Growing Together

Merridale Primary School

Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's great to see everyone back at school for the start of the new school year. Staff have been delighted to see the children again and we have enjoyed seeing how happy children have been to see their friends and have a chance to play together again after the summer break. We look forward to a term full of learning and fun together. We extend a warm welcome to our new families and children who have started this term, particularly our new Reception and Nursery children as they start their learning journey with us at Merridale.

I am sure you have seen our previous letter (which can be found here)which explains the safety measures we are continuing with at school during September and beyond. Please remember that COVID has not gone away and we will, undoubtedly, see cases rise as schools re-open. All members of our school community must do all they can to keep themselves and others safe so please help to support us with these continuing measures as we start the new school year. As we move through the term, we are hopeful to introduce more normal school routines but this is dependent on the number of cases that we have within our school community and the local area.

School staff take twice-weekly Lateral Flow Home Tests and we urge parents, carers and children to do the same You can order your FREE home test kits here. Please remember: if you receive a positive LFT result, **DO NOT** attend school and arrange a PCR test straight away. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive LFT or PCR test result **MUST NOT** attend school. Please notify school immediately if your child has COVID-19 symptoms or received a positive test result.

We still encourage the wearing of face coverings for staff (when not teaching) and would advise parents and carers to do the same whilst on the school site. We also strongly advise that families practise social distancing on the school site.

We will keep our risk assessment under review as we move through the term and will notify you of any changes via text message link to our school website (letters section) which can be found here . Please make sure that school has up-to-date contact numbers for your family as text messages will only be sent to the main contact identified for each child. We also regularly send online forms for some permissions via text link. If you need any support accessing these, please contact school.

You asked, we responded: Our SimsPay online payment system is now fully up and running. After consultation with parents and carers, there was an overwhelming positive response and request for this. However, we have seen a limited number of families sign up for this system. If you pay for school meals or milk for your child, we urge you to use this system to avoid sending cash into school. Families can also pay for school trips and visits using SimsPay. If you require any support setting up your account, please e-mail: office@merridaleprimary.co.uk

Thank you to our parents, carers, family and school community for your continued support as we work together on your child's learning journey. Please remember that school staff will always make themselves available to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have throughout the year via the main school office, telephone or e-mail.

Yours Sincerely, Mr Lane
Headteacher

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Newsletter

Staffing Changes

We are pleased to welcome two new members of staff to Merridale. Mrs Hitch is our new School Administrator working in the main school office and Mrs Hatton is our new Year 2 class teacher, taking over from Mrs Tanner as she will be shortly be leaving to have her baby.

Attendance and Punctuality

Can I remind you of the importance of children attending school every day unless they are unwell. If your child is ill, please telephone the school office to inform them on the first day of absence.

Our attendance policy states that we are unable to authorise any absence for family holiday, trips or visits. If you wish to discuss this further, please make an appointment to see Mr Lane or Mrs Towle.

Can I remind you that children can come straight into the school building between 8.40am and 8.50am where they will be supervised by school staff. From 8.50am, children must enter school through the main office at the front of the building and they will be classed as late and a text will be sent home.

All children must be collected from school between 3.10 and 3.20pm unless they have permission to walk home alone. We continue to operate our one-way system at the end of the school day. Please can we ask that all members of our school community respect this system when collecting children.

Patterns of poor attendance and punctuality will be followed-up by the school's educational welfare officer to look at ways of reducing these instances. If you require any support with these areas, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Contact Details

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 contact sheet and medical form will shortly be sent out to all families. This is an opportunity to amend and correct your details where necessary. 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.

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.

School Equipment

We have tried to limit the number of items that children bring into school from home. All children have been provided with all equipment/stationery needed for school (pens, pencils, rulers etc) 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).

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 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 during the Autumn term. Please send your child's swimming kit into school in a named bag on a Thursday, starting from Thursday 16th 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.

Sickness

If your child is unwell, could you please call to advise the school office before 9am each day. This applies for every day that they are unable to attend school.

Please note that any child with sickness or diarrhoea must be clear for at least 48 hours before returning back to school – Many thanks for your co-operation.

Newsletter

Milk Money
Milk money for the Autumn term will be £14.00 unless your child is entitled to free school milk. Please note that children in Year 1 and Year 2 are **not** entitled to free school milk unless parents have applied for this (it is not included in the Universal Infant free School Meal entitlement). Sims Pay is preferred for this please. If you need any help setting up a SimsPay account, please contact Mrs Towle at school. Milk money for this term must be paid no later than 24th September.

Dinner Money
Dinner money is £2.30 per day (£11.50 per week). SimsPay is preferred for school meal payments. Dinner money must be paid at the start of each week. If you do pay by cash, money be sent into school at the start of each week in a named, sealed envelope. You can view our school meals menu here.

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.

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.**

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.

Outdoor Learning
Government advice is for learning to take place outside wherever possible. Children will be going outside as often as the weather allows so please ensure they are dressed appropriately for this. We ask all children to bring in a pair of named wellies in carrier bag which they can leave at school throughout the term to use when the ground is wet.

Handwashing
We have strict hand-washing and hygiene procedures in place in school. Children are instructed to wash their hands regularly and practice healthy respiratory hygiene practices (including catch it, bin it, kill it).

Allergies
Merridale is a NUT FREE school. Please do not send in nuts or items containing nuts in any from into school.

WOW Walk to School
We encourage all families to earn their walk to school badges by ensuring they walk to school at least once per week. Find out more here.

Term Dates

Tuesday 14th September: Year 3 and Year 4 Forest School/Outdoor learning session (every Tuesday up to and including Tuesday 19th October). Children will require suitable (outdoor, waterproof) clothing and wellies for these sessions please
Wednesday 15th September: Collection morning for Afghan Refugees (see letter on school website)
Thursday 16th September: First Year 5 swimming session
Friday 17th September: Food Bank Friday collection
WB 20th September: Healthy Living Week
Wednesday 22nd September 5pm: Year 6 parent/carer meeting
Wednesday 22nd September: Year 3 visit to Kingswood (TBC and details to follow)
Friday 24th September: Fun and Fitness/ Merridale Marathon (parents, carers and families will not be able to come into school for this)
Friday 24th September: Milk money due by today - £14.00 per child for the term
Wednesday 6th October 3.30-8pm: Meet The Teacher (to be confirmed)
Friday 15th October: Year 4 Cooking session (further details to follow)
Friday 22nd October 3.20pm: School closes for half term
Monday 25th-Friday 29th October: Half term – school closed
Monday 1st November: School re-opens
Friday 5th November: Diwali celebration day in school. Children are invited to wear celebration clothing if they wish
Monday 15th – Thursday 18th November 3.20-4pm: Book Fair in school (to be confirmed)
WB 15th November: Anti-Bullying/E-Safety week
Friday 19th November: Odd Socks for Anti-Bullying Day (further details to follow)
Tuesday 7th and Wednesday 8th December 2pm: Reception, Year 1 and 2 Christmas Play performance for parents and carers (To be confirmed)
WB 13th December: Christmas Enterprise week
Thursday 16th December 2pm: Christmas Enterprise Week sale for parents. Carers and families (To be confirmed)
Friday 17th December 3.20pm: School closes for the Christmas Holidays
Tuesday 4th January: INSET Day – school closed to pupils
Wednesday 5th January: School re-opens to pupils for the Spring term

HM Government

NHS

CORONAVIRUS

STAY ALERT TO THE SYMPTOMS

HIGH TEMPERATURE
OR NEW CONTINUOUS COUGH
OR LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL?

Find out how to get a test, and how long to isolate, at **nhs.uk/coronavirus**

STAY ALERT › CONTROL THE VIRUS › SAVE LIVES

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive LFT or PCR test result

MUST NOT ATTEND SCHOOL.

Arrange a test and notify school IMMEDIATELY!

Telephone 01902 558760 or

E-mail: office@merridaleprimary.co.uk

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one issue of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Online Safety Tips for Children

Wow, it's September already! The month when autumn officially starts and ... oh yeah, the beginning of a new school year. Every cloud has a silver lining though! Another term means new friends to make, different stuff to learn, fresh online trends to jump on and exciting new games to play on your phone, computer or console. We've compiled a list of our top tips to ensure that - whether you're going online to chat, research things or just have fun - you can do it safely.

Be cautious with your profile

Be careful not to give out too much info on your social media or gaming profiles. Details like your full name, address or school's name could all help strangers to actually find you offline. A trusted adult can help you make your profiles private – so only your family and actual friends can contact you.

Lock your devices

Taking your phone or tablet to school? Turn password protection on. It keeps your private info safe and stops anyone accessing your device without permission. Passwords should be memorable to you – but difficult for anyone else to guess. Get a trusted adult to write it down in case you forget it!

Be smart with screen time

Too much screen time, especially just before bed, can affect your quality of sleep. Losing sleep, or not sleeping well enough, messes with your concentration and energy levels. Try muting notifications so you don't get pinged late at night: you'll feel fresher and more focused the next day.

Know how to deal with bullies

Sadly there are people online who enjoy picking on other users. If you ever feel like you're being bullied online – by anyone, not just someone from school – talk to a trusted adult about it. Together, you can discuss possible steps, such as blocking or reporting the person who's targeting you.

Manage online relationships wisely

Most people in a relationship chat to their partner online. Just be mindful that once you send a pic or message (even if it's private), you no longer control who else might see it. Messaging someone you've never actually met – and who might not be who they say – is definitely best avoided.

React well to inappropriate content

When you're researching something online, there's always a chance of finding content that makes you feel uncomfortable or upset. If this happens, you can report it as inappropriate and (hopefully) get it taken down. Tell a trusted adult what happened: they'll help you decide what to do next.

Report offensive in-game chat

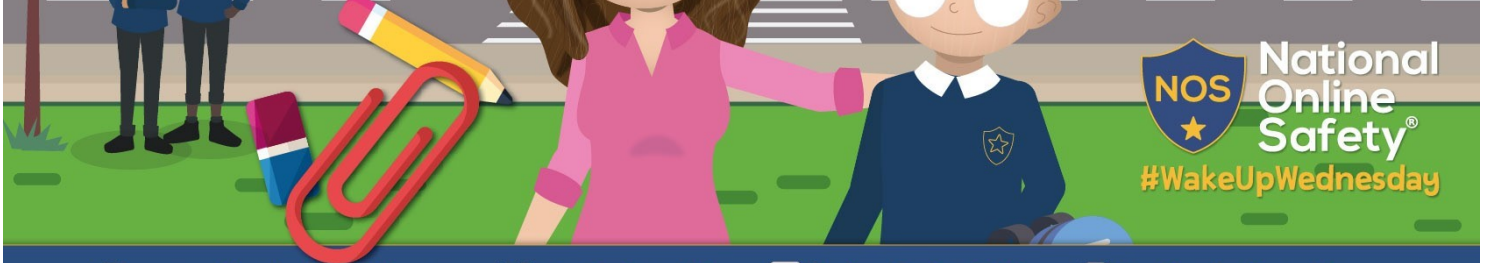
If you game online with your mates, you'll know things can get competitive and heated on the in-game chat. Playing against people you don't know (especially if they're older) raises the risk of offensive comments and even threats. Our advice? Find out how to block or mute those bad losers.

Learn to spot fake news

If you're looking into a topic for homework or a project, be careful not to get taken in by fake news: content that's deliberately created to mislead people. Check the story with credible sources, like the BBC or Sky News. Trust your instincts, too – if it seems too unbelievable to be true, it's probably fake.

Keep it 'real' with online friends

Everyone enjoys adding friends and followers on social media. It's important, though, that the people you interact with online really are your friends. If they're just random people you've connected with to increase your contacts, you don't know if they could be trolls or bullies (or worse).



National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

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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.