



# Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,  
 This is my first official newsletter since becoming headteacher of Merridale and I am excited to be working alongside you as we start the next part of Merridale's journey together. I have worked at Merridale for nearly 17 years with 15 of those as Deputy Headteacher so I feel I know our school community really well and am able to build on our many strengths and successes moving forward. Thank you for all of your good wishes so far.

I am so proud of our wonderful school community and most importantly, our amazing pupils. I love to visit lessons and see what children are learning—they always have something interesting to share.

I am keen to work closely with parents and families and wanted to remind you of Merridale's "open door" policy. I am always available to meet with parents, carers and family members to talk about any issues or concerns.

I look forward to GROWING TOGETHER with our school community and sharing and celebrating our children's many successes and achievements.

Kind regards, Mrs Towle



### COVID Changes

As I am sure you are aware, from last Thursday, all legal requirements to isolate due to COVID have now ended. All free testing will also end on 1st April 2022.

We urge all members of our school community to participate in the vaccination program if you are able to and take all opportunities for booster vaccinations also. In this way, we can all do our part to stay well and protect others.

Our priority is always the safety and health of everyone in our school community. We would urge parents and carers **not to send children into school who are unwell** as this will help to minimise the spread of all illnesses. If you are ever unsure of what to do if your child is unwell, please contact Mrs Hitch in the school office as soon as possible and she will advise you.

### 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.

### Attendance

Missing school means missing out. We aim for all children to attend school, on time, every day that they are able to. We know that attendance and punctuality has a direct impact on children's learning and well-being. Children who are regularly absent or late to school do not achieve their potential and fall behind in class.

It is the legal responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that their child/ren attend school everyday on time.

If your child is unable to come to school, we ask parents/carers to contact school before 9.00 a.m. to confirm the reason for the absence.

If your child has a medical appointment, please provide evidence of this to the school office.

For further information on attendance, see here:

[Attendance | Merridale Primary](#)

[Attendance Figures | Merridale Primary](#)

### Punctuality

School starts at 8.50am each day. Children that arrive late miss important learning at the start of the day. Please support your child's learning by making sure they arrive at school on time each morning.



# Newsletter

## **Road Safety**

We continue to experience problems with parents and carers parking illegally and dangerously near school at drop off and collection times. Problems we continue to see:

- Parking on the kerb/path on/near the zebra crossing where children and families are walking.
- Turning around in the middle of the road into on-coming traffic without waiting for the traffic to stop.
- Pulling into the staff car park suddenly whilst children and parents are crossing the entrance.

The way that some of our parents and carers park and drive near to school is proving to be very dangerous and worrying. I know that many parents and carers are concerned about this. School has approached the road safety team many times regarding this issue. We would now urge parents and carers to report their concerns and any incidents using the form link below. By raising and reporting concerns, we are more likely to get a response from the road safety team to help us to make our school safer.

<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/parking-and-roads/contact-road-safety>  
[Contact Road Safety | City Of Wolverhampton Council](#)

## **WOW Walk to School**

We continue our Walk to School challenge this half term. Children who walk to school at least once per week are awarded a special badge at the end of each month. Walking to school helps us to keep active and healthy whilst also reducing traffic around our school at busy times of the day.



## **Lunchtime celebration menus**

We are very lucky to have a wonderful catering team who put together delicious, nutritious food everyday. Over the past half term, they have also supported with some wonderful celebration lunches for Chinese New Year, Valentine's Day as well as a special rainbow lunch.

School meals are free for all children in Reception, Year 1 and 2 and charged at £2.30 per meal for children in Key stage 2 who are not eligible for free school meals.



## **Parent Survey**

Thank you to everyone who recently took the time to complete our parent/carer survey. We will be sending out an evaluation and response shortly.

Please remember that we welcome and encourage feedback to ensure we can be effective partners in learning and welfare with our families.

## **Charity support**

As you know, school supports a wide range of charity fund-raising events. This year, the School Council have decided that we will focus on one local charity each year to raise money for— rather than the range of different events that we usually support throughout the year. We hope that this will make it easier for children and families to support local good causes whilst also learning about the good work that they do in our local area. We will let you know which charity is chosen by the children shortly.

We will still also continue to support our local food bank The Well with termly Food Bank Friday collections.



# Newsletter

## Eat them to Defeat them

This week sees the beginning of our “Eat them to Defeat Them” healthy eating campaign.

Did you know that 80% of children do not eat enough fruit and vegetables? This campaign aims to inspire children from early years and primary school to develop good habits.

Each week will have a focus on a different vegetable and we will be encouraging children to taste and try these in all of their different forms, supported by our school kitchen.

Children who taste the week’s focus vegetable will earn a special sticker in school. We encourage families to get involved at home too. Find out more here:

[Eat Them To Defeat Them | VegPower & ITV](#)

Focus vegetables each week:

- w/c 28th February Carrots
- w/c 7th March - Peppers
- w/c 14th March - Broccoli
- w/c 21st March - Tomatoes
- w/c 28th March - Peas

## Wolves Foundation Feed Our Pack

Once again, we are incredibly grateful to the Wolves Foundation Feed our Pack campaign for their half term food donations. We were able to provide 30 food parcels to support Merridale families over half term.

Please remember, if you require any food support at any time, we also have our Community Larder at school and can provide support on request in the strictest confidence.



## In the News

The current situation in Ukraine is distressing and concerning and your child may have questions or be seeking reassurance.

Here is some useful advice and information for parents and carers in a child-friendly format if you think it is appropriate and helpful.

[Home - CBBC Newsround](#)

[Advice if you're upset by the news - CBBC Newsround](#)

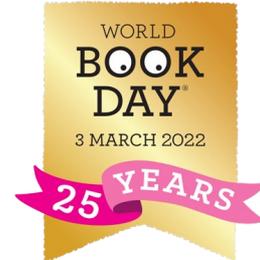
## Wrap Around Childcare at Merridale

We recently sent a forms link to families so that you could have your say on before and after school provision at Merridale. You can find this form here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/aQyNZbgj6e>

This form will be open until Friday 4th March.

## World Book Day



This year is the 25th anniversary of World Book Day and will be celebrated on Thursday 3rd March.

We do **not** ask children to dress up for this event. Instead, we are holding a “Masked Reader” competition via Seesaw. Children are invited to log on and see if they can work out who the masked reader teachers are. All correct guesses will be entered into a special prize draw!

All children will also receive their usual £1 World Book Day voucher also which can be exchanged for the special £1 books at participating retailers. Find out more here: [2021s-1-books \(worldbookday.com\)](#)

There are also a wide range of digital events and competitions available on the World Book day website:

[World Book Day | World Book Day is a registered charity. Our mission is to give every child and young person a book of their own.](#)

## One Way System

We have decided to continue with our one way system at the end of the school day as it has proved to be a much more efficient system with children being collected and leaving the school site quickly.

Please can we ask all parents and carers to support us in this system and come in through the main school car park gate between 3.10pm and 3.20pm to collect children from their classroom doors.



# Newsletter

## What have we been learning?



### Football Tournament

On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> February, our girls football team competed in their first football tournament at Aldersley Village in an event that was organised by the Wolves Coaches. They competed against a range of primary schools, all from Wolverhampton. They played extremely well, showing excellent teamwork, respect and resilience throughout. They won 1 match and drew 2, resulting in them qualifying for the semi-finals. They played so well and worked amazingly as a team. Sadly, they did not win their final game, but we were all so proud of how far they had got! Well done girls!



### Chance to Shine Cricket

On the 14th January, children from Years 1-6 enjoyed a cricket engagement day with Staffordshire Cricket/Chance to Shine. Children had the opportunity to bat, bowl and field and they thoroughly enjoyed themselves and learned lots about the sport.



### Children's Mental Health Week

During Children's Mental Health week, classes took part in lots of mindfulness activities. Here you can see Year 2 taking part in a guided meditation and Year 6 enjoying a yoga session.



# What have we been learning?



## Year 2 Design and Technology

Year 2 have loved their teddy bear D&T project this half term. Children researched what made a good teddy bear then designed and made their own. They used running stitch to hold the sides together and then decorated with recycled materials as part of their Materials Matter project.



## Year 6 Music Workshop

On Tuesday 1st February, Year 6 enjoyed a music workshop with a specialise teacher from Wolverhampton Music School. Children explored and enjoyed a range of rhythm and singing activities.



## Year 1 Computing Day

On Thursday 13th January, Year 1 enjoyed a computing day. They learned about programming. They programmed Code-A-Pillow and Beebots to move around their classroom and through obstacles.

# Newsletter



# What have we been learning?



## **Year 4 Cooking session**

Year 4 thoroughly enjoyed welcoming back Mr Caldora from The Royal Academy of Culinary Arts for their second cookery session on 28th January. This lesson's focus was all about knife skills. The children were safely shown two different cutting methods that chefs use: the claw method and the bridge method. To practise these methods, the children prepared a fresh Brazilian salad using a range of ingredients. The children chopped and cut carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, celery, cucumber, apples and lettuce. Once they had prepared their salads, it was time to taste them. Year 4 loved the fresh flavours!

# knowledge and skills



## **Year 6 Design and Technology**

Year 6 enjoyed cooking sessions as part of their Design and Technology curriculum where they tasted and then made their own pasta sauces.



# Newsletter

# Values

## Merridale Values

Each half term, we focus on a core value. This half term we are learning about **RESILIENCE**.

What does **resilience** look like?

*Have a go*

*Keep trying*

*Never give up*

*Take a risk*

*Take on a challenge*

*Reflect*

*Have another go*

*Keep calm*

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 resilience with children at home and explore ways to reinforce it.





# Newsletter

## Term Dates

- Monday 28th February:** Eat them to Defeat Them Healthy eating campaign starts
- Tuesday 1st March:** 15 children from Years 2/3/4 to Wolverhampton Grammar School for World Book Day author event
- Thursday 3rd March:** World Book Day
- Monday 7th March:** Year 2 parent/carer meeting 3.15-4pm
- Wednesday 9th March:** Year 3 Wroxeter Visit
- Friday 11th March:** Year 5/6 Boys' Football Tournament at Aldersley
- Tuesday 15th March:** Year 2 Julia Donaldson event at Grand Theatre
- Tuesday 15th March:** Year 4 Athletics event at Smestow
- Friday 18th March:** Year 4 Bikeability (15 places)
- Friday 18th March:** Fourth and FINAL payment date for Year 6 Borth residential. £30 due by today—SimsPay is preferred
- Friday 25th March:** Year 6 visit to Wolverhampton Archives
- Friday 1st April:** Year 3 Wolverhampton Art Gallery visit
- WB 4th April:** No after school clubs this week
- Tuesday 5th April:** Year 4 visit to Carding Mill Valley
- Thursday 7th April:** Year 1 visit to Dudley Zoo
- Friday 8th April 3.20pm:** School closes for Easter holidays
- Monday 11th April—Friday 22nd April:** School closed for Easter Holidays
- Monday 25th April:** School re-opens for Summer term
- Thursday 28th April:** Year 5 visit to Wolverhampton University
- Thursday 28th April:** Year 1 visit to Bantock House
- Monday 2nd May:** Bank Holiday—school closed
- Friday 6th May:** Eid Celebration Day
- WB 9th May:** Summer term after school clubs start
- Monday 9th May-Thursday 12th May:** Year 6 SATs week
- Monday 16th May:** Year 4 visit to Bantock House
- Tuesday 17th May:** Year 5 Singing in the Rain Music School event
- Wednesday 25th May:** School Photographs
- Monday 30th May—Friday 3rd June:** Half term. School closed
- Monday 6th June—INSET Day—school closed to pupils**
- Wednesday 8th June:** Farm on Wheels visit for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and 2
- Thursday 9th June:** Year 4 cooking session
- Friday 10th June:** Food Bank Friday collection
- Friday 17th June:** Year 5 Wolverhampton Art Gallery visit
- Wednesday 22nd—Friday 24th June:** Year 6 Borth residential
- Wednesday 6th July 1.45pm:** Sports Day
- Thursday 7th July 1.45pm:** RESERVE Sports Day
- Friday 15th July:** Nursery closes
- Tuesday 19th July 9.30am:** Year 6 Leavers Play performance for parents/carers
- Wednesday 20th July 3.20pm:** School closes to pupils for the Summer Holidays
- Thursday 21st July:** INSET Day—school closed to pupils
- Monday 5th September:** INSET Day—school closed to pupils
- Tuesday 6th September:** School re-opens to pupils for the Autumn term

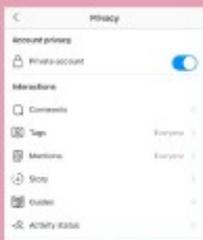
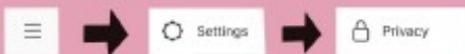
# Social Media Settings



Most social media apps are 13+ (WhatsApp is 16+) but - as we are aware some children are using them regularly - we wanted to share some important settings to keep children safe online.



## Instagram



**PRIVATE ACCOUNT:** when this is on, only followers can see your posts and stories and you have to approve followers  
(recommended: on)

**COMMENTS, TAGS, MENTIONS, STORY:** allows you to control who can tag you, comment on your posts, mention you in their story and control your story audience

You can also restrict, block or report a user by clicking on their profile and selecting the three dots in the top right.

You can also remove a follower using this method.



## Tiktok



**PRIVATE ACCOUNT:** when this is on, only followers can see your posts and you have to approve followers  
(recommended: on)

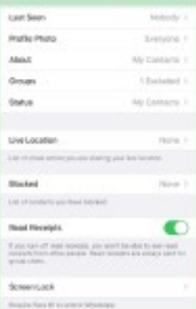
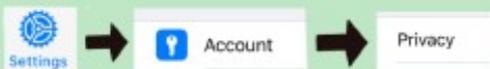
**SAFETY:** Tiktok has lots of options to restrict contact and interaction with video posts  
(recommended: friends)

**COMMENT FILTERS:** you can automatically hide comments that may have offensive words in  
(recommended: on)

You can also block, report or remove a follower by clicking on their profile and clicking the three dots in the top right hand corner.



## WhatsApp



**PROFILE PHOTO AND STATUS:** You can change who can see a profile photo and status  
(recommended: my contacts)

**GROUPS:** allows you to stop a contact being able to add you to groups  
(recommended for when a friend adds you without permission)

**BLOCKED:** can add a contact to a blocked list so they can't message you.

You can also block or report a contact/number by clicking on the chat with them, clicking on their number/name at the top then scrolling down!



## Snapchat



**CONTACT:** decide who can message you and send you snaps  
(recommended: my friends)

**VIEW MY STORY:** restrict who can see your story  
(recommended: my friends)

**GHOST MODE:** if this isn't on, contacts can see your location on a map  
(recommended: on)

You can also block or report a user by locating their contact, tapping and holding their name and clicking more