had a lot of coughs and colds in class this week. Hopefully the germs are on their way out.

Wishing you all a lovely, restful weekend,

Mrs Kelly



1	I	6	VI	10	X
2	II	7	VII	50	L
3	III	8	VIII	100	C
4	IV	9	IX	500	D
5	V	10	X	1000	M



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Classroom updates - Clover Class

Bonjour et bienvenue to Clover Class' weekly update for the very popular Friday Flyer!

This week has been another busy and exciting one in Clover. We've been throwing ourselves into Tony Bradman's *Anglo-Saxon Boy* — and by "throwing ourselves in," we mean quite literally. Acting out scenes, freeze-framing dramatic moments, and stepping into the characters' shoes has been our speciality. It turns out that pretending to be an Anglo-Saxon warrior is far more fun than just reading about one! We're only at Chapter 4, but already we're hooked.

In maths, we've been working hard on developing our mental strategies. At first, many of us thought the only way to solve problems was to write everything down — but the penny is starting to drop: sometimes your brain really can do the heavy lifting! We're discovering that mental maths can be quicker, more flexible, and (dare we say) more satisfying.

Afternoons in Clover are never dull. They're packed with fun, laughter, serious debate, and, every now and then, a tangent or

two (usually started by Mr Phillips... apparently he likes to talk). We've been learning more about the Anglo-Saxons and how they shaped England — or should we say "Land of the Angles" — and especially how they left their mark on Northumberland.

PSHE this week led to some lively debates about stereotypes. Mr Phillips and Mr Shaw had us thinking carefully, and the boys learned one very important lesson: it's never a good idea to upset the girls! Thankfully, we ended the lesson as friends, proving that Clover Class knows how to disagree, debate, and then put things right.

Art continues to be a firm favourite, but this week Mrs Slack decided to test our brains in French. Let's just say some of us need to practise more than "bonjour" and "au revoir"...

All in all, it's been a brilliant week in Clover Class. We've worked hard, laughed lots, and learned even more. And the best bit? We can't wait to see what adventures next week 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 17th December
Monday 6th October	3:00-5.30	Parents Evening
Tuesday 7th October	3:00-5:30	Parents Evening
Wednesday 22nd October	5:00-6.30	Halloween Party
Thursday 23rd October	1:15-3:00	Harvest Festival at St James Church
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**



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