



6th September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

A warm welcome to the new school year at Merry Hill! We are thrilled to have your children with us and look forward to a year filled with learning, growth and excitement! The first Merry Hill Matters of the year is designed to provide you with some helpful information about daily life at Merry Hill.

Our Exceptional Team at Merry Hill

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our team this year.

Office and Support Team	Nursery Team	Reception Team	Year 1	Year 2	Assistant Head teachers
Mrs Stephenson (Office Manager), Mrs Krangel (Administration Support, <i>works mornings</i>), Mrs Tooley (Finance Officer, <i>works afternoons</i>), Mr I Reid (Site Manager)	Mrs Gavriel, Miss O'Donnell Mrs Parker	Mrs Jones, Miss Reuben Mrs Ogilvie-Jones Mrs Hill Mrs Barnes	Lions: Miss Bates Panthers: Miss Honor Learning Support Assistants Miss Will Mrs Rogerson Mrs Bradbury Miss Gold	Giraffes: Miss Stringer n Bears: Miss Finch Learning Support Assistants Mrs Shahzad Mrs Kemp Mrs Din Mrs Mitzman	Mrs Ineson Mrs Summers Mrs Hall (working remotely)

Communication at Merry Hill

Collaborating with our learning community is fundamental to the achievement of our learners. The intention behind each mode of communication is outlined as follows:

Merry Hill Matters (Friday) This weekly newsletter will keep you up to date with school information. It is categorised according to our curriculum drivers and enables you to share in our school vision and values and learn more about our school priorities.

Dates and Reminders (Friday) Along with Merry Hill Matters, you will receive upcoming dates and key reminders.

Emails (Tuesday and Friday) Emails are sent twice a week to convey relevant and time-sensitive updates, while avoiding email overload.

Blogs (Friday) The weekly blogs share the children's learning to give you an insight into what's happening in the classroom and provide further guidance on how you can support learning at home.

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Seesaw – This online platform is used in KS1 and shares learning, homework and reading progress. It is a two way communication of your child’s learning journey.

Tapestry – This online platform is used to share the learning within school across the Early Years and enables our parents/carers to respond and also share home learning and events.

How do you communicate with us?

Attendance matters – Strong attendance is crucial for our pupils to benefit from their school experience, which includes their academic achievements, overall well-being, and wider life chances. Further information is provided in the attendance letter attached to the email. **As a school we ask that you phone or email on the first day of your child’s absence** – preferably before the start of the day – to inform us of the reason why your child is not in school.

General information (bad night sleep, fall on the way to school – anything that may impact the day) – please speak to one of our team on the gate who will ensure the message is recorded in our communication book and passed on to the relevant team members.

Speaking to the Class Teacher (at the End of the School Day):

If you wish to speak with the class teacher at the end of the school day, we kindly ask that you wait until all the children have been dismissed. This is to ensure full compliance with health and safety regulations, maintain appropriate supervision of the class, and allow the teacher to give their undivided attention to the conversation once the children have safely departed. Should you need to convey a brief message, you may do so promptly.

Appointments with the Class Teacher, Headteacher, or Assistant Headteacher (including SENCO):

To arrange a formal meeting with the class teacher, Headteacher, or assistant Headteacher, including the SENCO, please contact the school office. You may do so by visiting in person, calling, or sending an email to schedule an appointment with the relevant member of staff.

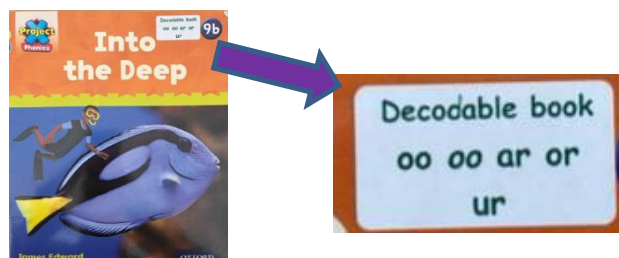
Phonics at Merry Hill

At Merry Hill, we use the ELS (Essentials Letters and Sounds) programme to teach phonics. There is written information as well as guidance videos about our whole school phonics programme available on our school website: <https://merryhill.org.uk/our-learning-community/our-curriculum/english/>

Reading Books

The children in KS1 will be bringing home their first reading books of the year. These include 2 books:

- 1 colour spot book for shared reading with an adult
- 1 phonics book, which is a fully decodable text, which the children should be able to read independently. The children will use their phonic skills to help them read unfamiliar words. The phonics decodable book has a label in the top right hand corner highlighting the focus phonemes within the text.



Please spend time practising reading with your child. There will be more information coming out to you regarding reading books. These texts will be changed every Friday in school. We encourage you to read each

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decodable text 4 times focussing on a different reading skill each time. Please watch this video to guide you through each of the 4 skills: <https://youtu.be/RHDaHaSAjPI?si=QnDcfPhN4Q45sUh>
Reception children will be bringing their reading books home very soon and there will be additional information and guidance provided to help support reading at home.

Zones of Regulation

Zones of Regulation

Throughout this week, our pupils have worked hard to enhance their learning behaviours and already their progress is truly commendable! We held assemblies and classroom discussions to help shape our successful school days and enjoyable playtimes. We also took the opportunity to address conflict resolution strategies which we can use if we have a disagreement with a friend, and we have reintroduced the Zones of Regulation. You can find further information about the zones of regulation here:

<https://merryhill.org.uk/our-learning-community/home-learning-blogs-and-extra-activities/emotional-wellbeing/>

Our team celebrates and acknowledges children whenever they demonstrate exemplary behaviour, and this consistent positive reinforcement contributes to the nurturing atmosphere that Merry Hill holds dear. It is important to ensure the children feel safe and comfortable at school, which is why we dedicate time establishing positive behaviours at the beginning of term, and reinforce throughout the year.

Timetables

Your child/ren will be coming home with a paper copy of their class timetable.

Class Bears

Each class has a special bear that plays a central role in encouraging positive behaviour, promoting public speaking and boosting confidence amongst the children. Every week, a child, who is demonstrating positive behaviours is chosen to take the class bear home. Your child then writes a diary entry about their time with the bear, describing the activities they shared. When the bear returns on the Monday, the child is able to share the diary with their friends.

Vocabulary at Merry Hill

We are passionate about building lifelong effective word learners here at Merry Hill. We use an approach called 'Word Aware' to teach children vocabulary. Please see the school website for further information:

<https://merryhill.org.uk/faqconc/how-do-we-teach-vocabulary-at-merry-hill/>

Label everything – Lost Property Box

Please label all clothes to prevent lost or mixed up items. Having labelled clothing enables us to return items to the children and saves parents/carers time and money.

Reception and Nursery have a lost property box for unnamed clothes found in their environment.

KS1 lost property box - located outside the library in the KS1 building. This can be accessed at the end of the day should any item get misplaced.

Road Safety

Road safety around school is crucial to protect our children as they travel to and from school. Please avoid parking on the yellow lines at school so that the children can cross the road safely. School Lane becomes very congested so we advise walking to school where possible and, if driving, parking further from school and walking the remaining distance.

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Lunch Time and Halal Options

Merry Hill is pleased to announce that we do offer a Halal meat option every Wednesday, through our catering company HCL. We are committed to meeting the diverse dietary needs of our pupils and acknowledge that some families require Halal meat for religious or cultural reasons. However, due to the higher costs of Halal meat and our limited budget, we kindly ask families whose children exclusively consume Halal meat for religious, dietary, or personal reasons to inform the school office at information@merryhill.herts.sch.uk. Your cooperation helps us ensure that we can provide this option while managing budget constraints.

Birthday Book Club and how we celebrate Birthdays

At Merry Hill, we love to celebrate children's birthdays during our class assemblies by giving them the chance to share a special book or magazine with their friends. In previous years, these donations have helped build up our school library. Now, we're focusing on enhancing classroom reading corners as well as the library. If your child wishes to donate a book or magazine for their birthday, they will present it during the assembly, and we'll add a special label with their name and birthday inside. This is a voluntary way for your child to share something special with their friends, and they'll be the first to read it! Some suggested magazines include Eco Kids Planet, First News, National Geographic Kids, Anorak, Amazing!, Horrible Histories, and more.

[Nursery Book List](#)

[Reception Book List](#)

[Year One Book List](#)

[Year Two Book List](#)

On behalf of our entire team, we look forward to the new academic year and extend our appreciation for your invaluable support in ensuring a smooth return to school.

Have a restful weekend.

Sincerely,

Ms Melissa Adams
Headteacher

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