



Learning for life!

Meridian Newsletter

Term 4

**Monday 20th February to
Friday 31st March**

Term 5

**Monday 17th April to Friday
26th May**

www.meridianschool.co.uk



**Meridian Community Primary
School and Nursery**



@MeridianCPS

**Friday
10th
March
2023**

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you are all well and are looking forward to the weekend. Fingers crossed the weather starts to improve soon so that spring will start to appear!

Teachers Strike Days

A separate letter has gone out today to explain about the planned strike days next week on Wednesday and Thursday. Please do read through this as it explains our plans should these proposed strikes go ahead.

Online Safety

I am sure you will have seen the first of our new Online Safety Newsletters which was sent out today. Our aim of these newsletters is to support and help parents, carers and children to understanding how to keep safe online and to prevent cyberbullying. We will be updating our website too with useful guides and information to support you with monitoring and helping your children at home.

Red Nose Day

Don't forget next Friday 17th March is Comic Relief Red Nose Day. To support this charity event, children are invited to wear something red to school for a £1 donation to Comic Relief. We look forward to seeing lots of red next week!

School Uniform

Thank you so much to everyone for your support following my letter last week about our school uniform policy, including ensuring hair that is long enough to be tied back, is tied back. It was lovely to see a real improvement this week in children's school uniform. I have asked teachers to speak with parents where there continues to be issues around correct school uniform. Don't forget to contact our wonderful PTFA if you would like information about second-hand uniform items!

Take care and best wishes

C. Westcott

**Claire Westcott
Headteacher**

strength

respect

responsibility

kindness

honesty



TERM DATES 2022/2023

Term 4

Monday 20th February – Friday 31st March

Term 5

Monday 17th April – Friday 26th May

01.05 – School closed for May Bank Holiday

08.05 – School closed for King's Coronation Bank Holiday

Term 6

Monday 5th June – Friday 21st July

**PLEASE NOTE NOT ALL INSET DAYS HAVE
BEEN ALLOCATED YET**

IMPORTANT DATES

15.03 Teacher Strike Day – school closed to all children

16.03 Teacher Strike Day – school closed to all children

17.03 Comic Relief Day – wear something red!

31.03 End of term 4

28.04 PTFA Social Event TBC

01.05 School Closed for May Bank Holiday

08.05 School Closed for Bank Holiday for King's Coronation

09.05 KS2 SATs start

12.05 PTFA Disco
R, Y1, Y2: 4.15pm – 5.15pm
Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6: 5.45pm – 7.00pm

26.05 End of term 5

26.06 Year 6 go to PGL

30.06 Year 6 return from PGL

07.07 PTFA Summer Sizzler

21.07 End of term 6

Safeguarding at Meridian

If you have a safeguarding concern about a child that attends Meridian, please do contact one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads:

Miss. Laura Miles

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Ms. Claire Westcott

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mr. Matt Doody

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

You can also call Single Point of Advice (SPOA) on 01323 464222

If you have an immediate or emergency concern about a child's safety, please call 999. The NSPCC has advice about this on their website [here](#).



NHS
East Sussex
School Health Service

Aged 11 to 19?
Or parent/carer of a child or young person aged 5 to 19 years old?

Speak to a school nurse in person.
Tuesdays and Thursdays
10am to 3 pm
and 6 to 9pm

Click <https://nhs.uk/east-sussex-school-health>
or text
07507 332473 anytime.

East Sussex School Health

Confidential, private
and here for you.

Service provided by Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

Healthy snacks and water in school

If you would like your child to have a snack at play time, please remember that this needs to be a portion of **fruit or vegetables**

Also, please can children bring water to school in their water bottle – **no juice or squash please**

Thank you for your support with this.

Contact Details

Please inform the school office of any changes in contact details (address, mobile number, email)

This is really important in case we need to contact you in an emergency.

Online bullying

I am becoming increasingly concerned about the level of **online bullying** that is taking place outside of school, mainly through group chats on **WhatsApp** but other messaging/social media services.

This is particularly noticeable in our **Year 6 children**, where I have seen and heard some truly **shocking language and behaviour** that is impacting on many children's mental health and in turn is spilling into school or making children worried about coming in to school.

The last two weeks, in particular, we have had to spend a disproportionate amount of time supporting children who have been distressed and upset by things that are being said and done online when the children are at home.

These have included:

- **Threats of violence**
- **Abusive language**
- **Inciting hate**
- **Inciting self-harm/suicide**
- **Using images of staff**
- **Taking photographs/selfies in school uniform and posting these**
- **Name calling and shaming**

The amount of time that we are spending in school dealing with this is unacceptable and I will be raising this matter with the Governing Body next week as a matter of urgency.

If your child has a mobile phone and is accessing WhatsApp (which has an age recommendation of 16) please can **parents/carers support the school** by monitoring what is being said and shared outside of school so that this can be dealt with at home. **We simply do not have the capacity to manage this behaviour in school.**

If your child is the victim of any abusive, threatening or hate incidents online, you need to screenshot it, report it and block the person. Then you need to consider calling the police, particularly if there is a threat of violence and/or hate (such as racist or homophobic abuse)

That being said, we obviously want you to inform us if your child has been involved in any bullying online so that we can keep an eye on them and make sure they feel safe in school. So please contact the school in the usual way. **However, we will not be able to get involved in addressing this behaviour as it is happening when the children are not in school.**

We will be introducing new online safety teaching resources next term to educate and support all children in an age appropriate way and our new online safety newsletter and app will hopefully help you at home too. Thank you for your support with this.

Good Attendance means...

Being in school at least 97% of the time or 184 to 190 days

Remember

Your education is important - don't miss out!

Did you know?

A two week holiday in term time means that the highest attendance a child can achieve is 94.7%



There are **365** days in a calendar year

175 days are **not** spent at school*

*So there's plenty of time for shopping, holidays and appointments!

Did you know?

When pupils attend school they:

- ✓ Can achieve their full potential
- ✓ Have better career prospects
- ✓ Learn how to look after themselves and be healthy
- ✓ Grow in confidence
- ✓ Keep up with work and homework
- ✓ Make new friends

Well done to RT for having the highest attendance so far this term at **96.7% - AMAZING!**

Our **whole school** attendance is currently very low at **93.0%** but hopefully as the weather improves and the coughs and colds disappear, our attendance will improve too

Please help us to ensure that your child has good attendance

Loose Parts

Keep those donations coming in for our OPAL playtimes! **All donations will be safety checked by the staff to ensure suitability for the children to use.** Here are suggestions of what we will be asking for:

Cardboard boxes

Cuddly Toys

Fabrics - all shapes and sizes

Metal pots, pans, trays etc. Especially catering sizes

Old clothes, jackets, overalls, hats, bags

Old household appliances, hoovers, fax machines, microwaves etc

Phones

Small Children's Bike Wheels, wheels

Sofa and chair cushions

Suitcases - all sizes

Tubes of all kinds

Carpet samples

Carpet squares

Guttering

Hoses

Brief cases

Buggies, push chairs



So if you are having a clear out, please think of us! The donation areas are by the entrances to the school gates – please put your items in there ready for our safety inspection.

Our wonderful playtimes!

The field was back in use this week and it was lovely to see the children in their wellies enjoying playing in and around the wild area, field area and bushes. It is always so great to see our older children getting involved and playing so nicely with our youngest children.



Please keep those donations coming in – the children really love exploring and getting creative with new things!

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about HOW TO COMBAT ONLINE BULLYING



Defined as "ongoing hurtful behaviour towards someone online", cyber-bullying makes its victims feel upset, uncomfortable and unsafe. In the digital world, it has numerous forms – such as hurtful comments on a person's posts or profile; deliberately leaving them out of group chats; sharing embarrassing images or videos of someone; or spreading gossip about them. Cyber-bullying can severely impact a young person's mental health ... so, in support of Anti-Bullying Week, we've provided a list of tips to help trusted adults know what to look for and how to respond to it.



1. GET CONNECTED

Playing online games together with your child or connecting with them on social media (providing they're old enough) is not only fun but also an excellent way of establishing some common ground to discuss things you've both seen or done online – as well as keeping an eye on who your child is communicating with in the digital world.

2. KEEP TALKING

Regular chats with young people about their online lives are good practice in general, but they can also be an excellent refresher to help prevent cyber-bullying situations. Topics you might want to revisit include why it's important to only connect online with people we know and trust, and why passwords should always remain secret (even from our best friends).

3. STAY VIGILANT

Observe your child while they're using technology and just after they've used it. Are they acting normally, or out of character? Possible signs of a problem may include seeming quiet or withdrawn, jumpy or anxious, angry or repeatedly checking their phone. When you feel it's the right time, you may want to check in with them to see if everything is OK.

4. MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE

If an online bullying incident does occur, it may take a while before your child is ready to open up about what happened. Just gently remind them that they can always come to you with any problems – and that they won't be in trouble. You might also suggest a trusted family member they could turn to, in case they feel too embarrassed to tell you directly.

5. BE PREPARED TO LISTEN

When conversations about online bullying do take place, they're likely to be difficult, emotional and upsetting for both you and your child. Actively listen to your child while they're bringing you up to speed, and try not to show any judgement or criticism – even if they haven't dealt with the situation in exactly the way you would have hoped.

FURTHER SUPPORT AND ADVICE

If you or your child need additional help with an online bullying issue, here are some specialist organisations that you could reach out to.

Childline: talk to a trained counsellor on 0800 1111 or online at www.childline.org.uk/get-support/

National Bullying Helpline: counsellors are available on 0845 225 5787 or by visiting www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/cyberbullying.html

The NSPCC: the children's charity has a guide to the signs of bullying at www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/ and can be reached on 0800 800 5000

6. EMPOWER YOUR CHILD

Depending on their age, your child might not want a parent 'fighting their battles for them'. In that case, talk through their options with them (blocking the perpetrator, deleting the app and so on). By allowing your child to choose the path they take, you're putting them in control but are also demonstrating that you're there to support them along the way.

7. REPORT BULLIES ONLINE

Cyber-bullying often takes place through a particular app, social media platform or online game. If this is happening to your child, encourage them to report the offender to the app or game in question – ideally with screenshots to support their complaint. Most games and apps have reporting tools specifically to stamp out abusive behaviour and protect users.

8. ENCOURAGE EMPATHY

Protecting themselves online is the priority, of course, but young people should also feel empowered to help if they witness other people falling victim to cyberbullying. Even if they don't feel confident enough to call someone out on their abusive behaviour online, they can still confidentially report that person to the app or game where the bullying occurred.

9. SEEK EXPERT ADVICE

Victims of online bullying frequently experience feelings of isolation and anxiety, a loss of self-esteem and potentially even thoughts of self-harm or suicide. If you think that an incident of cyber-bullying has affected your child's mental wellbeing, then seek psychological support for them. There are some useful contact details in the central panel below.

10. INVOLVE THE AUTHORITIES

If the nature of any online bullying makes you suspect that your child is genuinely in imminent physical danger – or if there are any signs whatsoever of explicit images being shared as part of the bullying – then you should gather any relevant screenshots as evidence and report the incidents to your local police force.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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Safety®**

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