



Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,
As we are now half way through the school year, we would like to share with you some of the learning opportunities and events that we have been enjoying and exploring at school.

Parent/Carer Consultations

On Wednesday 12th February, parents and carers were invited into school to meet with their children's class teachers and look at the work from the year so far. We always find these events to be very well attended but we still have a few families who make appointments but fail to attend. If you have made an appointment with a member of staff that you are unable to attend, please telephone the school in advance to let us know. This way, appointment slots can be made available for other parents and carers.

Road Safety

We do not currently have a crossing patrol warden on the zebra crossing outside school. We have noticed that many children do not cross this road safely. **Please can parents and carers ensure that they insist that their children use the zebra crossing correctly and safely:** stop at the crossing, wait for the traffic to cross and walk across the road.

We appreciate your support in this whilst we wait for a new crossing patrol warden to be appointed by the Council.



Parent/Carer Survey

Thanks to all of our parents and carers who completed and returned our recent survey. We will be texting the winning raffle ticket number this week so that the winner can claim their prize from the school office. Please note that prize can only be given on presentation of the matching winning ticket.

We will shortly be analysing the survey responses and sending the findings to families.

WGS Book Quiz and Book Award

During the first half of the Spring term, some of our Year 6 children were lucky enough to be invited to Wolverhampton Grammar School for their Children's Book Quiz and Book Award ceremony. Our quiz team worked hard to read the 7 shortlisted titles so that they could compete against other local schools. The team did incredibly well against some stiff competition to come 4th in the quiz on the 4th February.



On 13th February, 15 Year 6 children were invited back to WGS for the book Award ceremony where they got to meet many of the authors of the shortlisted titles and take part in some fun activities. Humza Arshad was the winning author this year, taking the title for his book "Little Badman and the Invasion of the Killer Aunties".





Newsletter

Key Stage 2 Poetry Challenge



On Thursday 6th February, we held our Key Stage 2 Poetry Challenge showcase. Our junior children were challenged to learn a poem off by heart and perform it to the rest of the school. At this event, we were lucky enough to be joined by Wolverhampton's Girl's High student, Elizabeth Stuart, who has recently been appointed as Wolverhampton's Young Poet Laureate. Elizabeth helped to coach and guide the performers to ensure they could present their poems confidently to their audience. She also performed her winning poem and told us about her new role as well as her love of poetry.

We were incredibly proud of all of our performers at the showcase and look forward to next year's challenge.

NSPCC Number Day

Thanks to all of the children and families who helped us to raise £110 for the NSPCC on our Number Day on 7th February. We loved seeing the children's numbered clothing around school.



World Book Day

We will be celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 5th March. Our theme for this event is "Reading around the World" and classes will be celebrating and sharing stories and books from a wide range of different countries. We do not require children to dress up for this event.



Yoga



Kids Yoga!

This half term, we have begun a series of yoga sessions for our Reception, Year 2 and 3 children with a full-qualified yoga instructor. These sessions help children to pause, catch their breath and get a sense of what they need. Mindfulness is also built into these sessions to help children to pay attention to their thoughts or feelings without judgement. We are really excited about this opportunity to support our pupils' mental health and well-being in a fun, active way.

Benefits of Mindfulness for Young Children:

- Promotes physical and mental wellbeing
- Supports the development of self-regulation and executive functioning skills i.e. attention, memory and impulse control
- Relieves anxiety and provides strategies to help prevent future anxiety
- Encourages social and emotional learning.
- Helps children to identify, express and share their emotions and so develop positive coping strategies, behaviour and social skills.

Dinner Money

Dinner money is £2.30 per day (£11.50 per week). Please can dinner money be sent into school at the start of each week in a named, sealed envelope. 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.

We ask that children stick to the same meal choice for half a term at a time (either school dinner or packed lunch), this is to assist the school kitchen in ordering food. If you do wish to change your child's meal option, please can an adult inform the school office.



Newsletter

Big Bird Watch

On Monday 27th January, our Year 4 pupils enjoyed taking part in the RSPB's annual "Big Bird Watch". The children counted and recorded many different species of bird in our school grounds.



Cashless Payment System

As many of you are aware, we are currently exploring the option of introducing a cashless payment system at school. At our recent parent consultation evening, we conducted a survey to find out whether such a system would be used by enough parents and families to make it worthwhile. The response was an overwhelming YES! Over the coming months, we will be exploring options and will keep you updated when we are in a position to roll out an app that can be used on phones and devices to make payments to school e.g. for school meals, trips, visits and clubs.

Year 4 Synagogue Visit

On the 28th January, Year 4 enjoyed their visit to Singers Hill Synagogue in Birmingham. They learned lots about the Jewish faith, the history and traditions.



Junior PCSOs

Over the Spring term, a number of our Year 4 and 5 pupils have been taking part in the West Midlands Police Junior Police Community Support Officer programme. The programme aims to empower students to tackle community-related issues, including road safety, bullying, online safety and anti-social behaviour. Our children have thoroughly enjoyed learning about their role and responsibilities in our community.

Eat them to Defeat Them!



Over the next six weeks, we will be taking part in a nationwide campaign, sponsored by ITV, SKY and Channel 4, to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables. We would love it if families could get involved as well. You can find out more here:

www.eatthemtodefeatthem.com

Each week, the campaign focuses on a different fruit or vegetable. The programme looks like this:

Week 1 - Carrots - It's crunch time carrots!

Week 2 - Peas - You're going down peas!

Week 3 - Sweetcorn - Sweetcorn, it's time to face the heat!

Week 4 - Broccoli - Hasta la vista broccoli!

Week 5 - Tomatoes - Bring it on tomatoes!

Week 6 - Peppers - You're stuffed peppers!

We will have a tasting table at lunchtimes and children will receive stickers for trying and eating the vegetable/fruit of the week. Please can we ask that parents, carers and families also try hard to notice and make a point of celebrating children's healthy choices over the coming weeks and beyond.

Year 5 Class Assembly

On Thursday 30th January, we were entertained and educated by Year 5's class assembly about the Ancient Greeks. We enjoyed their re-telling of the Greek myth "The Trojan Horse". The children combined excellent acting and singing to create a fun, informative showcase of their learning so far.





Newsletter

Care Home Writing Project

We are really excited about our new project where we will be giving children from our Year 2 and Year 5 classes the opportunity to write to the elderly residents of some local care homes. This intergenerational pen-pal project will give children opportunities to write for real purposes and also give the care home residents some lovely letters to look forward to and reply to. We are hoping to develop this project further with some possible pupil visits to their pen-pals later on in the year.



Reading Challenge

As you know, Merridale is a Reading School. We know that when children read everyday, they achieve more at school. For this reason, we have a weekly "Reading Challenge" - we ask all children to read at home at least 5 times per week. We ask parents and carers to sign children's reading records to show that they have read at home and children receive stickers and stamps on their class chart each week to show their achievement. At the end of each half term, the children with the most stickers/stamps on their class chart are entered into a special draw to win a prize.

EYFS Parent Workshops

In February, in EYFS, nursery parents and carers were invited to come into the setting to learn more about how to prepare young children for writing. They took part in lots of fun activities which develop gross and fine motor skills which are essential for good physical development.

Reception parents and carers were invited into school to take part in a number workshop. The focus was on counting and recognising numbers to 20. Everyone in attendance was given a number pack full of interactive games that can be played with number cards and dice. The children loved seeing their parents in school and playing the games with them before taking them home to play there.

Both events were very well attended and we hope were useful to parents and carers. The EYFS team will be holding a reading party later in the year as well as an Eid celebration day so please keep your eyes on the newsletters for the upcoming dates.

The World of Work—Careers Talks

We are keen to give our children experience of the wide range of job and employment opportunities that will be available to them in their future. For this reason, over the past half term, we have been inviting visitors into school to talk about their jobs and careers. So far this term, Year 4 have met a tree surgeon and Year 5 and 6 children have had the opportunity to meet two people who work for homeless charity, P3 (www.p3charity.org)

We have many more visits planned but we are keen to find more volunteers who might be willing to come into school to share their experience in the world of work with our pupils. If you are interested in getting involved (or know someone who might be interested in getting involved), please contact Mrs Towle at school.

Play leader training at The Way

On Tuesday 21st January, our Year 5 and 6 Peer Mentors attended some Play Leader training at The Way to enhance the support they provide to other pupils at break and lunch times. The children thoroughly enjoyed the activities and soon got to work back at school putting the approaches and games into action.



Year 6 Wolverhampton Archives Visit

On Thursday 23rd January, Year 6 visited Wolverhampton Archives to find out more about World War 1 as part of their current Discover topic. The children thoroughly enjoyed learning from local historians to find out more about the impact of the war on Wolverhampton and surrounding areas.





Newsletter

Food Bank Friday Collection

Yet again, we were overwhelmed by the generosity of our school community for our termly Friday Food Bank collection. We were able to send off many items to The Well foodbank, which will be used to support local families in need.



Children's Mental Health and Well-Being Week

The week beginning 3rd February was Children's mental health and well-being week. Throughout this week, we explored big feelings and ways that we can seek help when we need it. We continue to encourage parents and families to regularly make time to talk about issues that can affect our mental health and well-being.



Further ideas and support can be found here: www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk

Year 2 Wolverhampton Art Gallery Visit

On Friday 17th January, Year 2 visited Wolverhampton Art Gallery for a "Materials and Methods" workshop. The children did some "3d Sculpture" during the session. First, they explored the gallery, looking at sculptures and talking about what they were made of and how they were created. Children then used clay to create their own bust (head and shoulders) using tools and joining methods.



Sport Relief

On Friday 13th March, we will be raising money for Sport Relief by asking children to donate £1 (or any other amount you wish) to wear red for the day and complete our Daily Mile.



Attendance and Punctuality

We continue to strive for our whole school attendance to stay at or above 96%! Well done to all of the children who have achieved this so far this year.

For the school year so far (September to February)

Whole school: 95.5%

Reception: 93%

Year 1: 93.3%

Year 2: 96.5%

Year 3: 95.6%

Year 4: 95.8%

Year 5: 96.2%

Year 6: 97.6%

The class with the highest attendance at the end of this term will enjoy an end of term treat to celebrate their achievement.

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.

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.

All children must be collected by an adult from school at 3.15pm unless they have permission to walk home alone. I appreciate your support in this.

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 do not hesitate to make an appointment to see Mr Lane. 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.



Newsletter

Term Dates

Thursday 27th February: Year 4 cooking session
Thursday 5th March: World Book Day (Reading around the World)
Tuesday 10th March: Year 5 Poetry Workshop
Thursday 12th March: Year 4 Bikeability session
Thursday 12th March: School Nurse drop in session for parents and carers 8.45am. No appointment needed.
Friday 13th March: Sport Relief. Pay £1 to wear red and complete our Daily Mile
Thursday 19th March 9.15am: Year 2 Class assembly—parents and carers invited to attend
Thursday 19th March: Year 4 visit to Wolverhampton Art Gallery
Friday 20th March: Year 6 4th (final) Borth payment due (£25)
Wednesday 25th March 2.15pm: Year 6 Discover showcase for parents, carers and families
Thursday 26th March 2.15pm: Year 4 Discover showcase for parents, carers and families
Week Beginning 30th March (last week of term): No after school clubs or tuition.
Thursday 2nd April: Easter Disco
Friday 3rd April 3.15pm: School closes for the Easter holidays
Monday 20th April: School re-opens for the Summer term.
Thursday 23rd April: School Nurse drop in session for parents and carers 8.45am. No appointment needed.
Friday 24th April: Year 1 visit to Dudley Zoo
Monday 4th May: After school clubs start this week
Wednesday 6th May 2.15pm: Year 3 Discover showcase for parents, carers and families
Thursday 7th May 9.15am: Year 1 class assembly—parents and carers are invited to attend.
Friday 8th May: Bank Holiday—School closed
WB Monday 11th May: Year 6 SATs week
Friday 15th May 9am: Nursery New intake parent/carer meeting
Tuesday 19th May: Year 5 Singing in the Rain event
Thursday 21st May: Year 5 visit to Grand theatre “Holes”
Thursday 21st May: School Nurse drop in session for parents and carers 8.45am. No appointment needed.
Friday 22nd May: Year 6 visit to Bilston Art Gallery
Friday 22nd May 3.15pm: School closes for half term
Monday 1st June: School re-opens to pupils
Thursday 4th June 2.15pm: Year 1 Discover showcase for parents, carers and families
Wednesday 3rd June 2pm: Reception New intake parent/carer meeting
Friday 5th June: Food Bank Friday collection
Friday 5th June—Saturday 6th June: Year 2 visit to Sycamore Green Adventure Centre and sleepover
WB 8th June: Year 1 Phonic Check week
Wednesday 10th June: School Photograph day
Thursday 11th June: Year 3 visit to Wolverhampton Art Gallery
Friday 12th June: Year 5 visit to Wolverhampton Art Gallery
Thursday 18th June: School Nurse drop in session for parents and carers 8.45am. No appointment needed.
Wednesday 17th June 9.15am: Reception class assembly—parents and carers are invited to attend.
Wednesday 24th June: Reception visit to Rays Farm
Wednesday 24th—Friday 26th June: Year 6 Borth residential
Wednesday 8th July 1.45pm: Sports Day—parents, carers and family invited to attend.
Thursday 9th July 1.45pm: RESERVE Sports Day
Friday 10th July: Merridale’s Got Talent
Friday 10th July: Last day of term for Nursery children
Wednesday 15th July 9.30am: Year 6 Leaver’s Play—parents, carers and family invited to attend
Wednesday 15th July: Year 6 Leaver’s party after school
Thursday 16th July: Summer Disco
Friday 17th July 3.15pm: School closes to pupils for the Summer holidays.
Monday 20th July: INSET day—school closed to pupils.
Tuesday 1st September: INSET day—school closed to pupils.
Wednesday 2nd September: School open to pupils



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.