



Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are so pleased to be able to welcome all children back to school on Monday 8th March after the recent national lockdown. We were so proud to see how well so many children and families coped with the demands of remote learning. We saw some excellent work from home with parents, carers and families supporting children to complete the tasks set by teachers. Thank you for all of your efforts during this challenging time.

We are continuing with our many measures, following the government's guidance, to keep children, staff and their families as safe as possible.

We recognise that many children and families may have some anxiety and worry about returning to school and we are happy to discuss these with you if you wish. However, please note that, at this time, parents and carers are not allowed into the school building as we are limiting and reducing the number of visitors to the school site. If you wish to discuss any school matter with staff, please telephone the school or e-mail:

office@merridaleprimary.co.uk

(if it is not urgent) and someone will get in touch with you.

Throughout the rest of this academic year, school will be offering very limited activities and events to enable us to keep class "bubbles" separate from each other. For this reason, there will be no after school clubs, whole school assemblies or discos.

Attendance

Please be aware that attendance at school is no longer optional.

ALL CHILDREN will be expected to attend **every day that they are well enough to**. If you do not send your child to school, please be aware that you may receive a fine. If your child has been advised not to attend school for medical reasons, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss this.

Ventilation and colder weather

Government guidance insists schools keep classrooms airy and well-ventilated. School staff will be keeping windows and doors open as much as possible to ensure ventilation but this will mean that children may be colder than usual. We advise that parents and carers ensure children come to school wearing layers e.g. a vest, t-shirt and sweatshirt/jumper so that children can keep warm.

Jewellery Policy

The only items that are considered appropriate for school, for health and safety reasons, are **one pair of small stud or sleeper earrings and watches**.

The school does not allow any other jewellery or cosmetics unless for cultural reasons. Any items that are worn must be removed or covered with a sweat band/plaster (to be provided from home) for PE and all items are the responsibility of the pupil. Please note that staff are not allowed to remove or look after jewellery for children.

Long hair must be tied back for PE lessons. Children must come to school dressed in their PE clothes on their PE day:

Year 1 and Year 3 have PE on a Monday

Year 6 have PE on a Tuesday

Year 2 have PE on a Wednesday

Year 5 have PE on a Thursday

Reception and Year 4 have PE on a Friday

Please note that only watches and stud earrings are allowed to be worn in school at any time but these must be covered or removed for PE for safety.

Attendance and Punctuality

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.

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 make an appointment to see Mr Lane.

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. After 8.50am, children must enter school through the main office at the front of the building and they will be classed as late and a text will be sent home.

All children must be collected from school between 3.10 and 3.20pm unless they have permission to walk home alone. We ask that ONE ADULT come onto the school site to collect children at the end of the day and that all families ensure that they social distance from others that do not live in their household. **Please follow our one-way system at the end of the school day.**

The entrance path at the side of school is very narrow. Please be considerate to others and observe social distancing as much as possible when using this path.

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

We are pleased to let you know that households are now able to order Lateral Flow home testing kits to test members of your household for COVID-19. These tests are available to order for FREE delivery or collection **for any household members with primary, secondary or college aged children**. As you know, secondary children themselves will receive their Lateral Flow Test kits from their school but adults in the same household can also order tests to use at home.

School staff at Merridale are now using these tests twice per week so that we can ensure we can identify asymptomatic cases and do all we can to keep children and their families as safe as possible. We will really appreciate any Merridale families that also take part in this scheme as it means that other asymptomatic cases can be identified quickly to avoid passing the virus onto other members of our school community, especially as school re-opens next week.

All information is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/all-households-with-children-of-school-aged-to-get-rapid-covid-19-tests-per-person-per-week>

Home testing kits can be ordered here:

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

These tests are delivered FREE to your home to be taken twice per week (you will receive enough tests in a kit for 3-4 weeks per person). You can then order further test kits so that you can continue to test at home over the next few weeks and months.

Although schools are re-opening, the current rules on social distancing and no household mixing remain. We urge families to follow these rules and do all they can to keep our school community as safe as possible. If any member of your household feels unwell, please **arrange a test immediately and do not attend school**. Where children attend school and are unwell, you will be contacted immediately to collect your child and you will be asked to arrange a test for them. By being cautious and restricting contact between those with symptoms and the rest of the school community, we are doing all we can to keep children, staff and their families safe. Please make sure the school office has an up-to-date, working contact phone number for you.

By working together to keep each other safe, we can ensure that school can stay open to class bubbles and avoid having to send children and staff home to isolate. Please do all you can to support us in this.



Newsletter

Milk Money

Milk money for the rest of this term will be £5.00 per child unless your child is entitled to free school milk. Please note that children in Year 1 and Year 2 are **not** entitled to free school milk unless parents have applied for this (it is not included in the Universal Infant free School Meal entitlement). Please send milk money into school no later than 12th March although payment via SimsPay is preferred please.

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 (although SimPay is preferred please). 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.

Parking restrictions

Please can I remind you that the school car park is for **staff use only**. Please park outside of school where it is safe and legal to do so. Please can I also ask that you respect our school neighbours by **not parking in front of drop-down kerbs**.

Outdoor Learning

Government advice is for learning to take place outside wherever possible. Children will be going outside as often as the weather allows so please ensure they are dressed appropriately for this and have a warm coat and appropriate footwear. **We also ask that all children bring a named pair of wellies to keep at school please.**

Handwashing

We have strict hand-washing and hygiene procedures in place in school.

Children are instructed to wash their hands regularly and practice healthy respiratory hygiene practices (including catch it, bin it, kill it).

Red Nose Day

Red Nose Day is on Friday 19th March. We will be celebrating by asking children to pay £1 to wear something red along with their red noses. We will also be selling some Comic Relief Joke Books (compiled by Years 5 and 6) on the day for 50p each.

Please help us to support this fantastic cause.



Term Dates

Sunday 14th March: Mothering Sunday

Friday 19th March: Red Nose Day –children pay £1 to wear red.

Thursday 1st April 3.15pm: School closes for Easter holidays

Monday 19th April: School re-opens to pupils

Wednesday 26th May: Photographer in school

Friday 28th May 3.15pm: School closes for half term

Monday 7th June: School re-opens to pupils

Friday 11th June: Food Bank Friday collection

Wednesday 23rd—Friday 25th June: Year 6 Borth residential—to be confirmed

Friday 9th July 3.15pm: Nursery closes for the Summer holidays

Tuesday 20th July 3.15pm: School closes for Summer holidays

Monday 6th September: School re-opens to pupils

Online Learning

We have been really impressed with the way that so many children and families have responded to remote learning via Seesaw and Doodle this term. We know it has not been easy to get to grips with this new way of working and we are so proud of all of the work that children have completed from home with the support and encouragement of their families.

We will be looking at how we can incorporate Seesaw into our teaching and remote learning/communication provision moving forward.

Children in Years 1-6 are still encouraged to use Doodle regularly at home as this is a great learning tool to develop and practise key learning skills. Remember there are 4 apps: Doodle Maths, English, Tables and Spell.

Midday Supervisor

We currently have a temporary position available for a midday supervisor to work at school at lunchtimes supporting children with their meals and play. If you are interested (or know someone who is) please contact the main school office for further information.



CORONAVIRUS

STAY ALERT TO

THE SYMPTOMS

**HIGH TEMPERATURE
OR NEW CONTINUOUS COUGH
OR LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL?**

No one in your household should leave home
if any one person has symptoms.

Find out how to get a test, and how long to
isolate, at nhs.uk/coronavirus

STAY ALERT ▶ CONTROL THE VIRUS ▶ SAVE LIVES

If anyone in your household shows Coronavirus symptoms,
DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL.

Arrange a test and notify school IMMEDIATELY!

Telephone 01902 558760 or

E-mail: office@merridaleprimary.co.uk