



SHILLINGSTONE C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

GROWING TOGETHER • TOGETHER WE LEARN

Dates for diaries:

Monday 12th January 3.20-3.40pm - Year 6 parents and children meeting with Mrs Vail – SATs information and residential briefing

Tuesday 13th January 3.20-3.40pm - An introduction to Mrs McCall - Ocean class only

Wednesday 14th January 9am - New Governor information session

Wednesday 14th January – The Old Ox – all welcome

Wednesday 21st January – Special breakfast (Croissants and pain au chocolate)

Half term: 16th – 20th February

Monday 23rd February 2026 – INSET Day

Friday 27th March – Last day of Spring Term

A Happy New Year to you and your family from all the staff at Shillingstone Primary School!

Please see our school website for updates on events and news.

Is your child starting school in September 2026?

The deadline for applying for a school place is 15th January 2026.

Our Events page has been updated on the school website: [Events from December 16, 2025 - February 16 Shillingstone CE Primary School](#)

Our School Needs You!

We are looking for a couple of people to join our team of Governors. We understand that this may seem like a daunting prospect. However, this is an opportunity to help to shape and guide our school. You do not need any working knowledge of a primary school to be involved, just a passion for helping our school and students. We are holding a question and information session on Wednesday 14th January at 9am in the staff room with Mr Wright and Sharon Proyer (our Chair of Governors). You will be under no obligation to sign up so please do come along. There will be biscuits!

Mr Wright climbs a hill (or 3)

As you are probably aware, Mrs Whitehouse-Sharpe swam the channel to raise funds for our school! I am not able to take on such a herculean feat, however in an effort to help to add funds for future adventures, I am planning to do a bit of walking. The plan is to summit the three tallest peaks in the UK, over three days, hopefully at the beginning of the summer holiday this year. I'll be collecting sponsorship which will all go directly to the children, most likely to fund busses for trips and events (if there is enough, I would also like to fund some outdoor learning activities).

More details and links to fundraising will appear soon.

Also, in an attempt to warm up for this challenge, I have signed up to run 47 miles in February for the charity: Surfers Against Sewage, a charity very close to my heart.



Our wild waters are under threat.



Water companies paid out £1.2 billion to shareholders last year while dumping sewage nearly 600,000 times.





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⚠ The system is broken. I'm raising money to help put an end sewage pollution in our rivers & seas.

Every mile I run will help fight for cleaner, safer water. Please support me and this vital cause. 🙏
#please note: the below link is for the charity, not for the school#

<https://socialsync.app/fundraiser/cr-4pvwm685qk7vj>

Thank you. Mr Wright.

Road Safety Poster Competition

Further to our recent Road Traffic Survey, we announced a competition before Christmas to design a Road Safety Poster which will be made into a sign to slow down traffic on the local roads. We have now extended the deadline, so if your child would like to take part, please ask them to produce a poster on A4 paper and hand into the office by the end of next week (Friday 16th January). The winning entries will have the pleasure of seeing their designs made into the road signs. Thank you for your help in supporting our drive to improve road safety in our local area.

A message from Mrs Swaffield

Dear parents,

I just wanted to say a huge thank you for all of your kind messages and leaving gifts. I was really touched by your generosity and am so grateful for all of your support. I haven't yet taken the bracelet off and we will enjoy using the New Zealand dollars to buy something for our new family home.

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and enjoyed the break. We have had a very busy few weeks since leaving England. After a lovely holiday in Tokyo and Fiji, we touched down in NZ on 2nd January. We are based in a coastal town just East of Auckland and have already made good use of being so close to the beach. We have begun to explore our new surroundings and look forward to starting work/school at the end of the month.

Shillingstone is a fantastic school which I shall miss tremendously. I would like to wish you all the best for the future and thank you again.

Charlotte Swaffield





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Digital Detox New Year Challenge

ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR CHILDREN, CHILDREN, HEALTH & WELLBEING, LEARNING THROUGH PLAY, PARENTING

The Benefits of a Digital Detox & Why Families Should Try It



In today's world, electronic screens are everywhere — from TVs and smartphones to tablets and games consoles. Even our youngest children are growing up in increasingly digital environments. While technology brings many conveniences, intentionally unplugging can offer profound benefits for little ones and their families. Whether it's for a day, a weekend, a holiday, or even longer, the value gained from a 'digital detox' may surprise even the most dubious amongst us. Today's post investigates.





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What Science Tells Us

Research consistently shows the positive effects of stepping away from our screens. Studies report that a digital detox can lead to decreased stress and anxiety, improved mood and well-being, and even better physical health through healthier, less sedentary, lifestyles. Pausing the use of electronic screens can even help reset our perception of time, making days feel longer, fuller, and more engaged.



For children, excessive screen use, especially before bedtime, can disrupt sleep. This is caused by electronic screens interfering with natural melatonin production, leading to delayed sleep onset and poor quality rest. It can also slow language development and impair attention, particularly for children under five, whose brains are undergoing rapid early development. In one study, toddlers watching three hours of TV a day were three times more likely to experience language delays and weaker school readiness skills.

The results from combined studies indicate that children who reduce screen time show fewer emotional difficulties, improved social behaviour, and greater prosocial tendencies including kindness and cooperation. In another real-world experiment, teens who took a 48-hour smartphone break noticed better sleep, more outdoor activity and stronger family interactions.

Click on this link for more information

[Research Digest: Screen time and green time | Children & Nature Network](#)

How to Introduce a Detox Gently & Keep It Fun

Here are some tips to help ease families into a digital detox and set them up for success:

1. Begin by designating screen-free boundaries, such as bedrooms or mealtimes, and/or set a daily *screen-free hour* in the evening.
2. Get children to buy into the idea by inviting them to help set the rules. Ask them "*When are screens off?*" and "*What happens then?*" They can be nudged in the right direction through discussion and helpful suggestions if they're unsure.
3. Plan those entertaining and engrossing alternatives together. Screen-free ideas could include reading together, making simple crafts, telling stories, going outdoors, cooking, playing music, dancing and fitness sessions, baking together, garden safaris, yoga sessions, board games — and so on.
4. Celebrate small wins! For example, point out how much deeper and more restful sleep is, or how much more chatter there is at the breakfast table.
5. Once screen-free moments become familiar, try graduating your family to a screen-free *weekend* or even a full *holiday*. Many families describe these as *revelatory* with any initial frustrations soon giving way to something deeper and more rewarding.





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Kindest regards,

Mr Wright - Head of School (Monday-Thursday)

Mrs Vail - Head of School (Friday)

