

# Mersham Primary School

Church Road, Mersham, Ashford, Kent TN25 6NU

[www.mersham.kent.sch.uk](http://www.mersham.kent.sch.uk) 01233 720449

**Having completed my Ofsted Inspector training last week, it is clear that the new report cards that many of you may have heard about in the media, are very different. Schools will no longer be graded in the way that we have all been used to. Ofsted have produced a useful video for parents to explain the differences – please do take a few minutes to watch it and understand the differences.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbI0FvY976g>

**Cheryl Chalkley  
Headteacher**

## Term Dates 2026-2027

Term 1

Tuesday 1st September – Friday 23rd October

Staff Development Days – Tuesday 1st September and Friday 23rd October

Term 2

Monday 2nd November – Friday 18th December

Term 3

Monday 4th January – Friday 12th February

Term 4

Monday 22nd February – Thursday 25th March

Term 5

Monday 12th April – Friday 28th May

Bank Holiday – Monday 3rd May

Term 6

Monday 7th June – Wednesday 21st July

Staff Development Days – Monday 19th July, Tuesday 20th July and Wednesday 21st July

## **Reading Books in School - Have comics been banned.**

I think the message that 'comic books have been banned at school' has emerged this week! As a school we encourage a love of reading and absolutely appreciate the joy and 'hook' into reading that books that have a comic book style, such as, 'Dog Man' can provide for some children. Whilst there is not a 'ban' on children having these books in school. There are times during the school day, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time for example, where children are being encouraged to widen their horizons in terms of the texts, authors and genres that they are exposing themselves to. I know some children have loved their first reads of Michael Morpurgo this week and we are hoping that by encouraging this in school more rigorously we will be opening their eyes to wider vocabulary, content and a life-long love of reading, whilst also building their reading stamina and comprehension of stories with chapters. We thank you for your support and hope this clarifies things.



## **Upcoming Events**

4 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Walk in Wednesday
6 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Glow Disco
10 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Safer Internet Day
13 <sup>th</sup> Feb	End of Term 3
27 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Interim reports out
5 <sup>th</sup> March	World Book Day
31 <sup>st</sup> March	Easter Service at the Church

## Attendance and Lates

We are increasingly seeing that attendance for some children is deteriorating below the minimum expected by the government of 95%. Children who are now below 95% attendance have missed 4 or more days of school since the start of September. Those that are 90% or below have missed 9 or more days of school since September and this will have a significant effect on a child's learning and progress. I am very conscious that the flu virus that spread before Christmas has had an unavoidable impact for some children's attendance and this will undoubtedly even out over the rest of the year. However, I will be writing to parents before the end of term to highlight where current attendance is below 95%.

We are also seeing an awful lot of children arriving late to school in the mornings. This too has an effect on learning as children may miss critical instructions or information relevant to the day or the start of a lesson. This is known to have a negative impact on children's wellbeing and readiness to learn. Last week alone, 55 late arrivals were recorded involving 32 children arriving late at least once during the week. Again, I will be writing to parents to make them aware and to encourage them to consider what changes they could make to the morning routine to ensure that their child(ren) are in school before the gate closes at 8:45am.

## **Sporting News – Multi-Skills Festival**

On Tuesday morning, I had the pleasure of accompanying ten Year 6 pupils to the Stour Centre to participate in a Multi Skills Festival, with nineteen other schools. The children enjoyed games of curling, shooting the hoops, hockey skills, an obstacle course, speed stacking, balance beam, target shooting and speed bounce. The team took part in every event with enthusiasm, supporting and encouraging each other, and they all tried very hard to beat their previous scores. The children represented the school impeccably and I was so proud of them. Thank you to the parents who supported the event and to Kelly Jones for supporting me with the team. Mrs Cox

## **Parent Governor**

Further to previous information about the election of a parent governor, I would like to inform you that Mrs Nicky Reed was successful in the ballot. She received 17 of the 22 votes in total, that were received. She was welcomed onto the Governing Board this week.

## Miss Maher's Quiz – 13th March.

Following the success of the last quiz, Miss Maher is organising another one at the school on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March to raise money for the charity Sands which has a particular significance at the school, following recent events. Please find attached a flyer with further details. It would be great to see as many teams as possible!

## Class Assemblies – Terms 3 and 4

Class assemblies will be performed at 9:00am in the school hall.

Dates are as follows:

5 <sup>th</sup> February	Robin Class
12 <sup>th</sup> February	Duckling Class
12 <sup>th</sup> March	Toucan Class
19 <sup>th</sup> March	Kingfisher Class
26 <sup>th</sup> March	Parrot Class
2 <sup>nd</sup> April	Falcon Class

## **Emotional Wellbeing Teams – Online Parent groups for child anxiety and behaviour**

The Emotional Wellbeing Teams are offering two online parent groups, which support with child anxiety and behavioural concerns. Parents can now self-refer to the service for these groups. Please see attached flyers with information on how you can access that support.

## **Bricks at the Museum Event – RAF Manston History Museum**

Please see attached flyers with information about an exciting event for all Lego enthusiasts over the February half term.

## **PTFA News**

### **Glow Disco 2026!**

We are thrilled to be hosting this years Glow Themed disco on Friday 6th February. Tickets cost just £5 each, and £3.50 for additional siblings, and includes a large hot dog or generous slice of pizza, unlimited squash, and plenty of glow bracelets to keep children on theme! More information can be found on our new and improved booking system: <https://www.pta-events.co.uk/mershamptfa/index.cfm?event=event&eventId=110298>

We are also desperately in need of volunteers, particularly for the KS2 Disco. If you are able to volunteer, please email [hello@mershamschoolpta.co.uk](mailto:hello@mershamschoolpta.co.uk) or volunteer when you book a ticket via our new booking platform.

### **Amazon Wishlists**

A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who has purchased items from the Class Amazon Wishlists. This is a fantastic way to directly support your child's class with resources! The wishlists remain open for all classes, with just a few items left to get. QR codes for each class can be found on the attached poster.

### **Do You have any Unwanted Gifts?**

We are having a Gift Amnesty to prepare for our next Elfridges! If you were lucky enough to have been gifted more presents than you need, please consider donating them to the PTFA. We rely heavily on donations to stock our shop with a variety of lovely gifts. Any unwanted gifts are gratefully received and can be dropped into the school office anytime in January. Thank you!

## **Winter Weather Guidance from Kent County Council**

### **Severe Snow/Ice Plan for Parents and Families**

Every winter brings the possibility of snow and ice. Extreme bad weather can cause widespread and prolonged disruption. Schools are often affected, and it can be challenging to maintain an education service.

As a fundamental principle, every effort must be made to keep schools open, even if only limited numbers of pupils can attend. However, schools may close due to 'unavoidable' circumstances. Given those circumstances, it is no longer safe for staff or pupils to be on-site.

We recognise that it is important for our school to remain open, so parents can continue to work and pupils can continue to learn. **Mersham Primary School** will make every effort to prepare for severe snow/ice this winter by gritting pathways, clearing access points, etc

**How will we let you know if the school is closed?**

If we do experience severe snow/ice resulting in hazardous conditions, Mrs Chalkley may have to make the decision to close the school. Once this decision has been made, we will notify parents via the Kent Closures website, which can be accessed here: <https://www.kentclosures.co.uk>

To receive alerts, it is necessary for parents to register and sign up for email and/or Android smartphone notifications on the Kent Closures website. This service will send an email alert to let parents know if **Mersham Primary School** is closed. It is free to use.

Local radio will sometimes provide information on school closures.

**What can you do to help?**

Please visit [www.kent.gov.uk/winter](http://www.kent.gov.uk/winter) for more information about gritting routes and travel issues around Kent so you can plan your journey.

Please approach the school with caution – it can be really icy on the road in front of the school and through the village/country lanes.

Check with the school to see whether you need to provide a packed lunch from home in case school meals cannot be provided.

Don't forget suitable warm clothing – gloves, hats, scarves, wellies, etc. or even a change of clothing. If you are a working parent or feel you may have a problem with a sudden earlier pick up, please could you put a back-up plan in place with another family member or parent and inform the school. This will allow staff to leave earlier for their safety if the weather dictates.

Many thanks for your support in helping **Mersham Primary School** remain open during periods of severe snow/ice.