



2nd February 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

This week we were delighted to welcome our parents/carers of children with SEND to our APDR (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) meetings. Working in partnership with parents is an essential part of identifying and providing the right support at the right time for our children. Please don't forget our Family Support Coffee morning taking place this Monday 5th February. It is an opportunity for parents/carers to chat together as well as with our SENCo, Mrs Summers, about any concerns you may have regarding extra support for your child. This might be related to speech and language, special educational needs and disabilities etc. We look forward to welcoming you then.

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

During our weekly safety assembly, we talked about the importance of making good choices. We discussed the golden rules and how we use them every day to help us make good choices. We also know that our choices can affect others so it is important to make sure we try our best to follow the golden rules. In assembly, we shared why we must walk in our classroom and corridors and not run, so that we can help keep each other safe. Next week, we will be looking to hand out team points for people making great choices e.g. holding the door open for others, keeping the cloakroom tidy and moving around the school safely.

GOLDEN RULES

The Six Golden Rules are:

- Do be gentle
- Do be kind
- Do work hard
- Do look after property
- Do listen to people
- Do be honest

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Merry Hill's Vocabulary Parade

The children looked amazing as they entered school this morning, displaying a real variety of words; thank you so much for supporting us in our journey to establishing life-long word learners! The children proudly displayed their words while promenading the catwalk; some children even incorporated a little action to personify their chosen word! Attached to this week's newsletter are some word games you can play at home to help develop your child's vocabulary.

Please see the blogs for further details about our Vocabulary Parade:

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



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Cost of Living

Every week, we aim to feature a suggestion for a free (or inexpensive) family activity that you can enjoy together. If anyone has any tips or ideas of free or inexpensive activities you would like to share with our community, please let the office know. I hope you find these activities enjoyable and valuable for quality time together.

Leavesden Country Park

What: Leavesden Country Park is formed on the grounds originally belonging to the Leavesden Asylum and St. Pancras Orphanage. The asylum and the orphanage were both constructed in 1868 and continued in various forms until 1995. Two of the original hospital buildings can still be seen from the north side of the park, which consists of two children's play areas, three football pitches, an adult outdoor gym, a BMX track and over 20 acres of woodland area. The south side comprises of about 50 acres of typical English parkland along with a variety of apple trees, a pergola and the largest Monkey Puzzle tree in Hertfordshire.

Where: College Road, WD5 0NX

For further information and to book specific events, please visit:

<https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/pages/category/peace-doves>



For those of you attending the movie night tonight, I do hope you enjoy it. Thank you to the wonderful FoMH who have organised this exciting event.

I hope you all have a wonderful weekend!

Sincerely,

Ms Melissa Adams
Headteacher

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Helping your child learn words: Play word games

Word games are a great way to get your child interested in words. The more words we know the easier it is to get on in life. We learn best when we are having fun. Play word games when you are travelling somewhere: walking home, in cars, on buses or trains. You just need to have learnt a couple of games, so you are ready to play at any time. The first few games are the easiest.

I went shopping

This game is good for developing memory, so is good for adults too. One person starts by saying, 'I went shopping and I bought a ...' (names a food item). The second player says, 'I went shopping and I bought ...' and repeats the first player's item before adding their own. The third player continues, saying the first two items before adding their own. And so on. See how many you can remember. A variation of this game is: 'I went on holiday and I packed ...'

What am I?

For younger children, riddles need to be straightforward, rather than the conundrums that older children enjoy so much. Three to four simple clues are usually adequate, for example:

- You find me ...
- I can ...
- An important thing about me is ...
- When you look at me, you can see ...

Example: 'You find me in the kitchen. I can cook food. An important thing about me is that I get hot. When you look at me, you can see a handle and lid. I am a ...'

I spy

Play the traditional 'I spy' game. 'I spy with my little eye something beginning with ... (letter)'.

Variation 1: Thinking hat. Word meaning clues are given rather than letters and the object does not need to be within sight. Say, 'I put on my thinking hat and think of something that is (give a clue)'. If incorrect say, 'It's not that. I put on my thinking hat and think of something that is (original clue and a second clue)'. Continue until the word has been guessed. E.g.: 'I put on my thinking hat and think of something that is spicy.'

Variation 2: Big brain. In this game players give a clue containing the first sound of the word as well as a word meaning clue. Unlike 'I spy', players do not need to be able to see the item,

but they need to think with their 'big brains'. For example, 'I think with my big brain, something that is part of a tree and begins with a "b."'

Word rounds

Choose one of the categories below. Go around the circle, with each player adding a category item.

Variation: After you have chosen your category set a timer for one minute. Taking turns around the group see how many words can be generated in one minute. Record the family total and then try to beat it next time.

Easier

Animals	Clothes	Food
Things you can see at the seaside	Things you would see at the zoo	Boys'/girls' names
Transport	Things in a classroom	Verbs (things we can do e.g. jump, walk, swim)

Harder

Things you can cut	Things you can smell	Toys and games
Somewhere you go on holiday	Countries	Adjectives (describing words e.g. long, pink, smelly)
Things that are cold	Things with legs	Sports
Things that grow	Books	Emotions
Things that are fast	Things that are red	Things that open
Furniture	Living things	Things that make noise
Shops	Breakable objects	Things that are long

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What can it do?

Pick one of the words below. Can you think of five things that it can do or that can be done with it? For example, **tree**: climb, chop, grow, fall down and absorb carbon dioxide.

apple	baby	ball	bread	chalk
giraffe	leaf	lion	lollipop stick	paper
paperclip	pencil	penguin	rubber band	stick
tree	your foot	your hand	cat	flour
flower	hair	water	air	spoon

Alison is an acrobat in Asia

Start at the beginning of the alphabet the first player must generate a name, profession and place that all begin with that letter. For example, for the letter 'a': 'Alison is an acrobat in Asia'. The next player then has to do the letter 'b': 'Bob is a builder in Benidorm'. Make it more complex and add adjectives, so it becomes 'Alison is an ambitious acrobat in Asia'. To make it easier, try name, food and a place in a house e.g. 'Alison is eating apples in the attic'.

Describe it!

Take a look at www.pobble365.com and look at the amazing images. Choose a picture and talk about it in turn. Support your child by taking in turns to talk about all the things you can see, how the picture makes you feel, what might someone be thinking, what might happen next, how someone or something is moving, what might someone say or what sort of person they are. Make the picture the start of an exciting adventure story.

What's the same and what's different?

Select two related words from a topic that your child is interested in and together talk about what is the same and different about two things:

- Book or film characters, e.g. Superman and Batman, Sirius and Voldemort
- Sports, e.g. rugby and football, basketball and volleyball.

- Hobbies, e.g. different computer games, computer games and board games, reading and films
- Restaurant chains, e.g.: Nandos vs McDonalds

Don't say it!

Cut out the words below or think of your own words. They might be related to what your child has learnt at school or any words that they are familiar with. Place all the words in a 'hat'. Each person takes a turn at taking out words from the hat. The challenge is to describe the word without using the word at all.

hill	trolley	graph	desert
dinosaur	fly swat	spaceship	cornflakes
mountain	biscuit	storm	flood
tree	umbrella	bee	baby
geography	daisy	crocodile	cinema
planets	purse	moon	present
spider	earthquake	tiger	America

Word associations

One player starts by saying a word. The next player says a word that is related to the first word. It can be related in any way. If another player cannot see how the words are related, they can challenge and the connection needs to be explained. Keep going until a word is repeated or a connection cannot be explained. Here's an example: Egypt – Mummy – Dad – beard – Santa Claus – Christmas – trees – leaves – departs – trains.

20 questions

One person thinks of an object. Others try and guess what it is by asking questions. The original player can only answer yes, no or maybe. Give a clue if they are on the wrong track. Can they guess it in 20 questions?

Play word games, have fun and your child's vocabulary will grow.

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