



MERRY HILL INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Starting School Booklet



‘A Happy Face, A Learning Place, A Growing Space’

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Welcome to Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery

On behalf of all our staff I would like to welcome you and your family to our school. At Merry Hill, we are extremely proud of the excellent relationship that exists between our pupils, staff, parents, governors and wider community. The power of partnerships that exist between home and school ensures every success in our children.

For your child, starting school is an expedition into the unknown. With our engaging provision and caring ethos, we are confident that it will be an exciting and enjoyable experience for all concerned.

We know how special your child is to you and it is important to us that they are happy and feel secure and relaxed at school. With this in mind we try to make our school an extension of a caring home where the children will respond well to a learning environment.

All children at Merry Hill will be taught self-belief and self-esteem as this will guide them to independently overcome obstacles (both academically and emotionally) through experiences that are challenging yet attainable.

As teachers, we believe that given opportunities and choices in an enriching and stimulating environment children will be eager to learn. Given a positive surrounding, when children are encouraged to talk and interact with friends and adults, they feel safe and able to explore all opportunities.

Parents and Families who have chosen to be a part of Merry Hill have entrusted us with one of the most important and rewarding jobs - that of the academic, social, emotional and spiritual welfare of their child. All staff and governors take this responsibility very seriously.

Melissa Adams MA, NPQH
Headteacher

School Vision and Aims

'A Happy Face, A Learning Place, A Growing Space'

The Merry Hill School Vision is a simple statement of the type of school we wish to be. In many aspects it is a reflection of what we have already achieved at Merry Hill; in others it is a statement of how we would like to develop the school. Overall it is at the heart of everything we do from preparing lessons, to

working with the children, to recruiting new staff, to improving our facilities.

Merry Hill School Believes

- Every child is entitled to enjoy their childhood.
- They should be valued for their individuality, culture and heritage.
- They should be encouraged to develop their full potential in a stimulating and caring environment.

Aims

We aim to achieve this vision by:

- Working together as a team – staff, parents and governors and the local community.
- Providing a secure, caring and stimulating environment that will encourage children to develop lively, enquiring minds.
- Fostering the development of a positive self-image, independence and a sense of responsibility.
- Enabling children to become aware of their own feelings and be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others; also to develop a concern for all living things and for the environment inside and outside the school.
- Giving the children the opportunity to work both independently and collaboratively to enable them to begin to develop their potential both physically and intellectually.
- Presenting a broad and balanced curriculum that will stimulate a natural curiosity and a love of learning.
- Providing a curriculum that is sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of each child.

We ensure the children all leave with happy memories of their early years at Merry Hill.

Our School Creed

In our assemblies we often say the following poem, which demonstrates our vision and we hope is acceptable to all faiths. It is based on a verse first used in a one-room school in Canada, but this version has been devised to use more modern words, e.g. 'live' for 'dwell', and 'happiness' for 'contentment'.

This is our school,
Let peace live here,
Let the rooms be full of happiness,
Let love be all around,
Love of one another,
Love of all people,
And love of life and living,
Let us remember,
That as many hands build a house,
So many hearts make a school.

Beginning the Journey

Before the Big Day

Independence

Getting ready to begin school starts almost from the cradle. It is our job as parents and teachers to help our children grow in confidence and become independent.

Independence should be encouraged - let your child do things for themselves whenever possible. The more confident they are, the happier they will be coming into school and the more quickly they will settle. 'I can do it' is an attitude that leads to success right through school and into adult life.

It is generally expected that most children will be toilet trained and out of nappies before they begin school or nursery. However, we recognise that children joining Merry Hill Infants and Nursery will have reached differing levels of independence and development in toileting and self-care. Therefore, it is inevitable that from time to time some children will have accidents and need to be attended to. In order to help the children to become aware of their bodily needs and respond to them in time, those who wish to go to the toilet are always allowed to go, although they are encouraged, as they progress through the school, to use the toilet during break times.

Children in the EYFS have access to the toilet whenever they need to and are encouraged to be as independent as is age and developmentally appropriate. The children are reminded at regular times to go to the toilet and to wash their hands afterwards.

In addition to this, an increasing number of children and young people with disabilities and medical conditions are being included in mainstream settings. A significant number of these pupils require adult assistance for their personal and intimate care needs and a staff member will always be at hand to assist.

Communication

Children learn and develop by talking to adults; please find time to talk to and listen to your child. Encourage them to look at and enjoy books and take them to the local library. Children also enjoy and learn a great deal from visiting new places and these outings can form a valuable talking point. Make time to talk during an evening meal and have a switch off time for everyone's devices.

Sing nursery rhymes and action songs together. Encourage your child to listen to music, songs and stories. Read stories together and make this an enjoyable experience. Look at the pictures in the book and discuss the story. Increase your child's memory and concentration by playing board and card games as often as possible. Also do jigsaws and play lotto and domino games.

Children learn from their experiences, so please take your child out and about as much as possible.

Learning at home

Allow your child to help around the house and garden, measuring, sorting the washing, digging and planting. These activities offer a wide range of learning experiences. Let your child lay the table, count the cutlery, weigh and cook with you and play at the sink. When you go out, let them look for numbers on houses and gates and help you with the shopping. These are all valuable activities that will help prepare them for school.

Routine

All of us need an adequate amount of sleep. Please ensure that your child goes to bed at a reasonable time so that they are well rested and ready to learn.

Transition

Visiting the school before the first day will help your child feel more at home. Visits for children with their parents are organised just before your child starts, but you are most welcome to attend our fund-raising fairs and open afternoon in the summer term.

The First Day at School

It helps for parents to have a clear picture of what the first day at school means to a child. Instead of being a very important little person at home, they have suddenly become one of thirty children all vying for the teacher's attention. They have to cope with new faces, a different routine, strange food and seemingly meaningless commands like 'line up by the door'. Even if they have been well prepared for all of this, your child still has to adjust to the necessity of leaving home and being separated from you.

Naturally, you know your child much better than we do, so we rely on you to form a partnership with us and share this knowledge. In order for us to get to know your child well it is particularly helpful for us to know about any

behaviour traits that may require additional support e.g. tantrums, shyness or hyperactivity, as well as physical conditions such as asthma, eczema or any allergies. It is useful to know of any personal family difficulties, e.g. divorce, separation, bereavement, etc. Of course we also want to know about your child's achievements, abilities and particular interests. Your child's happiness and ability to settle into school life depends very much on this partnership. Don't worry if, after all the trouble you have taken to prepare your child for school, they cry on their first day. Some children settle immediately and never cry; some cry on the first day and never again; some during the first week and some, weeks later - having apparently settled down well at the start. Children are often unpredictable!

Never leave your child without saying goodbye and letting them know when you will be back.

Nursery Hours

Our Nursery operates a single entry in September. We offer the full statutory 15 hours free nursery provision over five days with children being offered either five mornings or five afternoons. If we have spaces available, we can accommodate the 30 hours free childcare. If we still have spaces, we will have an intake in January.

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Our morning sessions are: | 8.30 – 11.30 am |
| Our afternoon sessions are: | 12.30 - 3.30 pm |

Starting Nursery is a big step for children; for some this may be their first time away from home on a regular basis.

To enable your child to settle into the daily routine as quickly as possible we encourage them to come in to Nursery on their own. Please always remember to say 'Goodbye' to your child at the door before leaving.

Please bring your child to the classroom door at the start of each session and collect them from the classroom door at the end of the session.

Please let us know if someone other than you is collecting your child. Punctuality helps your child understand the importance of time keeping at an early age and prevents them from worrying they may have been forgotten. Being on time helps your child to settle into the Nursery routines, socialise with their peers

and sets them up for the session. To avoid tears at home time, if you are unavoidably delayed, please call the office so we can explain to your child.

Reception Hours

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Doors open early for a 'soft start' to the day | 8:45am |
| Gates close | 8.55am |
| Morning session | 8.55am-12.00pm |
| Lunch Break | 12.00-1.00pm |
| Afternoon session | 1.00-3.15pm |

It is important that children arrive on time at the start of the school day. The Reception children wait with parents in the playground (located just before the Nursery classroom) until the staff member comes to collect them at 8.45am. The staff member will have a message book should you want to leave a message.

With over 200 children using the two buildings, corridors and cloakrooms become easily congested. In order to keep the children safe, please do not bring pushchairs or prams into the school building or block entrance ways. If you do need to speak to the class teacher, please contact the school office.

When the children come out at 3.15pm please stand by the wall opposite the kitchen. This will make it easier for the class teachers to see you and to hand your child over to you. To ensure your child's safety, please make sure you bring them into the playground each morning and that you meet them again in the playground at the end of the day. Children should never be left in the playground on their own before the school is opened.

Children's Development and Learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework sets the standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to five.

The framework is based on four themes which are supported by underlying principles (shown in the table overleaf).

| | |
|---|---|
| A Unique Child Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. | Positive Relationships Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. |
| Enabling Environments Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parent and carers. | Learning and Development Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. |

Areas of Learning and Development

The curriculum that we deliver is as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and is made up of seven areas of Learning and Development. All areas of Learning and Development are connected to one another and are of equal importance. The areas of Learning and Development are supported by the Principles of the EYFS as outlined above.

The Prime Areas of Learning

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language

The Specific Areas of Learning

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The teachers use these seven areas of learning to support their planning for both the indoor and outdoor learning environment. The Nursery and Reception day has a carefully structured routine and includes daily adult directed activities and sustained periods of child-initiated play.

Each area of Learning and Development is divided into different aspects with a number of 'early learning goals' attached to each. These

goals are established expectations for most children to reach by the end of their Nursery or Reception Year.

| The Prime Areas of Learning | |
|--|--|
| Personal, Social and Emotional Development | Building Relationships Self-Regulation Managing Self |
| Physical Development | Gross Motor Skills Fine Motor Skills |
| Communication and Language | Listening, Attention and Understanding Speaking |
| The Specific Areas of Learning | |
| Literacy | Word Reading Writing Comprehension |
| Maths | Numbers Numerical Patterns |
| Understanding the World | People, Culture and Communities The Natural World Past and Present |
| Expressive Arts and Design | Creating with Materials Being Imaginative and Expressive |

Learning Journal

An online Learning Journal (Tapestry) will document each child's time in Nursery and Reception. We actively encourage parents to view these documents at specific times during the year, and contribute to them during the year.

Religious Education and Assembly

Religious Education is taught throughout the school in line with the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. This is of a mainly Christian nature but also includes other major faiths. An assembly with an act of collective worship is held each day for the KS1 children in the hall. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education lessons and assemblies. Parents wishing to do so should discuss the matter with the Headteacher. Nursery & Reception classes will join special whole school assemblies.

Homework

All children and parents are encouraged to play mental maths and board games at home

together, to visit the park, local museums and the library.

It is our belief that infant children need time to relax at home, to chat to parents, to visit friends, attend a variety of out of school activities and most of all to enjoy being an infant.

In Reception the children choose 2 books once a week to take home and enjoy with parents. A special book bag, to take the books safely to and from school, can be purchased from the school office or via Mapac (see details on p8).

Reception & Nursery children will visit the school library to choose a book to look at over the week. Please make sure your child's library book is in their book bag on library days so that they can replace it for a new one.

Handwriting

The children are taught a Nelson script handwriting style. Please only use capitals at the beginning of a proper noun, never for the entire word, for example Mary rather than MARY (in capital letters). Please see link below for more information:

<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/english/primary-handwriting>.

Behaviour Expectations

At Merry Hill, we adopt the Hertfordshire STEP's approach to behaviour management, which encompasses our PSHE education, mindfulness, social skills, positive self-esteem and growth mind-set. This is a therapeutic approach to behaviour, which means that we believe all behaviour to be a method of communication. Staff work with the children to learn how to recognise their emotions and find effective, transferable strategies to self-regulate. We teach this following the six Golden Rules. They are:

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

British Values

"British Values" are an important part of the curriculum and are taught through PSED. These include democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

These are explicitly taught through PSED but embedded across our curriculum.

Toys

Toys should not be brought in to school unless at the specific request of the class teacher.

Lunches and Snacks

Mid-Morning Break

In line with our healthy eating policy, the children are supplied with fruit or vegetables every day. The children choose when to have their snack during the session (rolling snack).

Please do not send biscuits, crisps, sweets or any other items as a substitute as these are not allowed. Nuts and chocolate should never be brought to school.

Milk

Milk is available at a small charge for those who would like it and free to those children who will still be four years old at the end of each term. Milk must be ordered and paid for via our online payment system before the start of each term. Water is available for those who dislike milk. Please do not send cartons of drink as an alternative. Your child will also be able to bring a bottle of water (no juice or squash) to school that they will have access to all day or session. Your child will be encouraged to drink water throughout the day.

Lunches at School

There are several alternatives included within our School dinners:

1. A hot vegetarian meal
2. A hot non vegetarian meal
3. A school 'packed lunch'

The school dinners are cooked on the premises and there is always a choice of vegetables with the main course and a dessert. School lunches are free for children in Reception to Year 2. If you are uncertain about your child having school lunches, they may try them before you make a decision. Please let us know if your child does not eat a particular food for health or religious reasons. If we have spaces available, Nursery children can stay for lunch (please speak to the office for further details).

An Alternative to School Dinners

Packed lunches from home should provide a healthy lunch and may include a small carton, or other container of juice which your child can manage to unscrew or place a straw into. No fizzy drinks please, in line with our healthy eating policy. Please do not include nuts, chocolate or sweets. The packed lunch should be in a clearly named lunch box.

Absence and Medical Procedures

Attendance, Punctuality and Absence

Arriving for school in good time allows the children to chat with friends and settle into 'school mode'. Punctuality is important and sets a good example to the children, showing them the value you place on education.

At Merry Hill we aim to maintain good attendance and punctuality in order to enable all children to take full advantage of the learning opportunities available to them. In order to achieve this, we need the support of all parents. The information given below outlines the school procedures.

Arrival on time

It is important that your child arrives by 8.55am each day (for Reception) and 8.30am or 12.30pm for nursery. This will help them learn good time keeping and reduce classroom disruption. The security gates and outside doors lock at 8.55am and any children arriving after this time must be accompanied by an adult as entry is via the school office. Please use the gate near the office to gain access and to sign the Late Book.

Health and Absence from School

If your child has to miss school, it is important that you tell us why. Please explain all absences as soon as possible by telephone or by email to admin@merryhill.herts.sch.uk or in person. If you do not do this, the absence will be noted as 'unauthorised'.

Most absences are for good reasons and will generally be authorised by the school if they are due to:

- Sickness/Unavoidable medical or dental appointments
- Days of religious observance

The following reasons for absence will not be authorised:

- Shopping during school hours
- Birthday celebrations

- Holidays - Parents are strongly urged not to book family holidays during term time.

At Merry Hill we follow the Health Protection Agency guidelines which are that children should not return to school for a full 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting (48 Hour Rule).

For administration of medicines for non-chronic conditions, e.g. finishing a course of antibiotics, parents should be responsible for administration of medicine to their children wherever possible by coming to the School Office at the appropriate time to administer the medicine to their child. If parents are unable to come, they may authorise another adult to come on their behalf (written consent must be given). If the parent is unable to make arrangements, they may request that the school administer the dose. There is no legal duty that requires staff to administer medication; this is a voluntary role. If a member of staff agrees to administer prescribed medication, the school office must have written consent and instructions from the parent or guardian. Medication must be brought into school by an adult (**not** by the child) and handed personally to a member of the school office staff, in order for it to be given to the relevant staff member, along with the consent & instructions. Please do not send prescribed medicines into school unless this has been authorised by the school office.

Where clinically possible, any courses of medication should be prescribed in dose frequencies, which enable it to be taken outside of, school hours, e.g. medicines that need to be taken three times a day can be managed at home. Please ask the prescriber about this in order that medication can be given at home as far as is reasonably possible.

Non-prescription medicines will not be administered. Never allow your child to bring in over the counter medicines e.g. cough sweets, throat pastilles etc. Lip salve is not allowed unless medically prescribed. We need to know if your child suffers from asthma or may need special medical attention from time to time. If this is the case, please ask for a special medical form from the office. The school holds regular first aid training for staff which includes the use of Epi-pens and you should inform us if your child suffers from anaphylaxis.

All children have a height, weight, hearing and sight check by the School Nurse during their first year. The School Nursing team can be contacted on 01727 732009.

School Uniform

If you would like to buy uniform with a school badge, this can be purchased online at www.mapac.com/education/parents or you can visit their shop in Watford (see website for details). **Every child will require a book bag.** Uniform with school badges is optional. Non badge alternatives are available from most large department stores, supermarkets and online retailers.

Nursery Uniform

We would like the Nursery children to wear:

- Black elasticated waist jogging trousers/leggings or elasticated waist shorts/yellow check dress in the summer. (No buttons or zips if possible).
- Yellow T Shirt/Polo shirt & grey jumper
- Sensible shoes with **Velcro**, not laces or buckles, no shoes with open toes or heels and not "Crocs" or fashion boots
- Wellington boots (to be left at school)
- Coat with a hood

The Nursery uniform is based on the following criteria:

1. It allows your child to be dressed for an active, fun and safe session at Nursery where they can use sand, water, play dough, glue, paint etc. without worrying about getting their clothes messy.
2. It aids independence when getting changed for PE and using the toilet.
3. It allows your child to play outside throughout the year.

Reception Uniform

All children will require:

- Sensible shoes (not trainers) with **Velcro**, not laces or buckles, no shoes with open toes or heels and not "Crocs" or fashion boots
- Wellington boots (to be left at school)
- Coat with a hood

Boys' Uniform:

Winter

- Yellow polo shirt
- Grey trousers
- Grey sweatshirt

Summer

- Yellow polo shirt
- Grey shorts
- Grey sweatshirt

Girls' Uniform:

Winter

- Yellow polo shirt
- Grey tunic, skirt or trousers
- Grey cardigan or sweatshirt

Summer

- Yellow check dress or polo shirt & shorts
- Grey cardigan or sweatshirt

PE Uniform

- Black elasticated waist shorts
- Black tracksuit/jogging bottoms for winter
- White T-Shirt
- Elastic fronted or Velcro plimsolls (not trainers)
- Spare pair of socks

Please ensure all clothing is clearly labelled.

Jewellery & Make-up

For obvious reasons, jewellery should not be worn to school. For safety, children who have their ears pierced should only wear plain studs, not sleepers or dangling earrings. Studs must be removed for PE or covered with micropore tape. Please put a roll of tape in your child's book bag. Please do not send your child to school with nail varnish or temporary tattoos.

Hair

All children with long hair must have their hair tied back for school. Please use small, plain hair bands.

Accidents and Changing

We do have some extra clothing in case of accidents. However, if your child is happier to change into clothing they recognise, a spare set kept in a separate bag which will be hung on their pegs would be useful. If we do provide your child with clean clothing, please return this to us as soon as it has been washed.

Waterproof Clothing for Outdoor Play

The children have access to outdoor play in all weathers. In cold weather please ensure your child has a warm waterproof coat with a hood, hat, scarf and gloves - all named please. In addition please provide your child with a pair of named wellington boots that will stay at school. Only children with wellington boots will be allowed to play in the wildlife area when it is muddy and join in with gardening activities.

In hot weather, please ensure your child has a named sunhat that covers their face and preferably neck. We ask parents to apply sun cream before school that will last for the duration of the school day. Please make sure your child brings in their bottle of water each day. Staff will refill bottles during the day if needed.

Lost Property

All items must be named before coming into school. If you forget to name an item of your children's property, it will be placed in the school's lost property box. There is a box in Nursery and also a box can be found in the Key Stage 1 building outside the Hub or on the front playground by the shelter.

Safeguarding Children

E-Safety

Information Communication Technology (ICT) including the internet, e-mail and mobile technologies has become an important part of learning in our school. We expect all children to be safe and responsible when using any ICT.

Please read and complete the ICT agreement with the rest of your admission documents.

Photographs

There are several reasons why we would take photographs of your child. The main reason will be to evidence their learning throughout the academic year. These photos are placed into your Child's online Learning Journal and you will receive them with your child's end of year report but they could also be used on displays in school.

Photographs may also be used in the school newsletter to keep you up to date with activities throughout the year. You will be asked to give permission for your child to be photographed before they start school.

For Reception classes, early in the first term, a photograph will be printed in the Watford

Observer as part of its 'Starting School' feature. If you do not wish your child to be included in the photograph, please let the class teacher know at the start of term. Children will not be named in the Watford Observer.

Sending Documents into School

Any letters, forms, etc. should be handed to a member of staff or into the school office.

These should be in an envelope marked with your child's name, class and details of the content.

Safety and Travelling to school

In the interests of children's safety, please never drive into the school grounds or park on any of the yellow lines outside the school. Local residents would appreciate it if you do not park across their driveways. Access to school is via the pedestrian entrance as the vehicle entrance is in constant use by staff. Please do not park in the staff car park.

Due to on-going problems with traffic congestion at drop off and pick up times, Merry Hill believe walking is the best way of travelling to school. Children should be encouraged to walk whenever feasible as it alleviates traffic congestion and aids health, social and environmental issues. We ask that if you do drive to school, you park further away and walk the last bit of your journey.

Please note that as some children are wary of dogs; they are not allowed on the school premises unless they are service dogs. Please keep the gateway area free of dogs and do not leave a dog unattended.

The safety of all children out of school hours is the responsibility of the parent. Please keep them by your side at all times and do not allow them to play on the top playground or in the wildlife area before or after school, or climb on the walls or gates.

Children who travel to school on a scooter can leave their scooter in the scooter rack. The school takes no responsibility for scooters that are left. Children must not ride their scooters on school grounds. Please encourage your child to push them to provide a safe area for all.

Please note Merry Hill is a designated no smoking area.

Parent and school communication

Home School Agreement

We ask you to sign a home school agreement. This is a contract between home and school to show we will both do our best to support the children in our care. Please fill it out and return to school as soon as possible.

Home School Link Book (Nursery) or Reading Record (Reception)

You will be provided with a communication book when your child starts in their new class. In this book we record the title of the book your child has chosen to read. Parents are to write a comment every time you hear your child read. Please do not use this book to write messages to your child's class teacher. Leave a message with a member of staff at the Nursery/Reception door in the morning, contact the school office or communicate a message via your Tapestry account.

Website

The school website is where you will find a wealth of information. Please check it regularly for updates.

<http://www.merryhill.org.uk/>

Termly Curriculum Information

At the beginning of each term you will receive a Topic Map and knowledge organisers outlining what the term's learning focus will be. A copy of this will also be placed on the school website for your information.

Merry Hill Blogs

Each week you will receive an email, which directs you to your child's year group blog. These celebrate learning within school and provide ideas on how you can support learning at home.

Email

Please sign up to receive emails from school. We will email you the school newsletter and any important information. If you do not have the facilities to receive emails please let the school office know so you can be provided with a paper copy.

Scopay/Tucasi

We use an online payment & communication system called Scopay to allow parents to sign up for parent consultation evenings, pay for school trips, Nursery fees & lunches, Breakfast club, milk, stationery items and much more. You will be provided with an access code for the system after your child has started.

Open Door Policy

At Merry Hill we are proud of our link with parents. Please feel free to make an appointment to speak to your class teacher or the Head teacher.

Parent Consultations

Parent Consultations are held in the Autumn Term and Spring Term to keep you informed about your child's progress and targets.

School Reports

At the end of each Summer Term you will receive a written report on your child's progress. This will also give details of areas for development.

Open Classes

Each Summer Term we invite you to come and see some of your child's wonderful learning. This is also an opportunity for you to look around other classrooms and see what other year groups have been working on. Please feel free to bring other family members to celebrate your child's success with them.

Curriculum/Year group Information Sessions

Throughout the academic year, the school has a selection of curriculum sessions. These may be subject based or year group based but all will be designed to help you achieve the best with your child. Please look out for dates of these throughout the year.

Community News and Activity

The school often receives letters and leaflets from organisations, agencies and charities who organise activities for children. We do from time to time send these letters and/or leaflets home. This does not mean we are approving or recommending the activity. We are only acting as a distributor.

School Closures

The school will take every effort to remain open. However, there are situations where this is not possible and a school closure is unavoidable. If we experience heavy snow and we feel it is unsafe for our children and staff to travel to school we may take the decision to close. Please keep a close eye on the school website, you can sign up to the Emergency closure system and we will also email parents/carers to inform you of any school closures.

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

We welcome all children to our school and work closely with colleagues, parents and outside agencies where necessary, to ensure all children have access to the curriculum and achieve their full potential.

We are proud to follow a person-centred approach that places pupils' strengths and needs at the heart of their curriculum. We work closely with families to ensure our provision is suited to the abilities of all pupils.

Assess, Plan, Do, Review meetings may take place. These meetings involve home and school coming together in order to support certain pupils in making targeted progress.

Pupil Premium

We receive additional funding to support children in receipt of pupil premium funding. Pupil premium is allocated for children who claim free school meals, are looked after or previously looked after children. The school allocates the funding to help these children overcome challenges and raise attainment.

Service Pupil premium

Additional funding is awarded to provide mainly pastoral support for children from forces families. We have established close links with Northwood HQ, have an allocated Forces Liaison Mentor and provide many activities to promote and celebrate the children from our forces community.

Volunteering in School

Parents are welcome to help in school; please speak to your child's class teacher about an appropriate time. Your involvement in class activities is very beneficial to your child's education and we greatly appreciate any help you can give.

Help may also be needed for any school trips or workshops. Your class teacher will send out a message if they need any help.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

All voluntary helpers who come into school on a regular basis, i.e. once a week or more must complete a DBS check (formally a Criminal Record Bureau/CRB check). Please ask at the school office for more information.

Class Reps

Every class will ask for two parents to be Class representatives. This provides a close link between school and parents. These parents will be asked to spread messages for their class and also attend meetings to represent their selected class.

Governing Body

School Governors are people who wish to make a positive contribution to children's education. Governors come from all sections of the community: parents, staff at the school, the world of business, representatives of local councils and churches – in fact anyone. There is always a need for enthusiastic and committed people to serve as Governors.

You don't have to be an 'expert' – only able to get on with others and to work as part of a team. You'll also need some spare time – typically between 20 and 30 hours a year. There are plenty of free training courses available to help Governors with their responsibilities.

What do Governors do?

The role of Governors has grown over the years but essentially remains the same - to help and support the Headteacher and staff in running the school and continuing to provide the best possible education.

Together with the Headteacher they set the future direction for the school and decide how the school's budget should be spent. Governing Bodies make decisions collectively on matters such as performance targets, school policies and the school's development plan.

Governors monitor the impact of policies and oversee the use of the school's budget. They report to parents on the school's achievements and respond to inspection recommendations. They hear appeals from pupils and staff and consider complaints.

Governors provide the Headteacher with support and advice, drawing on their knowledge and experience. They ask searching questions and respect the Head teacher's position as professional leader of the school.

Interested in becoming a Governor at Merry Hill?

Please refer to the school website for relevant information.

Friends of Merry Hill (FOMH)

A very warm welcome to our school and to our Parent Teacher Association, 'The Friends of Merry Hill' (FoMH). We realise it can be strange and a little nerve-wracking joining a school, and there always seem to be so many questions to ask!

Why Do We Have a PTA?

We are very fortunate at our school to have a PTA that is, and has been, such an integral part of the school community for many years. In its time the PTA has raised many thousands of pounds, which have been spent on improving equipment and resources to enhance our children's education and the facilities in school in general.

But it is much, much more than just fundraising. The PTA exists to provide closer links between home and school, and it is an excellent way to bring staff, parents and friends together socially in support of the school. And it's fun! Just ask any of the PTA Committee or helpers. Obviously as in any organisation, there are times when it is more 'challenging', but with the continued support of parents and staff, our PTA has always succeeded in its efforts.

All parents and members of the school community can get involved if they want to, even if they only have a small amount of time available, and all parents are automatically members of the Friends of Merry Hill when they join our school.

The Committee meet on a regular basis usually once or twice per half term, with smaller working groups meeting as necessary to organise our bigger events.

How We Raise Money

As in most schools, we raise the majority of our funds through the events that we run. Some of our most popular events are the Summer and Winter Fairs. We have had sponsored events such as a sponsored slide. We have had children's fun afternoons and, probably everyone's favourite, the Mother's/Father's Day Secret Rooms.

So you can see there is always something going on! We always try to respond to the children's requests for events and it is truly the icing on the cake to see them having fun at the events or enjoying using a piece of new equipment that the PTA has donated.

Donations are extremely important. These can be time, money, items for sale, donations for raffles or offers of services and skills etc.

We look forward to having you on board!

Data Collection

Privacy Notice

What is this Privacy Notice for?

Merry Hill Infant School & Nursery is committed to protecting the privacy and security of personal information. We collect data and information about parents/carers of our pupils so that we can operate effectively as a school. This privacy notice explains how and why we collect parent/carer data, what we do with it, who we share it with and what rights parents have.

Why do we collect and use parent/carer information?

We process information about parents/carers as part of our legal obligation to provide an education to our pupils, to support our function of running a school and for safeguarding purposes.

Where we process data not covered by these reasons, we will ask for your consent. This consent can be withdrawn at any time.

What parent/carer information do we collect, hold and share?

This will include personal information such as name, address, telephone number and email address. It could also include information relating to your identity, marital status, employment status, religion, ethnicity, language, medical conditions and free school meal/pupil premium eligibility/entitlement to certain benefits, information about court orders in place affecting parenting arrangements for pupils.

How long do we keep the information?

We will only retain your personal information for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes we collected it for, including for the purposes of satisfying any legal, accounting, insurance or reporting requirements, as recommended by both national and local guidelines. Certain types of data may be held for longer, e.g. safeguarding. For more information on the recommended timescales please see our Data Protection policy on the school website.

Who do we share your information with?

We routinely share parent/carer information with schools that pupils attend after leaving us. We may share pupil information with the

DfE, the Local Authority, and other bodies and organisations. We do not share information with anyone without consent unless the law or our policies allow us to do so. When we share personal data, we will provide the minimum amount necessary to fulfil the purpose for which it is required. For more details, please see our Data Protection policy on the school website.

How can you request access to your personal data?

Parents/carers have the right to request access to information about them that we hold via a Subject Access Request (SAR). To make a request for your or your child's personal data, contact the School office. The legal timescales for the school to respond to a Subject Access Request is one calendar month. As the school has limited staff resources outside of term time, we encourage you to submit Subject Access Requests during term time and to avoid sending a request during periods when the school is closed or is about to close for the holidays, if possible. This will assist us in responding to your request as promptly and fully as possible. [For further information about how we handle Subject Access Requests, please see our Data Protection policy on the school website.]

For more information about Data Protection Regulations and your rights see:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, please raise with us in the first instance or directly to the Information Commissioner's Office at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

If you would like to discuss anything in this privacy notice, please contact the School office.

A more detailed version of this privacy notice can be found on the school website.

Transition

Transfer from Nursery to Reception

Transfer to our Reception Class from our Nursery is **not** automatic. Hertfordshire County Council will send you a letter containing information about the application process at the beginning of the autumn Term. If you do not receive this, please let us know, as you will not be able to apply without it. The

criteria for entry to the Reception Class are the same as those for entry to the Nursery.

Parents are notified as to the success of their application during April.

Transition from Reception to Year 1 & Nursery to Reception

Nearer the end of the summer Term, the Nursery children, who have been offered and accepted a place in our Reception class, and the current Reception children will have the opportunity to meet their Reception/Year 1 teacher and visit their new classrooms. Parents will be informed which class their child will be in via a letter.

Contact Details

Merry Hill Infant School and Nursery
School Lane, Bushey, Herts, WD23 1ST

Telephone: 020 8950 2166

Email: admin@merryhill.herts.sch.uk

Website: www.merryhill.org.uk

Twitter account: @merryhillsch

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL!



Tick off the following activities over the summer to help you get ready for school



Find out what is going on at your local family centre



Visit some local parks



Join the local library



Explore the local woods



Practise washing your hands with soap, independently



Practise taking your coat off and putting it back on



Play a board game and practise taking turns



Practise your journey to school



Practise putting your uniform on and taking it off



Practise putting your school shoes on and try wearing them for a day



Practise carrying your food on a plate



Learn to sing a number rhyme



Share books with an adult



Share your toys with a friend



Try a variety of fruit prepare this yourself

★ WELL DONE! YOU ARE 'GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL!' ★