



Merry Hill

Infant School and Nursery

Headteacher: Ms. Melissa Adams MA, NPQH

10th October 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Staffing News

We are excited to welcome three new team members joining us this term: Miss Senghani, Ms Cubbin and Miss Newman. They each bring with them unique skills, enthusiasm and experience and we can't wait for them to become part of our school community.

Miss Senghani brings extensive experience in childcare and working in inclusive environments, and we know her expertise will be invaluable to the children and staff. Ms Cubbin, with her art and design background, has worked on architectural projects with local authorities to improve school environments. She also has experience in inclusive settings, making her a perfect fit for our team.

Miss Newman, a former Merry Hill pupil, will be joining our breakfast club team and working a few days a week while studying for her Physiotherapy degree at the University of Hertfordshire. It's wonderful to see our pupils thrive in so many directions – and we're sure Miss Newman never expected she'd be back at Merry Hill quite so soon!

We are thrilled to have all three of them on board and look forward to the positive impact they will make on our school learning community.

'Healthy Learners' – how we ensure we are ready to learn

World Mental Health Day at Merry Hill Infant School

Each year, on 10th October, we join together to celebrate World Mental Health Day, an important opportunity to raise awareness of mental health and well-being. At Merry Hill Infant School, we are fully committed to prioritising the mental well-being of both our staff and pupils as they work and learn in our community.

This year's theme, "**Workplace Mental Health**," invites us to reflect on the support we provide within our school. For our staff, we take a proactive approach to well-being by ensuring a healthy balance between workload and personal time, with open communication at the heart of our ethos. We encourage staff to share their thoughts, knowing that their voices are heard and valued. Professional development (CPD) is a priority at Merry Hill, allowing staff to grow while maintaining well-being. Additionally, we offer initiatives such as Fitness Mondays—a chance for staff to take part in exercise sessions—and actively encourage staff to make the most of opportunities to finish early when their schedules allow, promoting a healthy work-life balance.

For our pupils, mental well-being is embedded in our daily practice. We have created mindfulness areas within the school where children can reflect and find calm. Our therapeutic approach to behaviour ensures that all children feel safe, supported, and understood. Regular daily exercise is also incorporated into the school routine, helping pupils stay physically active while promoting emotional balance. Through these initiatives, we ensure that every child feels nurtured and secure, empowering them to learn and grow with confidence.

At Merry Hill, mental health and well-being are not limited to a single day—they are fundamental to everything we do. By nurturing a caring and supportive environment, we help our entire school community thrive.

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Online Safety and Resources to Support Parents and Carers

As we continue to prioritise the well-being and development of our children, it is vital to also focus on online safety. In today's digital world, technology plays a significant role in children's lives from a young age. To support parents and carers in navigating these challenges, we have included a link to Hertfordshire's Online Safety Newsletter, which offers valuable guidance and resources. We encourage you to take a look to ensure that our children can thrive mentally, including when online.

<https://www.hfleducation.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/hfl-education-online-safety-newsletter-autumn24-parents-carers.pdf>

'Curious Learners' – *what we learn*

At Merry Hill, we are incredibly fortunate to have a library filled to the brim with a diverse selection of exciting books. Our collection is a true treasure trove of cultural representation, and our walls are filled with showcasing stories from around the world. If you have any cultural stories at home that you can recommend, we would love to add them to our collection! Additionally, this is a great reminder about our Birthday Book Club, where you can contribute a book in celebration of your child's special day.

We invite you to explore our recommended list of books that beautifully illustrate the richness of various cultures. Literature is a powerful tool for learning and encourages our children to ask questions about the world around them, such as:

- What do people in other countries eat?
- Why is my skin colour different?
- Why do some families celebrate different holidays?
- What languages do people speak in different places?
- Why do some people wear different clothes?

These enquiries foster an environment of learning and growth as we embark on this journey together.

We cannot stress enough the importance of reading at home with your child. The time you spend together reading, and engaging with stories, significantly impacts their learning and development. We truly appreciate all of you who make reading a regular part of your routine. To help us stay connected with your child's progress, we kindly ask that you write in your child's reading record and keep it in their book bag along with their reading book. This simple act helps us see how they are progressing both at home and in school, ensuring that we can support them fully in their reading journey.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to your child's learning.

Year Group Blogs

Each week the class teachers post blogs, which enable you to find out more about our education offer and reinforce learning at home. Please click on the link below to see the wonderful learning that has taken place over the week.

<https://merryhill.org.uk/our-learning-community/year-group-blogs/>

'Ambitious Learners' – *how we act when we learn*

This Week's Focus: The Golden Rule – 'Do be Gentle'

This week, we wanted to share more about our golden rule: Do be gentle. It is a simple yet powerful reminder that kindness and respect should guide how we treat each other every day. We have been actively reinforcing

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this important rule in the classroom, playground and around the school through positive reinforcement and discussions.

How you can support at home:

- **Model gentle behaviour:** children learn from what they see, so showing patience and kindness in your own actions helps reinforce this lesson.
- **Talk about feelings:** encourage your child to express how they feel and listen when they do. This helps them understand the impact their words and actions have on others.
- **Celebrate gentleness:** when you see your child being gentle, praise them and explain why it is important.

Together we can create a supportive and caring environment both at school and at home. Thank you for your continued support in helping us nurture these values in our children.

'Collaborative Learners' – our place in the world

As part of our commitment to celebrating cultural diversity at Merry Hill, we are excited to highlight Black History Month this October. We look forward to welcoming Dr Ruddock for an inspiring assembly next week.

While we take this opportunity to celebrate and honour the contributions of Black individuals to our society, it's important to remember that we embrace our unique histories and cultures every day of the year. Our goal is to cultivate an environment where all children feel valued and appreciated for their backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

Through engaging activities and discussions, we encourage our pupils to become collaborative learners who appreciate the rich tapestry of cultures in our world. Together, let's celebrate our differences and learn from one another, reinforcing the message that every month is a chance to honour the diversity that enriches our community.

Thank you for your ongoing support in fostering a culture of inclusivity and understanding at Merry Hill.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

The Friends of Merry Hill would like to say a HUGE thank you to everyone who attended and/or donated money or baked goods towards this year's Macmillan Cancer Support coffee morning. We had a brilliant time getting to know lots of new faces, and we feel immensely proud of the monies raised for this incredible charity. We raised a whopping £287 this year thanks to all of you!

Parent Consultations

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the Year 1 parents' consultations this week; your support and involvement in your children's education make such a positive difference and it is also a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the children's achievements together. We look forward to welcoming our Year 2 parents and carers next week for their parents' consultations and the Early Years parents and carers after half term.

Have a wonderful and restful weekend.

Sincerely,

Ms Melissa Adams
Headteacher

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