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IMPORTANT UPDATE: CHANGES TO SCHOOL START AND END TIMES
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REMINDERS OF INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/ CARERS OF ALL CHILDREN

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our parents and carers who continue to follow Government rules and advice, as well as our own school procedures, to help keep everyone safe. We recognise this half-term has been like no other and all the staff at Mersey Vale would like to thank you for your continuing support.

Since September, one of additional protective measures we have put in place is to stagger start and end times for classes by ten minutes. As a result of the swift drop off and collections by parents/ carers and after listening to feedback from families which have children in different classes, we have decided to reduce these staggered times to five minutes. By doing this, we hope parents will not have to wait too long to drop off or collect children especially as it will be colder and wetter in the coming months.

We do ask, however, that parents/ carers continue to be prompt when arriving and leaving and also we continue to encourage adults to distance from each other and wear a mask. The entrance for each class bubble will remain the same.

Time	Gate A	Gate B
8:45am – 2:45pm	Y6	Y2
8:50am – 2:50pm	Y5	Y3
8:55am – 2:55pm	Y4	Y1
9.00am – 3.00pm	-	Reception
8.40am – 11.40am		Morning Nursery
12.20pm – 3.20am		Afternoon Nursery

Plans will be kept under constant review and are subject to immediate change if further DfE, Local Authority or other guidance is issued or due to other matters beyond our control. You will be notified of any change as early as possible.

It is our intention to revert to our "normal" school hours for all classes as soon as it is safe to do so.

The essential protective measures which we will continue to follow include:

- a requirement that people who are ill stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene for everyone in school
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with NHS Test and Trace if required
- reduced contacts and maximised distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimised potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable. At Mersey Vale we group children together in phase or year group bubbles and avoid contact with other bubbles as much as possible. Staff will maintain distance from pupils and other staff as much as they can.



Infection Control, Hygiene, First Aid and Cleaning

Please do not send your child into school if they or a member of your household is displaying symptoms of coronavirus. If any child or member of school staff displays symptoms during the school day, they will be taken to our designated isolation room. Staff will wear PPE to care for them. Parents/ carers will be contacted, the child should be collected from school immediately and advised to follow current guidance. School will also follow the current guidance and contact the local health protection team for advice.

Staff will wear PPE if they are providing first aid, medical or intimate care to any child at any time.

The School Day

We want school to continue to be as normal as possible, given the requirements and guidance we will be following. Here is a reminder of some key points about the school day;

- Children should wear full school uniform including appropriate plain, black school shoes. If the weather is poor please ensure they bring a coat or waterproof jacket as there are increased opportunities for outdoor learning and play. They should also have their PE kit in school.
- Children will continue to be part of a bubble. At Mersey Vale we have 7 bubbles; EYFS (Nursery & Reception), Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, Year 6.
- Regular handwashing and sanitising routines will continue to be put in place for everyone.
- Teachers continue to plan for a range of indoor and outdoor learning to deliver an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum.
- Children will continue to be provided with many opportunities to talk about any worries they have and to ask questions during regular PSHE check-ins and other activities. All children from Year 1 to Year 6 benefit from the experience of a weekly Forest School session with other children from their class bubble. These sessions are led by Miss Wilding, our Forest School Leader and Mrs Cropper, our Learning Mentor.
- Wherever possible children from Year 1 to Year 6 have their own workspace and classrooms are arranged with forward facing desks.
- As bubbles are kept apart; we will continue to avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or other events with more than one group.
- We have carefully organised timetables for each class to ensure staggered start/ end times as well as staggered playtimes and lunchtimes. Lunchtimes will continue to be reduced from 1 hour to 40 minutes to facilitate the staggered start and end times.
- For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, staff and children have their own items that are not shared.
- It is still recommended that pupils limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day, to essentials such as lunch boxes, water bottles, hats, coats, books and stationery. Bags are allowed. Children are encouraged to bring their own pencil case which will remain in school containing; pencils, pens, ruler, rubber, pencil sharpener and colouring pencils (not felt tips or gel pens). If you are not able to provide this please let the class teacher know as soon as possible via ClassDojo. Please also continue to provide a labelled water bottle for your child which can be taken home every day to be washed and refilled.
- Classroom based resources, such as books and games, are used and shared within a bubble; these are cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between classes or bubbles, such as sports, art, computing, music and science equipment are cleaned between bubbles, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different bubbles.
- Lunch for Y1-Y6 continues to be eaten in the classroom bubble supervised by the class Midday Assistant. Our Reception class is the only bubble to eat lunch in the school hall.
- If you wish to order a lunch or are entitled to Free School Meals, then please do so in the normal way. This will continue to be a 'lunch bag/ box' option as children are not eating at dining tables in the hall, but it does include a daily hot item such as pasta with sauce, jacket potatoes, pizza, sausage roll, breaded chicken wrap and all day breakfast.

Attendance Expectations

In March when the coronavirus outbreak was increasing, the Government relaxed the law and made it clear that no parent would be sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school. Now the circumstances have changed and school attendance is mandatory. This means that the usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

I know that there is a lot of information in this letter, but most is hopefully a helpful reminder of things we are already doing to try to keep our school community safe in these challenging times. The main change is the staggered start and end times for our Reception, Y1, Y3, Y4 and Y5 class bubbles as detailed on the first page.

If you have any questions or comments please contact the school office.

Many thanks for your continued support,

Yours faithfully,



Mrs. J. Mullane

Headteacher