



Newsletter





Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you had an enjoyable, restful Christmas break and managed to fight off all of the winter illnesses that have been circulating over the past month or so. We look forward to a happy and healthy start of 2023 with a renewed focus on attendance and punctuality for all of our children.

House Points

As you know, all children were allocated a house this term as part of our new house points system to recognise children's efforts and achievements in school. Children have been awarded raffle tickets and house points throughout the Autumn term and, at our special end of term assembly, the House cup was awarded to Sycamore as the house with the most points in total. Well done Sycamore!

I am sure you will all agree that all of the houses achieved brilliantly. Over 9,000 house points were awarded in total this term! We now start a new term and a new challenge to find the Spring term's winning house.

House	House points—Autumn term
<u>Ash</u> 	2,190
<u>Sycamore</u> 	2,345
<u>Elder</u> 	2,274
<u>Lime</u> 	2,233

New handwriting scheme – parent workshop **DATE CHANGE**

We would like to invite parents and carers to find out more about our new handwriting scheme, Kinetic letters, at a meeting on **Friday 3rd February** straight after school in the school hall (this a change of date from previously advertised). **Every parent/carer that attends the session will be entered into a prize draw with a chance to win a £30 Amazon gift voucher.**

To book your place, please complete the form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/Z0VCijtUz>



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Dinner Money



Dinner money remains the same at £2.30 per day (£11.50 per week) for children in Years 3/4/5/6 who pay for their meals. All school meals must be paid for via SimsPay. Our school meals menu is available on our school website:

[School Meals | Merridale Primary](#)

Some parents and carers in receipt of income support and Working Family Tax Credits are entitled to free school meals and milk. Please ask at the school office for more information.

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are eligible to receive a free school meal everyday under the Universal Infant Free School Meals funding.

School Milk



Milk Money is now payable to Coolmilk. The school no longer take payments for milk. If your child is under 5, they will provided free milk until their 5th Birthday. If you wish your child to continue to receive milk after they turn 5, please register with Coolmilk and make a payment at least a week before via the website: www.coolmilk.com. If your child is eligible for free school meals, the school will continue to provide free milk (please check with the school office if you are unsure if you need to pay). If you require any further information please, contact Mrs Hitch in the main school office.

Jewellery Policy

The only items that are considered appropriate for school, for health and safety reasons, are one pair of small stud or sleeper earrings and watches. The school does not approve of other jewellery or cosmetics unless for cultural reasons. Any items that are worn must be removed or covered with a sweat band/plaster (to be provided from home) for PE and all items are the responsibility of the pupil. Please note that staff are not allowed to remove or look after jewellery for children.

Long hair must be tied back for PE lessons.





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Family Liaison Officer

We are pleased to announce that we will be joined by Miss Sarah Jones this term as our new Family Liaison Officer, taking over the role from Mrs Worker who left us in the summer. Miss Jones will be working at Merridale on Thursdays, providing support and advice to anyone who needs it. I am sure you will all make Miss Jones feel very welcome at Merridale.

Contact Details

We are committed to becoming a paperless school and, as such, will increasingly be sending communication via text message. Please make sure school has an up to date contact number for you so that you do not miss any communications. All text messages will be sent to the "Priority 1" mobile telephone number that we have for your child. If you are not receiving any messages for your child, please contact the school office.

It is vital that the school office has up-to-date, correct contact details for all parents and carers in the event of an emergency.

If you need to inform us of any change in circumstances or medical information, you can e-mail school at: office@merridaleprimary.co.uk to let us know.

Parking restrictions

Please can I remind you that the school car park is for staff use only. Please park outside of school where it is safe and legal to do so. **Please can I also ask that you respect our school neighbours by not parking in front of drop-down kerbs.**

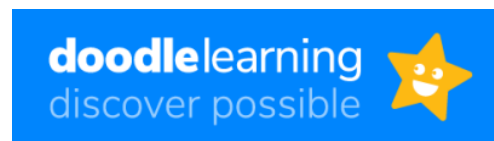
Home Learning

A reminder that all children in Years 1-6 have a log in to our home learning platform—Doodle. Log in information can be found in your child's reading record but, if you cannot locate it, please ask their class teacher who will be able to provide this for you to use at home.

Each week, we have a Doodle Challenge and encourage all children to use at least one of the 4 Doodle apps.

You can log in here:

[Homepage - DoodleLearning](#)



A little bit about Doodle

Doodle builds confidence and ability in maths and English by creating every child a personalised work programme tailored to their strengths and weaknesses. Using Doodle for just 10 minutes a day is proven to help children make three months of progress in just one month!



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Attendance and Punctuality

We encourage all children to have excellent attendance at Merridale.

Regular school attendance brings enormous benefits to individual pupils, their families, schools and the community as a whole. Without regular attendance, levels of attainment suffer and opportunities are missed to obtain maximum benefit from education.

Persistent absence and lateness will affect a child's achievement and progress in school. As a parent, it is your legal responsibility to ensure your child receives a suitable full time education. It is your responsibility that your child attends school each day and is on time. It is important to set the expectation of good attendance right from the beginning of school so children grow up with 'good habits'. Children attend school for **190** days each year—this leave **175** days for family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments. Make the most of your child's 190 days of education by ensuring they are at school on time everyday that they can be.

If you need to make a medical or dentist appointment:

Medical appointments should, where possible, be made outside school hours. When this is unavoidable, your child should be in school for the remainder of the school day, whether before or/and after the appointment. Please bring evidence of medical or dental appointments to the school office so that we can authorise these absences.

Please remember that we have a 15 minute window for children to come into school at the start of the day (**from 8.35am until 8.50am**). From 8.50am, children need to come into school via the main office and will need to be signed in by an adult.

Being on time for school is very important to ensure children are registered and settled in, ready to start learning promptly at 9am. During this time, all children are also offered a breakfast bagel so it is important for children to arrive in their classes on time so that they can have enough time to eat this.

We will update parents and carers by text message at the start of each term with your child's attendance percentage. Please remember that we aim for children to have at least 96% attendance as this is our target for whole school attendance. You will shortly be receiving a text with your child's attendance percentage for the Autumn term.

We know that there are times when children cannot attend school. If your child is unwell, please make sure you contact school as early as possible in the morning so you can register the absence with the school office. Medical evidence for absences due to illness may be requested, as stated in our attendance policy.

You can find further details on attendance on our website: [Attendance | Merridale Primary](#)

School **cannot** authorise absences for holidays or trips during term time, as stated in our attendance policy. If you would like to request a leave of absence for your child, you must do so in advance, in writing by completing a form from the school office. School will then write to you to confirm whether or not this absence will be authorised.

What will happen if my request is not authorised but I still take my child out of school?

Your school will notify the delegated local authority officer who may issue a Penalty Notice to you if 5 days or more have been taken.

A Penalty Notice of £60 could be imposed per child and per parent. If this is not paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, the cost rises to £120 which must be paid between 21 and 28 days of receipt of the notice. All Penalty Notices will be delivered by hand or first class post.

If the notice has not been paid in full by 28 days of receipt, the local authority must either prosecute for the offence or withdraw the notice.

This prosecution is for the offence of failing to secure attendance at school not for non-payment of the fine. Prosecutions are brought under S444 of the Education Act 1996. Parents/carers need to be mindful that a conviction for this offence can result in a criminal record.



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What have we been learning?

Well done to our Autumn term Prize Winners

Well done to our children who won their class prize this term. These children were selected by school staff for their impressive achievements and effort over the Autumn term.



Sing for Christmas

On Monday 5th December, a group of Year 6 pupils visited St John's Church for Wolverhampton Music School's annual "Sing for Christmas" event. Children and staff had a great time at the festive sing-along concert, joined by children from other local schools.





What have we been learning?



Festive Celebrations

Children and staff across the school really enjoyed learning about and celebrating Christmas throughout December. Thank you to all of our families who joined us for our Look for a Light lantern display as well as the EYFS Christmas craft session and Years 1 & 2 Christmas Play. We hope you had a wonderful Christmas break.



Thanks to everyone who contributed to our Christmas fundraising for Compton Care. With the donations from our lantern display and Christmas jumper sale, we raised £75.

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What have we been learning?

Christmas Carols at the Croft Care Home

On Tuesday 13th December, a group of Year 5 and 6 singers visited The Croft Care Home to sing some Christmas songs to the residents. As always, our children did Merridale proud with their fantastic behaviour and attitudes. The residents really enjoyed being entertained and we look forward to visiting again soon.



Dentaid "Brightbites" sessions

On Wednesday 7th December, EYFS and Key Stage 1 classes had a visit from some local dentists through the Dentaid charity Brightbites programme. The sessions taught children about the correct way to brush their teeth and the importance of effective brushing for good dental hygiene. The session also taught children about healthy food and drink choices in relation to sugar content and which foods/drinks to swap to maintain good oral health. The children really enjoyed the sessions and meeting a real dentist who could answer their questions.





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What have we been learning?



Dhol Drumming Performance

On Thursday 8th December, Year 4 and 5 children as well as parents and carers enjoyed a fantastic performance from our Dhol drumming music group. This group of children have been learning to play the Dhol drum for the past year with lessons from Mr Singh from Wolverhampton Music School. We really loved to see how they have progressed and grown in confidence.



Peer Supporter Programme

Throughout November, our Year 5 pupils took part in some Peer supporter training, led by Believe2Achieve. The topics covered were differences and different perspectives, feelings and emotions, empathy, bullying and resilience. The children took part in games and activities, discussions and watched short films to prepare them for their work as peer supporters on our playgrounds this term.



Newsletter

What have we been learning?



Stay and Play—Merridale Minis

In October, we introduced our weekly Stay and Play sessions for under 3s, led by Margaret and Hajra, our Parent Ambassadors, in our bungalow every Wednesday morning. The children have loved getting to know each other and taking part in fun activities alongside their parents and carers. If you have a child who is under 3 and would like to join our waiting list for Stay and Play, please e-mail office@merridaleprimary.co.uk with your details and we will be in touch.



Year 1 visit to Bantock House

On Friday 25th November, Year 1 visited Bantock House to learn about life as a Victorian child. The children made peg dolls and dressed up as Victorian children. The children really enjoyed the session as well as their local walk to Bantock House, looking at the different buildings and houses in our local area.



Newsletter

What have we been learning?



Spell It! Challenge

Well done to our Year 4 team who represented Merridale at the Wolverhampton Girls' High School annual Spell it! Challenge on Thursday 24th November. The team came a respectable 14th out of 27 teams taking part. Well done team —you represented Merridale brilliantly!



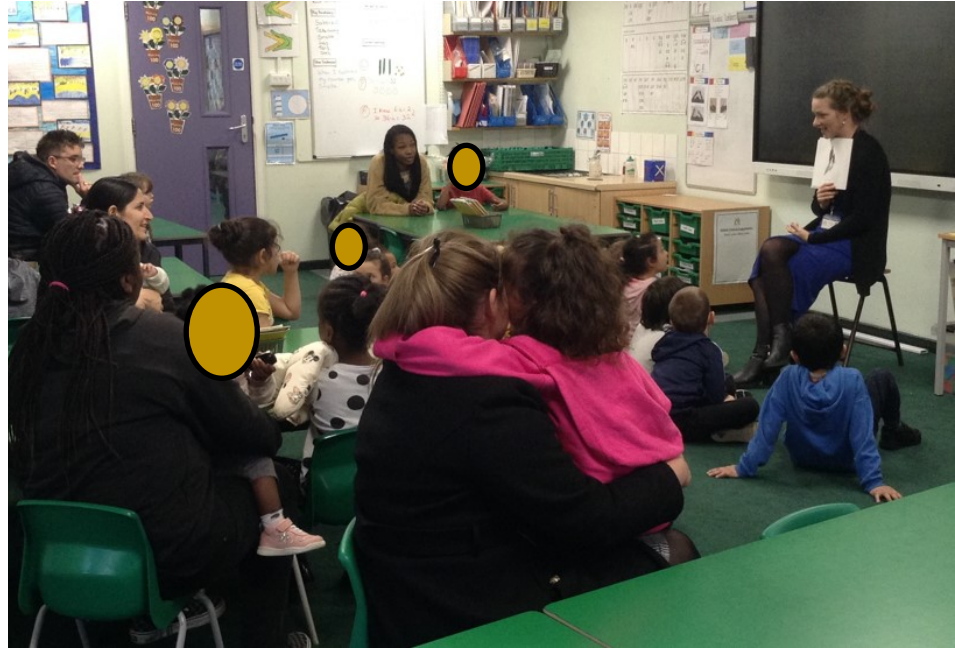
Open the Book Assemblies

We have really enjoyed being joined by the Open the Book team for our assemblies again during the Autumn term. Children really enjoy the interactive dramatisations of bible stories—especially the children who get to take part!



Newsletter

What have we been learning?



Story time sessions

We have really enjoyed invited parents and carers into school during the autumn term as part of our story time sessions. We look forward to many more of these over the spring and summer terms.





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Term Dates

Tuesday 3rd January: School re-opens to pupils
WB 9th January: E-Safety Focus week - Online Bullying
WB Monday 9th January: After school tuition starts this week for invited children
Tuesday 10th January: Year 6 Singing Workshop
Wednesday 11th January 2.30pm: Year 6 Discover Showcase for parents and carers (re-arranged date)
Thursday 12th January: First Year 5 swimming session of the Spring term
Friday 13th January 3.30pm: Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check meeting for parents/carers
WB Monday 16th January: Spring term after school clubs start this week
Wednesday 18th January 2.00pm: Year 1 Discover Showcase for parents and carers
Thursday 19th January 8.30-10am: School Nurse drop in session for parents and carers (no appointment needed)
Thursday 19th January 3.30pm: Year 1 Phonic check meeting for parents and carers
Thursday 19th January: Year 4 Royal Academy of Culinary Arts Cooking Session 2
Wednesday 1st February: Parent Ambassador Coffee Afternoon 2.15pm –all welcome
Wednesday 1st February 2.45pm: Year 3 Storytime session for parents and carers
Friday 3rd February 3.30pm: Kinetic Letters Meeting for parents and carers in the school hall.
Friday 3rd February: Year 6 Borth third payment due date (£30)
Wednesday 15th February 3.30-8pm: Parent consultation appointments
Friday 17th February: INSET Day (school closed to pupils)
Monday 20th February—Friday 24th February: Half term (school closed)
Monday 27th February: School re-opens to pupils
WB 27th February: E-Safety Focus week - Managing online information
Thursday 2nd March: World Book Day
Friday 3rd March: Book Swap event at school
Wednesday 15th March: Year 6 Borth final payment due date (£30)
Wednesday 15th March 2pm: Year 2 Discover Showcase for parents and carers
Friday 17th March: Food Bank Friday Collection
Sunday 19th March: Mothering Sunday
Tuesday 21st March 2.15pm: Year 6 Discover Showcase for parents and carers
Monday 27th March: Nursery story time sessions for parents and carers
Wednesday 29th March: Year 4 Easter experience at St Chad and St Mark’s Church
Thursday 30th March: Easter Disco
Friday 31st March 3.15pm: School closes for the Easter holidays
Monday 3rd April to Friday 14th April: Easter Holidays (school closed)
Monday 17th April: School re-opens to pupils
Monday 24th April: Eid celebration day in school —children are invited to come to school in celebration clothes for this if they wish.
WB 24th April: E-Safety Focus week - Health, Well-being and Lifestyle
Monday 1st May: Bank Holiday Monday (School closed)
Tuesday 2nd May: School open to pupils as normal
Friday 5th May: Buddhism day in school
Monday 8th May: Extra Bank holiday for the Kings coronation
Tuesday 9th May to Friday 12th May : Year 6 SATs week
Wednesday 17th May: School photographs
Friday 19th May: Book Swap event at school
Tuesday 23rd May 2.15pm: Year 2 Discover Showcase for parents and carers
Thursday 25th May 3.30pm: Year 6 Borth meeting for parents and carers
Friday 26th May: INSET Day (school closed to pupils)
Monday 29th May—Friday 2nd June: Half term (school closed)
Monday 5th June: School re-opens to pupils
WB 12th June: E-Safety Focus week - Privacy and Security
WB 12th June: Year 1 Phonic Check week

Dates continued on the next page...



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Term Dates (continued)

Friday 16th June : Food Bank Friday Collection
Sunday 18th June: Father’s Day
Monday 19th June—Thursday 22nd June: Book Fair after school until 4pm
Wednesday 21st June—Friday 23rd June: Year 6 Borth residential visit
Tuesday 27th June 1.45pm: Year 1-6 Sports Day
Wednesday 28th June (times to be confirmed): EYFS Sports Day (Nursery and Reception classes)
Thursday 13th July 3.30pm: Reception reading/phonics meeting for parents/carers
Friday 14th July 3.20pm: Nursery closes
Thursday 20th July 9.15am: Year 6 Leavers’ Play performance for parents and carers
Monday 24th July: Summer disco
Tuesday 25th July 3.20pm: School closes for the Summer holidays
Wednesday 26th July—Sunday 3rd September: Summer Holidays (School closed)
Monday 4th September: INSET Day (school closed to pupils)
 Tuesday 5th September: School re-opens to pupils

Values

Merridale Values

Each half term, we focus on a core value.

This half term we are learning about RESPECT



What does RESPECT look like?

- Listen to others
- Value other people’s contributions
- work together
- Be honest
- Choose kind words and actions
- Look after our school, the grounds and our things.



We will be looking out for children that demonstrate this value throughout the half term and rewarding them with special stickers. Please could you discuss RESPECT with children at home and explore ways to reinforce it. How can you show RESPECT to others?

Coffee and a chat

YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR
PARENT AMBASSADOR



Coffee Afternoon

COME ALONG FOR A DRINK, BISCUIT AND A CHAT WITH OUR
PARENT AMBASSADORS, MARGARET AND HAJRA.
MEET OTHER PARENTS AND CARERS FROM MERRIDALE.

THIS EVENT IS FREE TO ALL.
NO NEED TO BOOK.

WEDNESDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2.15PM
@ MERRIDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL BUNGALOW



All are welcome

Relax and share

Thanks to all of the parents and carers who attended our Parent Ambassador Coffee afternoon last half term. We would like to invite anyone who is interested to come along to the next one on Wednesday 1st February at 2.15pm. If you are interested, there is no need to book—just come along to enjoy a hot drink with Merridale parents and carers and our Parent Ambassadors.

Come in!
For tasty food
and good company



Free meals
Wednesdays
5.00pm

Everyone is welcome

FoodCycle
Wolverhampton
Wesleyan Holiness
Church
2 Merridale Ln
WV3 9RD



Is my child too ill for school?

When children are ill, there are times when they must not attend school so that they do not pass anything onto other children and staff.

Find out more here:

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)



Chicken Pox When all spots have crusted over	Conjunctivitis None*	Diarrhoea & Vomiting 48 hours from last episode	Glandular Fever None*	Hand, foot & mouth None*	Impetigo When lesions are crusted & healed or 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
Measles or German Measles 4 days from onset of rash	Mumps 5 days from onset of swelling	Scabies After first treatment	Scarlet Fever 24 hours after commencing antibiotics	Slapped Cheek None*	Whooping Cough 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
	Flu Until recovered	Head Lice None*	Threadworms None*	Tonsillitis None*	

This information is based on the [Public Health Agency guide - full copy here](#)

*No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed.

[Guidance on infection control in schools poster.pdf \(hscni.net\)](#)



Reading at home

For children learning phonics through Read, Write, Inc



Phonetically Matched Book

This book is specifically matched to your child's current phonic level. Please listen to your child read this book by themselves everyday for 20 minutes. If your child has finished reading their book within the week **please hear them read it more than once!** This is good practise and helps them to become fluent.

Scan this QR Code to see how to use a Phonetically Matched Book Bag Book



This book will be changed once a week, not always on the same day. Make sure your child brings their book back to school everyday.

Record reading daily in the reading record.

Here is an example of what this might look like.



Date	Book and Page Number	Remarks
16/3	A house fit for a mouse pg 1-5	Great sounding out
17/3	A house fit for a mouse pg 5-10	Retold the story well!
18/3	A house fit for a mouse pg 11	Answered questions with a bit of help

Sharing Book This book is a book to enjoy together with your child. It may contain sounds your child does not know so help them to decode these and read together. This book will be changed once a week, not always on the same day.

Library Book Your child has chosen this book from the library to enjoy. It could be fiction or non-fiction. It may contain sounds your child does not know so help them to decode these and read together. Please read together.



Rise to the

Reading Challenge!

We expect ALL children at Merridale to read (or enjoy a book with someone else) for **AT LEAST 20 minutes at least five times a week!**

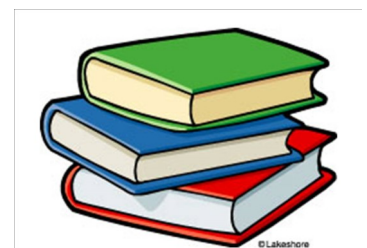
Evidence from research shows that children who read daily are more successful learners, leading to increased confidence and enjoyment of reading.

The **role of parents and carers** is central to your child's success with this challenge. Older children may enjoy reading independently each day, however, younger children will require an adult to read with/to them in order to meet their target.

Please ensure that you provide a quiet space for your child to read at least 5 days per week at home and sign their reading record to confirm that they have read for **at least 20 minutes**.

Children may read their school reading book or library book. They may also read any other book that they might choose. All of these should be noted down in their reading record and signed by a parent/carer. Just note the date, book title and how many pages have been read and sign in the comments box. If you also wish to write a short comment on your child's reading, that would be great!

At the end of each week, every child who has read for at least 5 days (if not more) will receive a sticker for their class reading chart. The children with the most stickers at the end of each half term in each class will receive a small reward.





Safe and Legal Parking outside Merridale Primary School

PLEASE KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE

The overriding reason for this guidance is to keep our children safe outside our school gates and to respect our neighbours whilst also making sure parents and carers do not break the law.

Drivers, parents and carers who break the law can be issued with a penalty charge notice (fine).

We know that the school run can be a stressful time. The last thing we want to do is make it harder, but it's really important for everyone's safety that you observe the rules and park safely. That's why it's a good idea, if you drive your children to school, to get here early and look for somewhere safe and legal to park.

Can I park on **double and single yellow lines**?

No. Please do not park on any yellow lines. Cars parked there can obstruct lines of sight for pedestrians who want to cross the road. Any car left unattended on a single or double yellow line for more than a few minutes can be issued with a penalty charge notice. You are only allowed to stop on double or single yellow lines for a short period of time to allow passengers to enter or exit the vehicle, providing no obstruction is being caused.

Can I park on school **zig-zag** or **keep clear** markings?

No. In the interests of safety, you should never park on those markings. Any vehicle found on them can be issued with a penalty charge notice. This also applies to Blue Badge Holders.

Can I **double park** if I remain in my vehicle?

No. This causes an obstruction for other road users and is a danger to pedestrians.

Can I park over **drop-down kerbs** in front of the houses opposite school?

No. This causes an obstruction and means that our neighbours around school are not able to get on and off their drives.

Can I park on the **school car park**?

No, this car park is for staff only. Parking on the school car park causes an obstruction for staff and is a safety risk for staff, pupils and families who might be crossing the car park on foot.

You must also make sure your child is using the correct child seat, restraint or booster seat when driving. Children under 135cm tall require a booster seat by law to ensure that they are safe when travelling in a vehicle.