



Shilbottle Primary School

Friday Flyer

9th January 2026

Headteachers Update

Happy New Year to you all! We hope you had a fantastic holiday and that Santa was kind to both the children and the adults alike.

It is hard to believe that we are already on Friday – this week has flown by! Firstly, thank you very much for your patience and understanding when we had to close the school site on Monday. We only ever close as a last resort but I am quickly learning that Shilbottle has its very own micro-climate which can feel rather arctic at times. Taking everything into consideration, we felt this was the safest option for the children, for you as parents and for our staff rather than trying to force travel in difficult conditions.



When we reopened on Tuesday, it was fantastic to see the children out enjoying the snow – laughing, smiling and building huge snowmen (some of which bore a remarkable resemblance to Mr Phillips!). Seeing the children having such fun always brings a huge smile to my face.

The rest of the week has been equally positive. The children have

returned after the Christmas break with a wonderful attitude – ready to learn, keen to get going again and as always, never ceasing to amaze us. They have been absolutely brilliant and we are incredibly proud of them – and we know you will be too.



We have a busy term ahead with lots of exciting things planned. We are introducing some new areas of learning and the staff have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to plan lessons that will be engaging and enjoyable for all of the children. There will also be various events coming up this term and we will, of course, keep you updated as these are confirmed.

We have not held a Celebration Assembly or Hot Chocolate this week. These will restart next Friday to give the children a little time to settle fully back into routines.

We hope you all have a lovely weekend and we look forward to seeing everyone on Monday.

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**.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

STAYING SAFE AROUND WATER

Enjoying time in, on, and around water plays a vital role in a young person's overall development, offering a healthy and exhilarating way to have fun. This guide outlines essential safety advice, based on the Royal Life Saving Society UK's Water Safety Code, to help ensure children can enjoy swimming and similar activities safely and responsibly.

- 1 STICK TO LIFEGUARDED AREAS**
It's never safe to enter unsupervised bodies of water, especially alone. Instead, it's crucial to stick to lifeguarded areas, where lifeguards are trained to respond swiftly in emergencies and provide first aid when needed.
- 2 LEARN SIGNS AND FLAGS**
When going to a new environment, it's important to read the local signs and make children aware of safety signage before entering the water. While staying at the seaside, make sure children are always supervised by an adult and that they know what different beach flags mean, as they're invaluable of where and when they can enter the sea.
- 3 STOP AND THINK**
Young people should be cautious before entering water, as it's difficult to know what's underneath. That's why the Water Safety Code (and encourage children to ask themselves questions such as, 'Is the water too deep or too shallow? Are there currents, ripples, or underwater objects?') Make sure children know never to enter water from a height, as what looks could cause serious injuries.
- 4 CONSIDER WATER TEMPERATURE**
Even on hot days, water can be deceptively cold. These strikes when young people experience cold water shock. Never let children enter water quickly; instead, ensure that they enter slowly and steadily to allow their body to adjust to the temperature or seek shade if needed.
- 5 INFLATABLE SAFETY**
Although inflatables may seem like a fun idea when visiting locations like the beach, they can float further and turn them into life-threatening situations. It's vital to use lifebuoys and life jackets in spaces like appropriately trained swimming pools, where they're used in more controlled and supervised environments.
- 6 SUPERVISION IS KEY**
For young children, and particularly those under the age of five, it's important for adults to be supervising them outside of the pool at all times. It's essential for parents and educators to understand that young children can drown quickly and silently; therefore, anyone supervising them must instantly notice when a child gets into difficulty.
- 7 DON'T GO TOO FAR**
When swimming, especially in open water, it's best to teach children to stay within a safe distance. Depending on the water depth, swimming further up to a shallower depth, and in the case of visiting the beach, swim parallel to shorelines, this will allow a child to stay in control and get out of the water easily.
- 8 KEEP POOLS AND TUBS DRAINED**
For parents of young children, a simple way to protect them at home is to keep indoor spaces and bathtubs dry after playing in water. This means removing any floating pools after use and turning them over, returning toys to hot tubs and taking toys out of bathtubs, so all water can be fully drained from the tub.
- 9 FLOAT AND CALL 999**
If a child gets into difficulty in the water, they should try to float on their back, stay calm, and call for help. If a young person sees someone in trouble, they should not go in after them immediately, then shout to measure their friend, encouraging them to float on their back, and letting them know that help is on the way. Children should never enter the water to attempt a rescue or retrieve belongings.
- 10 TEACH WATER SAFETY**
Beyond swimming lessons, children should be educated in schools and by the Royal Life Saving Society UK's website, [Water Smart to Life](#), which offers free lesson plans and resources on how to be safe on, near and around water by following the Water Safety Code.



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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 94.2%. Our Whole School Target is 96%

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Mrs Blackhall	93.8%	92.7%
Mrs Kelly	99.5%	95.5%
Mr Phillips	100%	94.5%

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 8.40am 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

It has been a positive start to the Spring term in our classroom. Although Monday's snow day briefly disrupted our routine, the children returned on Tuesday full of enthusiasm and to settle back into learning. This week, new reading books have been distributed across the class. Reception children have also received Ditty Sheets, which can be found in their Sound Folders, while Key Stage 1 pupils have been given their homework books containing updated spellings and maths activities.

In English, Key Stage 1 children have begun their first unit of the Spring term using the text *Lost and Found* by Oliver Jeffers. The story has been very well received, and pupils have been exploring the key features of instructional writing. Over the coming week, they will use these skills to plan their own set of instructions, titled *How to Pack a Suitcase for a Trip to Antarctica*.

Reception children have also enjoyed sharing *Lost and Found* during their daily Drawing Club



sessions. They produced some wonderful penguin drawings and used plasticine to sculpt their own models. As part of this work, they discussed which items of clothing or accessories might be needed in the South Pole. Ideas ranged from warm hats and bags to even a few

handbags! The children then described their creations in writing. Well done Reception!

In maths, Key Stage 1 children have started their new topic, *Addition and Subtraction to 100*. This week, they have used Base 10 resources to represent calculations involving adding and subtracting ones. Reception children have been revisiting and securing their understanding of numbers 0–5 through practical activities and discussion.

Elsewhere in the curriculum, we have begun our new history topic by learning about the Wright Brothers and their first successful flight. In science, the children have been introduced to our Chemistry topic on materials, which we will continue to explore over the coming weeks.



Overall, it has been a very positive first week back. The children have made a productive start to their new topics and have shown a real willingness to learn. Welcome back everyone, and well done on completing a super first week of the Spring term



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Mrs Blackhall

Classroom updates - Poppy Class

Welcome back and a very Happy New Year! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas break. Despite our first day back being disrupted by snow, we have still had a very busy and productive first week of the new spring term in Poppy Class.

In Maths, we have begun our new unit on multiplication, focusing on multiplying larger numbers and developing efficient strategies to support confident problem-solving. In English, we finished our class novel *Pugs of the Frozen North* and have now started reading *Beowulf* by Michael Morpurgo. This introduces the children to a well-known traditional story, helping them explore ideas such as bravery, friendship and doing the right thing, while also developing their understanding of myths and legends. Our new History topic on the Vikings has already sparked lots of interest. We have learned about where the Vikings came from and studied their first recorded raid on Holy Island of Lindisfarne. The children explored why the Vikings invaded, considering factors such as wealth, land, and resources.



In French, we have been learning the days of the week and the months of the year, focusing on accurate pronunciation and recall. Wednesday saw us head to the swimming pool for the first time this term. The children were extremely well organised and thoroughly enjoyed their session. From next week, this will be followed by cricket coaching with Tom Vickers, meaning Wednesdays will become a very energetic and active afternoon! In Science, we have started our topic on rocks and soils. The children enjoyed identifying, handling, and comparing different types of rocks, learning about their properties and how they are formed. In RE, we have begun our new topic on Hinduism. This week, we learned about Hindu gods, exploring the idea that Hindus believe in one supreme being who can be represented in different forms, such as Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. In Computing, we have been learning about how digital devices work, including understanding basic components and how information is processed. It has been a very busy and positive first week back, and we are looking forward to an exciting term ahead.

Have a lovely weekend,



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Mrs Kelly

Classroom Updates - Clover Class



Well, what a start to the new year! Although it is officially the start of the Spring term, it certainly felt very wintery on our first day back. In fact, it snowed so much that we had to delay our start and enjoy a Snow Day instead! However, the weather didn't stop our hardy bookworms: Amelie did some "Extreme Reading" on her snowy garden swing (Brrr!) and Gracie took the sensible option, wrapping up warm in bed to enjoy her book. Well done to both of you! You have earned your Bookworm Points and are a step closer to being entered in the BIG prize draw.



On Tuesday, school started for real, and Clover Class didn't mess around! We dove straight into the vocabulary of William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. We went hunting for synonyms and phrases to describe the themes of this famous play: Love, Families, Conflict, and War. The children have really impressed us with their vocabulary, inference, and predictions, but most of all with their ability to explain their ideas about these "star-cross'd lovers."



In Maths, we jumped straight into Fractions. We started with "concrete" work using cubes to visualize the numbers, before moving on to pictorial and abstract word problems. Using their ever-growing knowledge of multiplication facts, everyone made a great start to what is often a very tricky subject—especially just after a Christmas holiday!

Our afternoons have been just as busy!

History: We began investigating the world of the Tudors and Stuarts, looking at how Henry VIII changed the church and the Monarchy of Britain. The children's enthusiasm makes me so excited to see where they take their learning this term. **Art:** Mrs. Slack is back! We kicked off our new topic on Portraits by learning specifically how to draw realistic eyes and in French we explored the language of family names. **Science:** We recalled our knowledge on the properties of materials so we are ready to conduct investigations over the coming weeks.

We wish you all a very Happy New Year! We hope you have a great 2026—Clover Class has certainly made a fantastic start!



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Mr Phillips

Dates for your Diary

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

Date	Time	
7/1/2026-11/2/2026		Year 3 & 4 Swimming (every Wednesday)
Friday 13th February 2026	15:20	School closes for the holidays



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