

# Merley First School



Welcome to our parents'  
information event  
June 2026

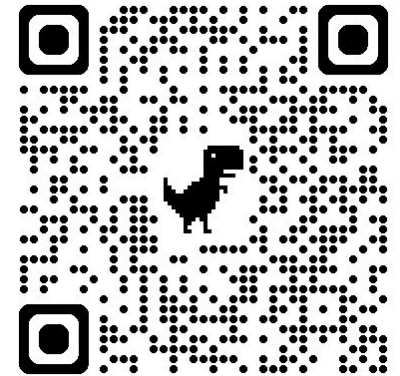
# Welcome

A very warm welcome to Merley First School.  
Thank you for choosing us to educate your child.

We are delighted that you will be joining us  
as part of the Merley family.



# Merley is part of Initio Learning Trust



# Meet the Reception Team

We are a two form entry first school and in Reception we have two classes Ladybirds and Butterflies. Your child will be placed in one of these classes.



Mrs Riley

Ladybird Teacher



Miss Brazel

Butterfly Teacher



Mrs Coates

Reception Teaching Assistants



Mrs Holland

# Other adults who you will see in school

Mrs Baldwin



Mrs Waldron



Miss Leftwich



Mrs Knott



Mrs Daunt



Mrs Baldwin

Headteacher

Deputy Safeguarding

Lead

Mrs Waldron

Deputy Headteacher

Safeguarding Lead

Miss Leftwich

SENDCo

Inclusion Lead

Mrs Knott

Administrator

Mrs Daunt

Office Manager

# Growing together to build our future

We believe the best way to educate children is by providing a happy, caring and positive environment.

We encourage everyone to achieve their best and strive for high standards in teaching, learning and behaviour.

## **Each child is helped to:**

- Develop a lively and enquiring mind, to grow in imagination and sensitivity by encouraging understanding, awareness and curiosity about the world;
  - Acquire knowledge, skills, confidence and self esteem;
- To develop and adopt personal and moral values, ensuring that everyone equally enjoys respect and consideration.

# Our School Values

At Merley First School, we believe that a supportive learning environment, where every child feels they belong is key to every child's success.

Our school values focus on three important principles that guide our community:

**Respectful, Engaged, Ready**

By supporting these values at home and school, together we can help our children develop a strong character and reach their full potential.

# In Reception...

## All children receive:

- Free fruit snack
- A free school dinner

You do not have to apply for these

- Free milk until they are 5 years old

Apply through Coolmik

A classroom scene with a blue wall. On the left, a string of colorful triangular bunting (blue, pink, yellow) hangs from the top. In the center, a large green chalkboard with a brown wooden frame contains white text. To the right of the chalkboard, a brown hanging pot with green vines is suspended. In the foreground, a brown wooden desk holds a stack of three books (yellow, pink, and red) with a red apple on top.

## Pupil Premium Funding and Free School Meals. Improving Educational Outcomes for all

Is your family in receipt of Universal Credit?

If you are, then from September 2026, you can apply for Free School Meals for every child over 7 years of age (meals are already free for 4-7 year olds).

This is known as Expanded FSM



**Furthermore**, if you are in receipt of Universal Credit and your annual household earnings are £7,400 or less, your child qualifies for **Targeted FSM**. This is the **Pupil Premium** which is an extra pot of government funding given directly to schools.

The purpose of this is to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged students and close the attainment gap between them and their peers.

If you qualify, you get:

50% off the cost of school trips

Free attendance at one extracurricular activity (after school club)

One free school sweatshirt or cardigan each year

Free milk

Even if your child prefers packed lunches, it is absolutely vital to apply through the school website. Registering ensures the school receives additional funds every year to support their education and well-being.

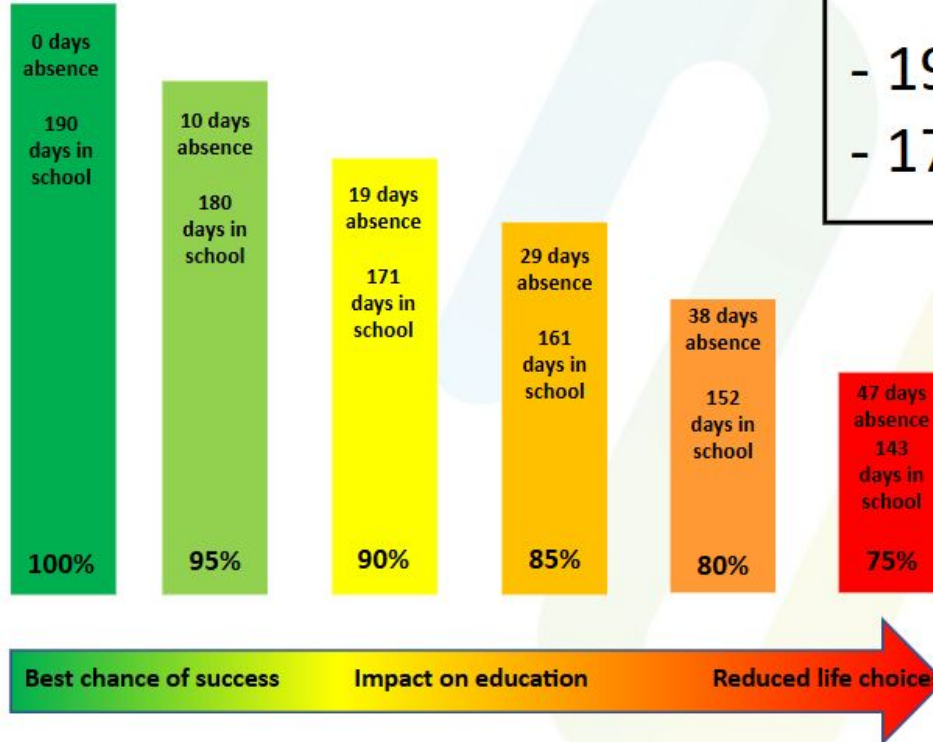
# Attendance

- We are building early foundations of regular attendance.
- Arriving at school on time will help your child settle quicker.
- Please ensure family holidays are not taken during the school term.
- We work in partnership with families and if you have concerns or worries please come and talk to us.
  - You must complete a leave of absence form if your child requires any time out of school (other than sickness or medical appointments)
- Please click [here](#) for school guidance regarding attendance

# Attendance

## Attendance:

There are 365 days in a year  
- 190 school days  
- 175 non school days



# Moments Matter

Moments in Reception lay the foundation for your child's entire school journey.

- **Social-Emotional Development:** collaborative play, learning to share, building the confidence and emotional resilience that comes from daily classroom routines.
- **Phonics Learning:** new letter sounds and blending skills. Missing a day creates a gap in their reading and writing journey, as every lesson builds directly on the previous one.
- **Key Number Recognition:** exploration of number patterns, counting, and shape recognition
- **Developing Inquiring Minds:** Child-initiated play and discovery where teachers spark curiosity, encourage problem-solving, and help children ask big questions about the world.

**MOMENTS  
MATTER,  
ATTENDANCE  
COUNTS.**

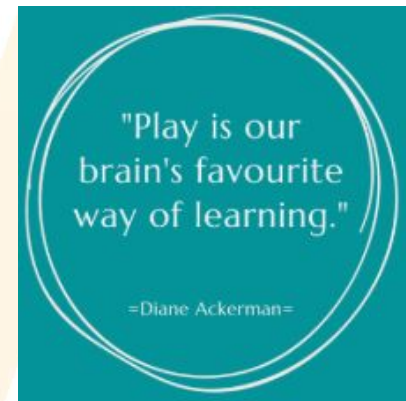
# Learning in Reception

In the Autumn term we spend time  
getting to know your child  
establishing rules and routines  
focusing on:

personal and social skills,  
communication and language and  
physical development.

In the Reception Year, we use the early  
years foundation stage curriculum.

Children will learn through play by  
exploring, talking, designing, thinking and  
being curious and active and working as  
part of a team.



# Welcome to Butterfly Class



We work together as one base with shared cloakroom, toilets, outside learning area and creative area.

We sit in our own classes for teaching time.

# Welcome to Ladybird Class



# A typical day in Reception...

Short whole class teaching inputs on phonics, reading and writing, handwriting and number.

Snack time

Play time



Discovery time (child-initiated play and adult directed activities)

Throughout the week we also have music, circle time and PE.

Always finish the day with Love of Reading time.

Parent meeting on Tuesday 15th September at 5.30pm

# What does it mean to be school ready?

Children do not need to start school knowing everything.

They need to feel safe, confident and ready to learn.

School readiness is about confidence and security.

Every child develops differently.

Home and school work together in partnership.



# Building Independence

**Independent toileting and washing hands.**



**Independent- putting on jumper/ coat on and off. Putting on shoes (velcro).**



**Independent with personal hygiene (including wiping nose)**



**Eating a whole piece of fruit.**



**Manage their own packaging in their packed lunch.**



**Using a knife and fork.**



**An independent child is a confident and happy child!**

# Communication Matters

## Encouraging positive interactions

**Expressing needs  
and feelings**



**Interacting with others  
sharing & taking turns**



**Listening and  
follow instructions**



**DID YOU KNOW**



Parents who just talk as they go about their daily activities expose their children to 1000-2000 words every hour.

[WWW.THESPEECHPRACTICE.COM](http://WWW.THESPEECHPRACTICE.COM)

**Language underpins all learning**

# A positive goodbye

## Your child coming into school

- Both classes will come into the classroom through this entrance. An adult will be on the gate each morning to greet the children and take any morning messages.
- The children walk down the path and into the Reception doors where they will find the cloakroom.
- It will help if they can recognise their name so they can hang their belongings on their peg.
- The Class Teacher will be in the classroom to settle the children.



## 'Drop-Offs Don't Have to Be Dramatic

♥ Simple things that help everyone.

Drop-off is hard. For kids. For parents. For educators. But it doesn't have to be a battle. When we work together, kids feel safe, settle faster, and the day gets off to a better start.



### Keep it short & sweet.

A quick, confident good-bye (10–20 seconds) is kinder than a drawn out one. Lingering or popping back for “one more hug” can make it harder for your child to settle.

Quick good-bye,  
big confidence.  
♥



### Your calm is their calm.

Kids read our nervous systems like a book. Take a deep breath, smile, and trust that they're in good hands. If you believe it's a safe place, they will too.

You set  
the tone.  
♥



### Create a goodbye script.

Keep it simple and consistent. Try: “I love you, I'll be back after lunch. Have a great day!” Then say it, hug, and go. Repetition builds security.

Same words,  
same love,  
every time.  
♥



### Trust the team.

We're more than caregivers—we're copilots in this journey. We'll comfort, distract, and help your child feel safe and connected.

We've got  
them.  
♥



### Be kind to yourself, too.

Drop-offs get easier with time. There will be tough days. There will be easy ones. You're doing better than you think. ♥

Teamwork  
makes the  
dream work. ♥

# How can I help my child?

Encourage independence

Encourage positive interactions

Sharing stories together daily

Practice positive and consistent goodbyes

Be positive about starting school



# Best Start in Life

[Steps For School Song | @BestStartinLife + @MCGrammarTV](#) 🎤 | [Educational Rap Songs for Kids](#) 🎵



# Ready, Steady, School!

- Check you have all the correct uniform

<https://www.merleyfirstschool.com/page/?title=School+Uniform&pid=27>

- Please label **EVERYTHING** even shoes and wellies, outside of lunchboxes and **ALL** uniform!

Remember **each day** your child must bring their:

- Named book bag
  - Named coat
  - Named water bottle (water only)
- Please keep us informed of any changes.

# Further information

The following information will be shared with you tomorrow.

- School term dates for 2026-27
- School Information letter which will include information about:
  - Uniform
  - Hot school meals
  - Milk registration
- Pupil Premium/ FSM application link
  - Tapestry consent form
- If you have not already supplied a copy of your child's **FULL** birth certificate (the long one!) please send a copy to [office@merleyfirstschool.org](mailto:office@merleyfirstschool.org)

# Outdoor Adventurers

Each class will visit our nature area every week for  
Outdoor Adventurers.

Some of these sessions will be with Helen and Leigha  
(Forest School teachers) and some with the  
class teacher and teaching assistant.



Children will wear old clothes to school and bring in waterproof trousers  
and coat and spare clothes.

Dates will be given to you in advance.

# Local School Committee

Chair of Merley LSC: James Tyler

## Interested in finding out more?

- Take a look at the school website Local School Committee information
- Further reading: Initio Learning Trust Scheme of Delegation
- Get in contact with the Chair of the Local School Committee:

*James Tyler*

*[jamestyler@merleyfirstschool.org](mailto:jamestyler@merleyfirstschool.org)*



# Support the Merley PTA

The Merley PTA is a small welcoming group of parents who want to raise funds to put into the school for the children.

If you feel you would like to become a member of the PTA you would be warmly welcomed.

The group just give time when the can and would value any support you are able to give.

# Thank you!

Please do talk to us if you have any questions.

You can also email the school office

[office@merleyfirstschool.org](mailto:office@merleyfirstschool.org)

We are looking forward to meeting your children and building positive relationships with your family.