
Term 1 – 2nd October 2026

Mersham Primary School

Church Road, Mersham, Ashford, Kent TN25 6NU

www.mersham.kent.sch.uk 01233 720449



The Department of Education is very clear about the importance of good attendance for all pupils. Research supports this with clear evidence that those pupils with poor attendance are far more likely to underachieve at school, which in turn impacts their long term futures. Schools are now expected to monitor all pupils with attendance less than 95% and to take action to support better attendance, as needed. With that in mind, illness is one of the main reasons given for children not being in school and the research is also showing that in many cases, children are being kept off school when they do not need to be. Consequently, the NHS is keen to work with parents and schools to provide more information around common illnesses and when children should be kept off school. Please see the attached flyer, that is worth saving for future reference. More information can also be found on this NHS link [NHS Is my child too ill for school?](#)

**Cheryl Chalkley
Headteacher**

Lunchtime Behaviour

Behaviour at lunchtimes in the hall has been deteriorating over this term and despite numerous reminders, it has not been improving. Unfortunately, this is not restricted to a minority! In order to reset this for the whole school, the children were asked to sit in silence in the hall whilst they ate their dinner on Friday. Needless to say, the behaviour was significantly better. I am aware that there was lots of discussion regarding this on the Parent WhatsApp groups – to be clear, I am not intending this to be a permanent change, rather a reset of the behaviours expected in the hall at lunchtimes. I have told the children that it will continue next week but my hope is that this will be eased well before the end of the week once I am reassured that all children know how to be safe, ready and respectful over lunchtime.

Parent Forum

The Parent Forum had its first meeting of the year last week. A huge thank you to those attended. Items that were discussed included the Ofsted report, costs in school and parking. The minutes are attached along with the minutes of the previous meeting that never made it onto the newsletter last

Upcoming Events

9 th Oct	World Mental Health Day
15 th Oct	Harvest Festival at the church 9:15am
22 nd Oct	Last Day of term 1
23 rd Oct	Staff Training Day
2 nd Nov	Start of Term 2
6 th Nov	Interim reports out
16 th Nov	Odd Socks Day
	Anti-bullying week
16 th Nov	Parents Evening 5-7:30pm
18 th Nov	Parents Evening 3:30-6pm
25 th Nov	Open Evening for Prospective Year R parents 5-7pm
17 th Dec	Christmas Church Service 9:15am
18 th Dec	End of term 2

year for some reason. These will also be uploaded onto the website. If any other parents are interested in getting involved, please do contact Mrs Chalkley on headteacher@mersham.kent.sch.uk . Our next meeting will be held in term 2.

Census Day

A huge thank you for the support we had for Census day on Thursday! We really appreciate everyone's efforts to have a school dinner!

Secondary Admissions – Year 6 pupils.

Online applications opened on Tuesday 1 September 2026 and will close on Monday 2 November 2026. Applications can be made at www.kent.gov.uk/secondaryadmissions. If parents are unable to access the online site, an alternative format can be requested by emailing kent.admissions@kent.gov.uk .

Open Evening – Wednesday 25th November

We will be holding our annual Open Evening for prospective parents of children starting school in September 2027 on Wednesday 25th November from 5-7pm. Please see attached poster with further information and I would be grateful if you could share with any other families you may know, who have a child starting school next year.

After School Club message

We have started to put together a craft box for the After School Club. If you have any unwanted card, craft bits, wool, paper plates, bubble wrap, kitchen roll card, etc (sorry - no toilet roll card) could you email me on Kim.wenn@mersham.kent.sch.uk and I can arrange to meet you to collect any items at the school reception before the club starts, or when you collect your child from the club at the end of the day. Many thanks Mrs Wenn and Miss Norman

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme – October Half Term

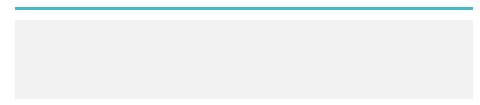
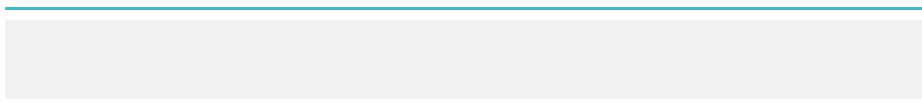
Kent County Council are pleased to confirm that funding has been secured through the Crisis and Resilience Fund to extend the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme into the October 2026 school holidays.

The HAF Programme offers funded holiday activities, enriching experiences and healthy meals for children eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals. The programme helps children stay active, build friendships, develop new skills and access nutritious food during the school holidays. Please note however, that the recent changes in free school meals eligibility will mean that some families may not now be eligible for the HAF Programme.

Further information about the programme is available on the Kent County Council website: Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/free-school-meals/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-haf>

As in previous holiday periods, bookings will be managed through the **HolidayActivities** platform and automated EVouchers will be issued to eligible families on **1st October 2026**.

Some families who were previously eligible for a funded HAF place may no longer meet the eligibility criteria following changes to their Free School Meal status. Further support and information can be found here:



Further support with childcare costs <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/childcare-and-pre-school/help-with-childcare-costs/further-support-with-childcare-costs>
Crisis and Resilience Fund <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/cost-of-living-support/crisis-and-resilience-fund>
Kent Family Hub <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/kent-family-hub>

PTFA Update:

Join Our PTFA WhatsApp Community. Have you joined our new PTFA WhatsApp Community yet? It's the easiest way to stay up to date with events, volunteer opportunities and school fundraising news. If you haven't joined already, please scan the QR code shared by the PTFA and become part of our growing community or contact us via hello@mershamschoolpta.co.uk and we will send you the link.

Turn Mersham Yellow - World Mental Health Day. Next Friday the school is supporting **World Mental Health Day**, and we're inviting the whole village to help us **Turn Mersham Yellow** in support of our children and YoungMinds. If you live on the route to school, please decorate your gate, hedge, fence or front door with something yellow before the school run. Look out for a yellow balloon through your letterbox and help us create a bright, uplifting journey to school for our children.

Calling All Christmas Elves! We're excited to be bringing back our popular **Elfridges Shop** this Christmas. To make the event a success, we're looking for volunteers to help with two key areas:

- Researching and sourcing suitable gifts
- Helping children shop, wrap and label presents on the day

If you can spare a little time and would like to get involved, please join the Elfridges group in our WhatsApp Community and let us know or drop us an email via hello@mershamschoolpta.co.uk . Many hands make light work!

Coming Soon... Halloween Sale! Keep an eye out for details of our spooky Halloween Sale coming soon! We have a great selection of decorations and Halloween items to help you get into the Halloween spirit!

Thank you for your continued support of the PTFA. Together, we can make a real difference for our school community.

Term Dates 2026-2027

Term 1

Tuesday 1st September – Friday 23rd October

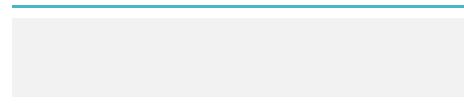
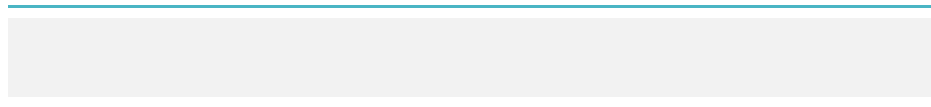
Staff Development Days – Tuesday 1st September and Friday 23rd October

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

