



Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the start of a new school year—an opportunity to start afresh and face new challenges with renewed enthusiasm and focus.

Improved security

I am sure many of you will have seen our new fencing at the front of school. This was completed over the summer holidays after advice from Wolverhampton City Council around the safety and security of our site. We are confident that the new fencing will make our school, children and staff safer and more secure.

Due to the fencing, we have some changes to the start and end of the school day. The gate at the front of school (at the end of the path near to the zebra crossing) will be the only gate open at the start of the day. Please can we ask all parents, carers, families and children to use this gate to come onto the school site **at the beginning of the day**. The children’s entrance gate (to the far right hand side of the site as you are facing the main school office) will now be open between **8.35am and 8.50am** for children to come into school.

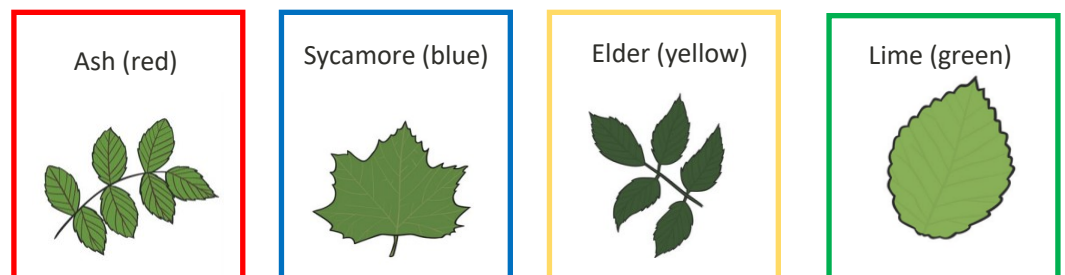
At the end of the day, we continue with our one-way system. Parents, carers and family members will come through the black gates on the staff car park between **3.15pm and 3.20pm** to collect their children. Please follow the one way system around the back of school, collecting your children from their red classroom doors. From 3.20pm, this gate will be locked and children will need to be collected from the main school office.

During the school day, access to the office will be via a buzzer/intercom on the two new school gates. We know it will take some time for everyone to get used to the new systems in place and we appreciate your patience and co-operation whilst everyone gets used to the new system.

House System

We have introduced a new “house” system across the school. All children have been put into one of four houses and children will earn house points as recognition for hard work, effort, positive behaviour and demonstrating our school values. House points will sit alongside our other rewards of raffle tickets, certificates, stickers etc to recognise children’s achievements and efforts in a positive way. The house points system will also give children a way of working as part of a wider team across the school to earn points each school term. The house with the most points at the end of each term will be awarded the Merridale House Cup.

Our four house names were selected by our School Council after consultation and votes within classes. Each house has been named after a tree in our grounds and has also been assigned a colour. Our four houses are:



New handwriting scheme

From September, we have adopted a new handwriting scheme across school called “Kinetic Letters”. We are confident this approach will develop children’s handwriting so it becomes automatic, fluent and legible right from the beginning. We will share further information on this approach later this year so that parents and carers can help to support children with their handwriting at home.



Newsletter

Attendance and Punctuality

A new year is a great opportunity to have a renewed focus on attendance and punctuality. 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 each term with your child's attendance percentage. Please remember that we aim for children to have at least 96% attendance as this is the average that we aim for as a whole school.

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.

School **cannot** authorise absences for holidays or trips during term time, as stated in our attendance policy.

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. A start of the year information form has recently been sent to parents and carers via text link to an online form. If you have not received one for your child/children, please contact the school office.

Please ensure that all information about your child is included on this form, including their home language, medical needs and whether or not they are a vegetarian or have any special dietary requirements.

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

Staffing Changes

We are pleased to welcome a new member of staff to school: Miss Hayley Neal is joining us this term as a Teaching Assistant.

Clothing and Lost Property

Each week, we receive many new items into our Lost Property box. To avoid this, we ask parents and carers to put their children's names clearly on items of clothing (particularly jackets, jumpers, hoodies and sweatshirts) so that they can be returned to their owner. If you think your child has lost an item at school, please ask at the main office to check the Lost Property box.

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.**

ATTENDANCE

Come to school, on time, everyday that you can.

At Merridale Primary School, we have high expectations for the attendance of our pupils. This is because we know that all absence from school has a negative impact on a child's education.

Missing school can damage children's achievements, disrupt the school's routines and affect other children's learning.

Above all, missing out on the opportunities provided in school can have a long-term effect on children's chances in life. In order for young people to gain the maximum benefit from their time at school and to maximise future life opportunities, we aim for them to attend school everyday.

What do we expect from parents and carers?

Make sure your child comes to school, on time, everyday.

Let school know straight away when your child cannot attend because they are unwell.

Only request absence leave in exceptional circumstances and always in advance. You will be asked for evidence of this, including travel arrangements and tickets.

Book any medical appointments outside of the school day wherever possible. Provide school with evidence of appointments.

Talk to school if you are having problems with your child's attendance or punctuality so that we can support you.

Engage well with school and our Education Welfare Officer so we can support families and children with attendance issues.



What can parents and carers expect from school?

We will follow up daily on attendance issues.

We will keep parents and carers regularly informed of their child's attendance percentage - each term by text and in their end of year report.

We have a published attendance policy and section on our website for attendance to keep parents and carers informed.

<https://www.merridaleprimary.co.uk/attendance>

We aim for each child and the whole school to have an attendance average percentage of at least 96%.

ATTENDANCE
MATTERS





Newsletter

School Equipment

All children are provided with all equipment/stationery needed for school (pens, pencils, rulers, water bottle) so there is no need for children to bring these items into school.

Children only need to bring the following items to school each day:

- Coat
- Packed lunch (where necessary)
- Reading/library book and reading record (this will come home with them each day as part of our reading challenge).

We are committed to learning outside as much as possible and we love to make good use of our extensive outdoor areas. We ask for all children to have a named pair of wellies in school so that they can take part in as much outdoor learning as possible throughout the year.

Children must come to school wearing their PE kit on their PE day.

Please ensure that children wear suitable clothing (tracksuit bottoms/shorts, t-shirt, sweatshirt/fleece) on their PE day as they will stay in these clothes all day. Children will need suitable outdoor footwear (trainers) on their PE day and also ensure that long hair is tied back, jewellery/ watches are removed or covered with plasters/ sweat band.

Year 3 have PE on a Monday

Year 6 have PE on a Tuesday

Years 1 and 2 have PE on a Wednesday

Year 4 have PE on a Thursday

Reception and Year 5 have PE on a Friday

Year 5 have also swimming on a Thursday. Please send your child's swimming kit (swimming costume/trunks, towels and swimming hat) into school in a named bag every Thursday, starting from Thursday 15th September.

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.





Newsletter

Dinner Money



Our school meals are now provided by Caterlink.

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. Until Friday 16th September, all children in Year 3 (who pay for their school meals) will also be offered a free meal at lunchtime as part of the launch offer from Caterlink.

School Milk



Milk Money is now payable to Coolmilk. The school will no longer be taking payments for milk. If your child is under 5, they will be 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.

School Reading and Library Books

All children will be given school reading and library books each week. Please can we ask that children and families take care of these books at home. We have a £5 charge for lost school books which is put towards the cost of their replacement.

Merridale Marathon

On Friday 30th September, we will be holding our annual "Merridale Marathon". Parents, carers and family members are invited to join us for this fun event which concludes our Healthy Living Week which starts on Monday 26th September. Children and parents/carers will try to complete as many laps as possible of our school field, collecting stamps on their cards as they do so.

This will also be our first official fund-raising event for our chosen charity this year, Compton Care. We are asking all children and parents/carers to bring in a small donation for this event which will be donated to Compton Care. There will be some collection buckets available for this on entry. Parents and carers are invited to join us at 1.45pm for the start of the Marathon.



Newsletter

Term Dates

- Thursday 8th September:** Year 4 cooking session with The Royal Academy of Culinary Arts
- Thursday 15th September:** First swimming lesson for Year 5
- WB 19th September:** After school clubs start this week
- Wednesday 21st September 5pm:** Year 6 Information Meeting for parents and carers
- Monday 26th September 3.30pm:** Year 2 Parent information meeting
- Week Beginning 26th September:** Healthy Living Week
- Friday 30th September 1.45pm:** Merridale Marathon—parent, carers and families are invited to join us for this—we will be raising funds for Compton Hospice, our chosen charity for this year.
- Wednesday 5th October 3.30-8pm:** Meet the Teacher appointments for parents and carers
- Friday 7th October:** Year 6 Borth deposit due on SimsPay (£35)
- Wednesday 12th October 3.30pm:** RWI (Phonics) meeting for Reception parents and carers
- Friday 14th October:** Food Bank Friday Collection
- Wednesday 19th October:** Flu immunisations for pupils at school (Reception to Year 6)
- Friday 21st October:** Year 5 Bulb Planting event at Bantock Park
- Friday 21st October:** Diwali celebration day in school—children are invited to come to school in celebration clothes for this if they wish.
- Monday 24th—Friday 28th October:** Half term (school closed)
- Monday 31st October:** INSET Day (school closed to pupils)
- Tuesday 1st November:** School re-opens to pupils
- Thursday 3rd November:** Year 2 author visit to Grand Theatre (further details to follow)
- Friday 4th October:** Book Swap event at school
- Monday 7th to Thursday 10th November until 4pm:** Book Fair in school
- Friday 11th November:** Year 6 Borth second payment due date (£35)
- WB 14th November:** Anti-Bullying Week
- Friday 18th November:** Odd Socks for Anti-Bullying day
- Wednesday 7th December:** Look for a Light lantern display for parents and carers straight after school in the school hall
- Thursday 8th December:** School Christmas Dinner day (children are invited to wear their Christmas jumpers if they wish)
- Wednesday 14th December 2pm:** Year 1 and 2 Christmas Play performance for parents, carers and family members (tickets will be available to purchase for this from Monday 21st November—initially 2 tickets will be available per child)
- Thursday 15th December:** Christmas Disco
- Friday 16th December 3.20pm:** School closes for the Christmas holidays
- Tuesday 3rd January:** School re-opens to pupils
- Friday 13th January 3.30pm:** Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check meeting for parents/carers
- Thursday 19th January 3.30pm:** Year 1 Phonic check meeting for parents and carers
- Thursday 2nd February 3.30pm:** Kinetic Letters Handwriting meeting for parents and carers
- 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
- 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)
- Friday 17th March:** Food Bank Friday Collection
- Wednesday 29th March:** Year 4 Easter experience at St Chad and St Mark's Church
- Thursday 30th March:** Easter Disco
- Monday 3rd April to Friday 14th April:** Easter Holidays (school closed)

Dates continued on the next page...



Newsletter

Term Dates (continued)

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.
Monday 1st May: Bank Holiday Monday (School closed)
Tuesday 2nd May: School open to pupils as normal
Friday 5th May: Buddhism day in school
WB Monday 8th May: Year 6 SATs week
Wednesday 17th May: School photographs
Friday 19th May: Book Swap event at school
Thursday 25th May: 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
Friday 16th June : Food Bank Friday Collection
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: 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

Merridale Values

Our focus value this half term is aspiration.



What does this value look like?

- aim high
- believe in yourself
- have ambition
- be positive about learning
- be ready
- be motivated
- look to the future

We can't wait to see what our children aspire to be throughout this school year.



Merridale Minis

NEW FREE Stay and Play session for parents,
carers and pre-school children (children under 3 years of age).

Every Wednesday morning during term time 10.30am-11.30am
at Merridale Primary School Bungalow

All are welcome

First session: Wednesday 12th October 2022



Come along for an opportunity to chat and meet other parents and carers whilst your children play together.

Free refreshments will be provided.

All children must be accompanied and supervised by an adult at all times

Places are limited to due space - book your place in person at Merridale Primary School office
or by e-mailing office@merridaleprimary.co.uk

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.