How to Join in With Blogging at Mersey Vale

Blogging is a fantastic way for students to share their work with one another here at school, with other students and teachers all over the world, and (perhaps most excitingly) with YOU – parents and carers, whose opinions they really care about. Why not have a go at setting up a gmail account so that you can let your child know that you've been taking an interest in what they're learning about in class, and give them some praise and positive feedback to keep them motivated.

Setting up your blogger/gmail account

1. Open up Google: search for 'blogger sign up' or click: *https://www.**blogger**.com/*
2. Click 'create an account'- written in blue towards the bottom of the screen.
3. Enter your personal details – we teach students not to give out personal information online. Since your first and last name, along with your username, will be displayed whenever you comment on the blog, **please do not choose anything that includes your own real name or your children's names**. For example: You could choose a colour for your first name and an animal or object for your surname, such as Green Cheetah. Give yourself that same username for your gmail name. You might need to add some numbers onto the end as your combination will probably already have been used by other people. For example, greencheetah3555@gmail
4. Put the rest of your details into the form and click on 'Next Step' once all the fields have been completed.
5. Confirmation of your new gmail address should appear under a banner saying 'Welcome!' In some cases Google will want to verify your details before they set up the account by sending a text message to your phone with a six digit number. Simply type this unique number into the message box that appears and your account will be verified.
6.Click the blue 'Back to blogger' button at the bottom of the screen.
7.You now have the option to set up your own profile – to add a profile picture and a bit of information about yourself. Again, **for e-safety reasons it is best to avoid photos of yourself or your family. Also remember to avoid giving out personal details like addresses.** You can choose to set up a google+ profile here (useful for accessing things like google docs) but to comment on our blogs you need only set up the second option, towards the bottom of the screen: 'create a limited blogger profile' (the button looks grey but click it – it does work!)
8.On the next page you will be asked to confirm your blogger display name – use the same one you chose earlier (greencheetah3555)

Once you've reached this stage you've set up your blogger profile – you're almost ready to start commenting!

Now, open a new tab in your browser and search for 'blogger'. You will be asked for your username and password. Once you have inputted these you will see a screen called the 'Blogger Dashboard' (the tab at the top of your screen should say 'blogger dashboard' if you're not sure whether you're in the right place).

Underneath 'Reading List' on the left of the screen, click the 'add' button. Copy and paste the address of any of our class blogs that you wish to follow. For example:
http://yearonemerseyvale.blogspot.co.uk/

You will then see any new posts from the blogs you have added to your reading list automatically every time you log in.

How to comment on blog posts

This is the bit we'd really like your help with! Now you've got a gmail/blogger account of your own you can comment on the work that our students do on their class blogs.
To do this you need to:

1.Find the class blog by looking on the relevant year group page on the Mersey Vale website and clicking on the relevant link.
2. Once you're on a class blog find a post on which you'd like to comment. Underneath the blog post it will either say 'no comments' or (hopefully) the number of comments that have been posted about it. If you click on the 'no comments' or '3 comments' text, a new box will pop up saying 'Make a comment'. Write your comment in this box. **Remember: if there is a photo of your child do not use their name when commenting. Photos and names should never be published together.** Also, please **use your first name only** so as not to identify specific children. For example: "Well done, Year One! From Jane – Jenny's mum" rather than Jane Smith – Jenny's mum.
3.Once you're happy with your comment and want to post it, you'll need to make sure the box underneath your new comment is set to 'Google account' and press the blue 'publish' button.
4.You will then be asked to enter your gmail address and password, before your comment is finally published!

Sorry if these instructions seem complicated and long. I promise they're a lot more straightforward than I've probably made them sound! Remember: you only need to do all of this once – once you have your gmail account set up you simply log in and comment, just as though you were checking your email.

These instructions seem to work best with a browser like Google Chrome or Firefox. If you're trying to do this using Internet Explorer and having problems, make sure you have installed the latest version.

Thanks in advance for your comments – the students will undoubtedly get a real buzz from reading them!

Mr Ellis, November 2014