

Starting School at Merstham Primary School

Welcome to Hedgehogs!

We are so pleased that you have chosen to come to Merstham Primary School and we can't wait to meet you all. We hope that you are keeping safe and having fun.

We just want to reassure you at this time of uncertainty that we won't forget you and will give you as much support as any other year. In the Summer term, usually we would hold a meeting to tell you more information about our school, how the Nursery class works and key information you need. It is also a chance for parents to ask questions. Unfortunately, due to current guidance from the government and Public Health England, our current transition practices may not be suitable and need to be adapted to suit the situation.

We have created some Frequently Asked Questions which may answer some of your questions or worries at this time:

- What time does school start each day?

We open our doors at 8.50 every day for parents and carers to come in through the nursery gate with their children and get ready for the day ahead.

- Where will my child keep their things?

All the Hedgehogs have a peg to hang their belongings on. There is a box for book bags and a tray by the sink for their water bottles. Children can access their water bottle throughout the day and can be refilled. We ask that they bring water in their bottle.

- Will my child get a snack at school?

Yes the government provide a piece of fruit each day and your child can choose when they want to have it. However if your children is extra hungry they can bring another piece of fruit in their bag.

- What happens at lunch time?

Merstham Primary is very lucky to have a kitchen on site providing high quality healthy school meals. Nursery children can pay and have a cooked school meal or your child can bring a packed lunch instead. There is always a vegetarian option for the children to choose and the kitchen also can cater for many dietary requirements e.g. dairy intolerance. Please let the school and your class teacher

know so they can make sure your child gets an appropriate meal. At lunchtime, the Hedgehogs go to the hall to eat. The class sit together (school dinners and packed lunches) as they eat and then they go back to the classroom to continue their day.

- When and where do I collect my child?

School finishes at 3.00pm. A member of staff will come out and open the wooden gate to let parents into the outdoor area. Then they will call each child as they see a parent or carer. In September, please be patient as staff learn to match parent faces and call your child.

- My child is going to be collected by another person on some days. What do I do?

If it is a regular arrangement, write it in a letter and give it to your class teacher. They will add it to the regular collectors list. If it is a one off arrangement, tell the member of staff on the door and they will record it on the going home list for the end of the day. It can be useful to introduce a new person to a member of EYFS staff as it will help them recognise the correct person at the end of the day.

- How do I find out how my child is doing?

Once the children are settled, you will be invited in to share some of a session with your child. They can show you the learning they like to do and you will also be able to talk with the teacher about their next steps. These 'focus visits' will be about once a half term.

- What do I do if I am worried about my child?

Please speak to your child's teacher initially. They will be able to help you with many questions about how your child is doing and put things in place if they need extra support. They will speak to other members of staff such as the Inclusion leader, the Deputy Head or the Headteacher if it is needed.

- My child has a medical need. How will school manage this?

Firstly make sure it is written in the school admission form / questionnaire. Your teacher will arrange time to talk to you about it, what school can do and what adaptations may be needed. If it is needed a meeting with the Inclusion leader will be arranged and it may be necessary to involve outside agencies e.g. school nursing team and / or write a care plan.

- How will you find out about my child before they start?

We will be asking you to fill out a questionnaire about your child. For example what they like or don't like, their family, any medical needs. If your child attends a pre-school setting, normally we would go and visit your children in their setting to

speak to their key workers and find out about them. As we are unable to do this, we will be calling other pre-school settings and speaking to them over the phone to gain this valuable information.

In September, we will have Nursery Class visits for families so that we can start to build a relationship with you and your child and get to know faces and personalities. Your child's start will be staggered so that the children can get used to the new environment, children and adults.

- How can I find more information about Merstham Primary and starting school?

We are creating a new parents webpage on the school website where we will share information about starting at Merstham Primary School. We will be adding our Nursery pack including what a typical day in Hedgehogs looks like and areas of the class. Please go through this with your child during the summer so that they are familiar with the setting and what will happen on their first day. We will also put on a video tour of our classroom so that you can see all the wonderful and exciting areas you get to play and learn in.

- How can I make sure my child is ready for nursery?

We have included for you some resources to help you gain an understanding of the things you can do to help prepare your child for school.

Some of the most important things for your children are:

- Developing their independent skills (putting on own clothes, going to the toilet by themselves and wiping their own bottoms or indicating that they need a nappy change if still in nappies)
- Communication - talking about what they are doing and asking questions
- Playing games and learning to take turns and using their imagination in their play.
- We all love to share stories and this is a valuable skill for children to learn to sit and listen to them and then answer simple questions about the story.
- Encouraging children to sing nursery rhymes and getting them to hear the words that rhyme is also a fun and beneficial activity.

There are also a few useful websites to help the children develop their skills and prepare for nursery.

<https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/being-school-ready/#readyforschool>

https://www.pacey.org.uk/Pacey/media/Website-files/school%20ready/PACEY_preparingforschool_guide.pdf

<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformation-sheets/getting-ready-for-nurseryschool/>

https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/media/98892/022_nw_pg-starting-school.pdf

Here are some web links with reading books about starting school.

<https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/children/2017/10-books-to-get-little-ones-ready-for-school-and-nursery/>

<https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home/starting-school/books-about-starting-school/>

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/s/starting-school/>

Also in the admissions folder are a number of pdf's from the Surrey county council website about early learning and development.

We are so excited that you have become part of the Merstham Primary family and will keep you updated on any information that you need. Please do not worry, we will get you all the information and be here for any questions you may have. Keep checking the website or emails from the school and if you have any questions please email info@mersthamprimaryschool.org.

See you all soon and keep safe,

Miss Thatcher and the Hedgehog team

