



# Shillbottle Primary School

# Friday Flyer

**16th January 2026**

## **Headteachers Update**

What a positive end to another week at Shillbottle Primary School. Although it has been a relatively calm one on the events calendar, what has really stood out is the way the children have approached their learning with such enthusiasm and maturity. Across the school, we are seeing high levels of engagement, excellent behaviour and a genuine determination to do their very best, which is exactly the learning culture we are so proud of.

In Monday's assembly we revisited the life and legacy of Dr Martin Luther King Jr, whose birthday is on 15th January. We reflected on how he stood up for fairness and equality at a time when society was not always kind or just, particularly in relation to race. This linked closely to our ongoing work around the protected characteristics and our core value of respect. The children shared some thoughtful ideas about how everyone deserves to be treated equally, regardless of their background and it was lovely to see how well these messages are being understood and lived out in our school community.

This week we are also continuing to place a focus on attendance. We know that winter illnesses have had an impact but also unauthorised holidays, so it is really important that we all work together to ensure children are in school as much as possible. The difference between 100% attendance and 95% attendance may seem small but the long-term impact on achievement can be significant, with higher attendance linked to stronger SATs, GCSE outcomes and future life chances. Thank you for your ongoing support in helping us improve our attendance figures so every child can make the most of their learning.

It has been wonderful to welcome back our celebration assemblies this week, along with our much-loved Hot Chocolate. It feels like a lovely way to kick off 2026 and we absolutely love celebrating all the successes our children are having. Please remember that if your child achieves anything out of school – whether it's a swimming certificate, representing a local sports team or winning a trophy – we would love to hear about it via ClassDojo so that we can celebrate those achievements together in assembly. Recognising these successes is just as important to us as celebrating academic progress.

Have a wonderful weekend and we look forward to seeing everyone on Monday, ready for another fantastic week at Shillbottle. Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

**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 GROUP CHATS

On messaging apps, social media and online games, group chats are one of the most popular ways that children connect. Group chats allow messages, images and videos to be shared in one place and help friendships flourish; however, they also come with a number of risks.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### TEASING AND BULLYING

Children of all ages are keen to fit in socially, and group chats can sometimes complicate that process. While group chats can foster connection, they can also give way to mean comments or jokes at someone's expense, or possibly when they join in for the first time. This can particularly impact on friends and classmates. It can intensify the emotional impact – leading to embarrassment, anxiety and feelings of isolation for the child being targeted.

#### UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Children often can't control who is added to a group, which can lead to privacy concerns. Sharing personal details in group chats can be dangerous, and children have no control over what others do with the material they send. Some members of the chat might even decide to use such information maliciously.

#### PEER PRESSURE

Children may feel they have to constantly stay engaged just to be included and keep up with the conversation. In some cases, they might participate in inappropriate behaviours – like sharing explicit photos, jokes or teasing – just to fit in. Group settings can also encourage children to act in ways they normally wouldn't, or stay silent when they know something is wrong, out of fear of being excluded. Some children may find it difficult to leave toxic group chats.

#### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some group chats may include inappropriate language or imagery. Even if a child isn't actively participating in the conversation, they may still be exposed to this content simply by being part of the group. Some apps have disappearing messaging features, which allow messages to self-destruct after a few seconds, which makes it harder for children to report something they've seen.

#### EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

Exclusion in group chats is common and can take various forms. Sometimes a new group is created specifically to leave one child out on purpose. In other cases, the chat may happen on an app that a child doesn't have access to, making it impossible for them to join in. This can cause feelings of being left out – even unintentionally.

#### VIDEO AND LIVE CHATS

Many social apps allow children to engage in live streaming with interactive chats or have group video chats. Anyone can be added to these streams, and often children log in to the comments and have conversations which are unmoderated. There's a risk of being exposed to inappropriate or violent content and offensive language, either in the group videos or via the group chats.

### Advice for Parents & Educators

#### CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats can become an arena for children to compete for social status. Help children consider how people might feel if they behave unkindly. If a child does upset someone, encourage them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

#### SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Group chats are an excellent way for children to connect and feel like they belong. However, remind them that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded. Instead of responding to the person who's upset them, encourage them to speak up and empower them to do so. Help them to handle that situation. You can also encourage children to speak up if they witness others being bullied.

#### SET SOME GROUP CHAT RULES

Discuss safe group chat practices, such as asking a peer for consent before adding them to a group chat, or leaving a group chat if it's stronger in added. Tell children that if they've added to a group they didn't agree to beforehand, it's OK for them to leave immediately.

#### PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

It's vital for children to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Encourage them to understand the importance of not sharing personal details such as their name, their school, or photos they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they can't be certain where it might end up or how it might be used.

#### BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If a child encounters inappropriate content or feels uncomfortable in a group chat, encourage them to block and report the sender and leave the group. Make sure children know it's OK to leave a group chat if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

#### SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Being bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be an irritating distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to children that they can silence a group chat while keeping notifications. In fact, it would be healthier for them to do so, helping them avoid the pressure to respond immediately.



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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 94.4%. Our Whole School Target is 96%**

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Mrs Blackhall	96%	93%
Mrs Kelly	100%	96%
Mr Phillips	95%	94%

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.

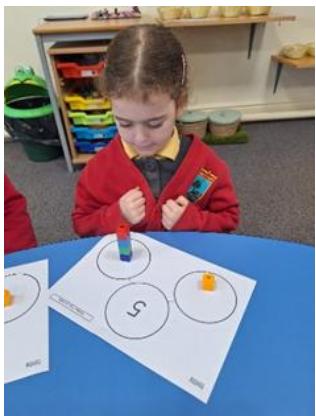


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## Classroom updates - Bluebell Class

The children are well settled back into their usual routines now and they are all bringing the books and equipment they need for the day. Thank you for your ongoing support with home learning. Sharing 'book bag books' has a big impact on your child's progress in reading. A huge well done to Sophia and Abi for reaching over 80 reads at home, and to Charlotte, Grayson and Ottolie who have all reached over 100 reads at home – An incredible effort! Keep it up.



Reception Class have continued their number work this week, revising one more and one less, then finishing today with a lesson on part-whole models – a practical and visual method of partitioning whole numbers into two parts. Next week the children will move on to their new topic, 'Mass and Capacity'.

Key Stage 1 children have continued to add and subtract within 100. They have been using number lines, 100 squares and ten frames to support their calculations. They will progress on to adding two 2-digit numbers next week.

In English, our Reception children have shared the traditional tale, 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. They have been creating paper plate bear paws to bring home with them this evening. Key Stage 1 children have continued their work on creating instructions: 'How to pack a suitcase for a trip to Antarctica'. They have looked at imperatives (bossy verbs), time sequencing language and adjectives in preparation for planning their instructions next week



In history, we have continued to explore the engineering genius of the Wright Brothers. Key Stage 1 children have compared the very first plane to modern day aircraft. Reception children made their own planes using our construction area resources.

The children were keen to get back into the swing of PE lessons outdoors this week. They practised some invasion games with our NUFC teacher, Imra. In addition to this, the children have had their first in a sequence of cricket lessons to be delivered by Tom Vickers on Wednesday afternoons. They really enjoyed this and are excited for next week's lesson.



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Have a great weekend everyone, **Mrs Blackhall**

## Classroom updates - Poppy Class

Another week passes by in Poppy class. This week in Maths, we have continued developing our understanding of multiplication with and without exchange, using a range of strategies to solve increasingly challenging calculations. Although some aspects have been tricky, the children showed great resilience and perseverance, working hard to improve their confidence and accuracy. In English, we have been exploring vivid setting descriptions of Heorot, the mead hall, from *Beowulf*, analysing the writer's language and discussing how powerful word choices, imagery and descriptive techniques help to create atmosphere and engage the reader.

Our PE sessions have made it a very active week, with our outdoor PE lesson with NUFC, swimming, where the children are becoming more familiar with routines and expectations and a dance session with Dance City, which the children thoroughly enjoyed and approached with enthusiasm and creativity.

In PSHE, we focused on the important message of resisting peer pressure, discussing real-life scenarios and developing strategies to confidently say no when something does not feel right. History lessons continued our work on the Vikings, where we learned about them as both fierce warriors and skilled traders, exploring where they invaded and the types of goods they traded across different regions.

In French, we learned and practised the names of different foods through the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, supporting both vocabulary development and pronunciation. In Art, we began designing our own Viking brooches, carefully considering patterns and shapes in preparation for making them next week. In Music we worked in groups looking at musical theatre and graphic scores.

Overall, it has been a very busy, engaging and productive week of learning across the curriculum. Have a restful weekend





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**Mrs Kelly**

## Classroom Updates - Clover Class

Wow! What a week. I'm sure it was just the same length as every other week, but this one felt truly special in Clover Class. Maybe it's the time of year, or maybe it's just because the children have been absolutely brilliant!



We made a fantastic start on Monday, continuing to impress Mr. Phillips with our exploration of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. This is fast becoming a favourite book for many. We have reached Act III, Scene I, where the story shifts from romance to "ancient grudges." Everything kicked off between Romeo and Tybalt, involving sword fights and high drama! Alas, we fear tragedy is on its way...



We are tackling Fractions with enthusiasm! Our top tip? Know your multiplication facts inside out, upside down, and back to front—it makes fractions so much easier! We are officially learning the Ukulele! Mrs. Barber was incredibly impressed with how much the children remembered from last time. (Warning: You might find a ukulele on next year's Christmas list!)

On Tuesday, we learned how Elizabeth I defeated King Philip of Spain's Armada. We discussed what a powerful monarch she was, proving

everyone wrong who thought a woman couldn't be a strong ruler. Inspired by her strength, we looked at our own Mental Health, exploring techniques to look after our brains and even creating a "Mind Gym" in the classroom.



Things didn't slow down mid-week! Wednesday: We acted out "freeze frames" of our Shakespeare scenes and welcomed back our favourite cricket coach, Tom Vickers, who will be with us for the rest of the half-term. Thursday: It was all about DANCE! While Mr. Phillips was seen busting a few moves (oh dear...), we were thankfully taught by the professionals. Lorna from Dance City in Newcastle came to teach us some real routines. It was awesome!



We took our foot off the pedal slightly on Friday to save energy for the weekend, but we still managed some electrifying Science. We tested different materials for their electrical conductivity, wiring them up to batteries to see if we could make a complete circuit.

Well done to our Bookworm Readers this week—keep reading to get closer to that Grand Prize!

Have a restful and happy weekend!



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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)
Wednesday 28th January	15.30	SATs Presentation for Year 6 Parents/Carers
Monday 9th February		Mock SATs Week - Y6
Tuesday 10th February	15.00-17.20	Parents Evening
Wednesday 11th February	15.00-17.20	Parents Evening
Friday 13th February 2026	15.20	School closes for the holidays



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

**Sonny L**

**Dexter P**

**Amelia M**

**Joey D**



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**Jeni H**  
**Francesca S**