



# Parent Handbook

Taking you step-by-step  
through starting school



MELDRETH  
Primary School

# Key Information

## What are our school times?

Start of the day	8:40am (our gates open from 8:35am)
Morning Break	10:30 - 10:45am
Lunchtime	12 - 1pm (12.10pm for Years 3 – 6)
Afternoon Break	2:30 - 2:45pm Early Years, Year 1 and Year 2
End of Day	3:10pm

## Arrivals and departures

Children are allowed in to school from 8:35am onwards. We ask parents to be prompt to school as our children begin working in shared spaces from the start of the day.

We appreciate all children being in school by 8:50am when the gate is locked.

## Safety: arriving late

In the interests of safety, all doors are locked immediately after the start of morning and afternoon school. Children arriving late, and parents visiting the school during the day, should in on arrival and out on departure and wear a visitors' badge.

We do not allow children to leave the premises during school hours without supervision. If any child is taken out of school during school time, we reason we ask to record your reason.

## Wraparound care

In offering wraparound care our aim is to provide an invaluable service for our many working parents.

**Breakfast club** – The Lookout club opens at 7:40am and closes at 8:40am at a cost of:

- £5.00 for first child;
- £3.50 for second child.

Breakfast is provided.

**After school care:** The Lookout club opens at 3:10pm and closes at 6:00 pm, at a cost with snacks of:

- 3- 4.30pm – £5.00 per child; £3.50 for second child
- 3- 5.15pm – £7.50 per child; £5.50 for second child
- 3- 6.00pm – £10.00 per child; £7.50 for second child

## Uniform

We encourage all children to wear a school uniform which our school governors consider promotes a sense of pride in the school; gives a sense of community and belonging; is practical and smart; identifies children with the school; is not distracting in class (as fashion items can be); makes children feel equal to their peers in terms of appearance; is regarded as suitable, and good value for money, by most parents; and has been designed with health and safety in mind. At Meldreth Primary the colour is predominantly green and grey.

### Our School Uniform

- dark green sweatshirt, cardigan or fleece, embroidered with the school logo
- white or dark green polo shirt, or white blouse
- grey trousers, skirts or shorts
- green and white check or striped summer dress
- flat, dark shoes with a good grip and proper support
- jewellery is not permitted. The exception to this rule are small earring studs/ and/or a watch in KS2, removable by the child for PE
- a named apron or old shirt is recommended for use in Art lessons to protect clothing

### PE Kit - all in a named drawstring PE bag

- dark blue shorts & white T-shirt
- plimsolls or trainers for outdoor work
- long hair should be tied back
- tracksuit for outdoor PE in colder weather
- swimsuit, swimming cap and towel (summer term)

We ask that all clothing is named so that we can return lost items to you.

## Where to buy

Uniform can be ordered on-line from:

<https://www.totalclothingshop.co.uk/meldreth> (navy PE shorts, white PE T-shirts and summer dresses are available from other retailers.)

## Book Bag

Our PTA kindly provide your child with a school book bag when they start school. This is used daily to carry reading books, letters and completed work. **Children do not need a bulky rucksack or pencil case as we cannot store these and all stationery is provided by the school.**

## Painting Apron

A named apron or old shirt with sleeves cut short is necessary to protect your child's uniform when doing creative activities. If you wish to buy an apron, we suggest nylon not plastic as, in our experience, they are longer lasting.

## Toys from home

We discourage children bringing personal belongings to school. We have 'Show and Tell' sessions every week to encourage children's speaking and listening skills. Children can bring in items of interest to tell their classmates about and occasionally we will ask for topic related items.

## Nature Detectives

Every week, no matter what the weather, our Nature Detectives head to Melwood to explore, build, problem solve, work with others...the list of learning is endless. We spend up to two hours outside so it is essential that children are appropriately dressed for the weather. To help keep uniforms looking clean, we ask that children are sent to school in non-uniform/suitable clothing for woodland exploration. Be prepared for this clothing to get mucky.

Suggested clothing-

- Jeans, tracksuit bottoms or similar.
- Long sleeve tops
- Several layers during the cooler months.
- Warm socks (two pairs are often needed!)
- Wellies, snowboots (not just for snow)
- Warm waterproof gloves (fleece or wool gloves just get wet)
- Hat and scarf
- Waterproof coat with a hood

We ask that even in warmer weather, children still wear long sleeved trousers and tops to protect themselves from plants such as stinging nettles.

## Food in school

Lunch time is from 12:00 noon - 1:00pm. Children may bring a packed lunch or have a school meal cooked on the premises. During the lunch break the children are supervised by midday staff. School lunch is healthy and tasty; we have vegetarian options and can cater for special dietary requirements. We operate an on-line cashless system on our My Child At School (MCAS) website. Parents will be given log in details to pay for dinners in Year 3-6.

## School meals

For children in Puffin, Swift & Wren classes, the government provides free school meals for every child. We are proud that 99% of our children take this up.

In certain circumstance a free school meal may be available for older children (please enquire if you require further details).

## Packed lunch

Children who bring sandwiches must bring the entire lunch, including a drink and spoon if required, in a named lunchbox. Cans, glass bottles, fizzy drinks, chocolate bars and sweets are not permitted as we are a healthy school.

## What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

This is the first stage of the National Curriculum focusing on the distinct needs of children up to the end of their Reception year in primary school. For the whole of the Reception year your child will be following the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. There are seven areas of learning and development that shape this curriculum. Three areas of learning and development are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, Social and Emotional development

Alongside the prime areas are a further four specific areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The prime areas cover the knowledge and skills which are the foundations for children's school readiness and future progress, and which are applied and reinforced by the specific areas. Each area of learning sets out the skills, knowledge and understanding which it is hoped children will reach or exceed by the end of the Foundation Stage.

## Learning through play

Each area of learning and development is planned through purposeful play and a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. The indoor and outdoor classrooms are organised to give children plenty of space to move around, to work

on the floor, table-tops, individually and in smaller and larger groups. Resources are well-organised and clearly labelled so that children know where to find what they need and can be independent.

Underpinning our teaching are three characteristics:

- Playing and exploring-children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
- Active learning- children concentrate and keep on trying when they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements
- Creating and thinking critically-children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things



### Communication and language

Giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

### Physical development

Giving children opportunities to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, to make healthy choices in relation to food.

**Personal, Social and Emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form

positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

**Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

### Handwriting

We use the following pre-cursive handwriting style. We find that if children start school already having learnt to hold a pencil in an awkward grip, or they are forming letters incorrectly, then it is very hard for them to correct this, even at such an early stage. It is useful if you use the same handwriting style and write in lower case when modelling writing, only using capital letters for the initial sound in their name.



**Mathematical** development involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.

**Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

**Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movements, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

cat 

Letter

Aa Bb Cc

Word

SO

Clue: Talking very quietly

isper



## The Foundation Stage Profile

This is the statutory way of summing up each child's progress and learning needs over Foundation Stage, during children's first year in school. The profile is based on teachers' ongoing observations and assessments over the three prime, and specific areas of learning in the curriculum. The class teacher completes a baseline assessment during the first few weeks of the term, based on observations.

This information is shared with parents using our online learning journal, Tapestry, which helps staff and parents to record, track and celebrate children's progress in early years education and at consultation meetings, and you are welcome to arrange a meeting with your child's class teacher at any time throughout the year.

At the end of the Foundation Stage, each child's learning development and achievement in all 7 areas are recorded and summarised in the Foundation Stage Profile. This will indicate whether they are meeting expected levels, or if they are exceeding or not yet reaching expected levels. The completed profile is shared with parents and passed on to the Year One teacher to help inform them about children's progress and learning needs.

## Helping your child in school

A close working partnership between parents and teacher is essential to learning, particularly in these early stages. If you have any information, questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to us. Teachers are usually in class at the end of every afternoon and this is a better time to speak to us informally, rather than in the morning when teachers are busy preparing for lessons and greeting the children. You are welcome to make an appointment at any time.

## Classroom helpers

Once all the children have settled into school, we will welcome helpers into the classroom. In order for our Nature Detectives learning to take place, it is essential that we have volunteers to accompany us. This might be just one a month, or more regularly depending upon your commitments. Perhaps you have a special skill or interest that you would be able to share with the children? Or maybe you would just like to be part of things, generally helping, so that you know what your child is getting up to and have a better insight into how you could help them.



***"The teachers are warm and approachable and really know the children. Could not think of a better place for our daughter to start her school career!"***

***Parent survey 2022***

# Frequently Asked Questions

Here are our answers, to what we find, are the most frequently asked questions. If you have any questions that are not answered here, please contact the school office and we will be happy to help!

## School Attendance and absence

All schools are held accountable for the levels of pupil attendance in school. We take pride in our good levels of attendance (currently 95.4%) and we are grateful for the support we receive from parents and carers.

## Illness and appointments

Where absences are unavoidable due to illness, medical appointments etc. please ensure that you:

- inform the school on the first day of absence by 9:15am
- keep us informed of any appointments which result in your child being absent for whole or part of a day.

## Holidays

We cannot authorise any term time holidays and so expect all holidays, visits to see family etc. to take place during the school closure periods. All school holiday dates are published to parents one year in advance. If you do need to go away in an emergency, there are forms to complete at the school office, which **MUST** be completed in advance. Holiday requests during term time are not usually granted apart from those with very exceptional circumstances.

Any holidays taken during term time without permission could result in a penalty notice and parents may be fined.

## Religious Education and Collective Worship

At Meldreth Primary School our children's education is underpinned by spiritual and moral development. The school's religious education follows the programme of study as agreed by our local SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education). Parents have the right to exercise their statutory right of withdrawal of their children from acts of worship and religious education.

An act of worship, which is broadly Christian in character, is held every day and is valued by all.

We also hold worship in the local Church to celebrate key events in the Christian calendar to which everyone is welcome.

## Road safety

Road safety teaching is experienced by all year groups in school. Additionally there are three specific courses:

- in Puffin class children take part in an approved 'learn-to-cycle' programme;
- in Year 4 children take part in Bikeability level 1, which is based on the government approved National Standards for Cycle Training, and teaches trainees the necessary skills to ride confidently within school grounds;
- In Year 6 Bikeability Level 2 is studied to ensure children have the necessary skills to ride confidently on today's roads.

## Jewellery

For safety reasons we request that only small studs are worn in pierced ears and that these are covered with medical micro pore tape during PE. In addition to this we do not recommend the wearing of rings or necklaces. Watches can be worn in Key Stage 2 classes but should be clearly named.



## Residential visits

At Meldreth Primary School we consider educational visits to be both valuable and an important aspect of the curriculum. Each year the children in Years 4 and 6 will spend time on a residential visit. We believe these visits are a very valuable aspect of the children's broader education and we always try to keep costs to a minimum and will support families, wherever possible, to ensure every child who wants to go, can.

## Class visits

All children will be given the opportunity to visit exhibitions, places of interest, museums etc. in connection with the work they are doing. On most of these occasions a request may be made for voluntary contributions from parents towards the cost of the transport and/or entrance fees.

## Charging policy

The staff and Governors of the school feel very strongly that no child should be omitted from any visit because of financial reasons. However, if insufficient money is collected to cover the costs, the visit will have to be cancelled.

If this is something you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Howard.

## Seeking your permission

We will always seek your permission if any activity takes place after school. If we are playing an after school sport at another venue we will ask you to arrange transport – but it may involve children sharing lifts in other parents' cars. We may ask you to organise this between parents/carers to ensure that you are happy with the organisation. We will ensure that children are brought back to school in an emergency but it is parents' responsibility for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made for their child to get home from an after school event.

## Homework

The partnership between home and school is vitally important to ensure all children achieve their potential. For this reason we believe it is important that some work is done at home on a regular basis.

### KS1

In KS1 activities are fun and practical carried out with mum, dad or grandparent. Alongside this your child will have reading, learning spellings or maths challenges. Please support us by hearing your child read regularly, at least three times a week, and write a comment in your child's Reading Record book.

### KS2

In KS2 we use Signpost home-learning which is linked to the curriculum being taught in class and is therefore meaningful to the children. This gives the children opportunities to research and gather information which may be used in lessons. The children can present this work in a creative way. As in KS1, the children are also expected to read three times a week with an adult questioning and supporting their reading at home.

## Assessment

Every child's progress is regularly assessed and detailed records are maintained. In addition, parent and teacher consultations are held in the Autumn and Spring terms for you to discuss the progress of your child. A formal written report is issued at the end of the summer term. Following the report there is an opportunity for you to meet with your child's class teacher to discuss any further concerns.

***"The school has the right ethos and makes sure communication is key."***

***"We are proud for our children to be in a school which has been rated in the top 10 of Cambridgeshire schools by the Times."***

***Parent survey 2019***



## Special Educational Needs

Mrs Samways is the lead teacher for Special Education Needs and Disabilities in our school. Her role is to support staff in ensuring that additional support is given to a child who requires it in accordance with our policy and guidelines. It is important to remember that a lot of children have additional needs at some time in their education and they all need individual attention. By working together, and occasionally with the support and advice from external agencies, many of these barriers to learning can be overcome.

We work to the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs (DFE). Please see our website for more information.

## Parent/carer involvement

We believe that school is successful when it works in partnership with people and organisations that can enhance the quality of the education it provides, and contribute to the progress and success of its pupils. The most important partnership that we have is with parents.

Children make maximum progress when home and school work closely together. Reading and homework is an important part of this partnership. It allows the pupil to improve his or her own standards and potential beyond the classroom environment.

We provide regular contact through formal and informal parent evenings and will contact you if there are any problems. Our policy is to keep an open door for parents at all times.

## Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

As a parent you are automatically a member of our active Parent and Teacher Association (PTA). Our PTA organise events to support the school by providing community activities and helping to provide items that the school cannot readily afford.

The association has in the past been very successful, supplying the school with many items and subsidising our annual puppet show visit. The AGM is held in October each year, at which everyone is welcome.

## Partnership with parents

In addition to all of this, many parents and other volunteers come into school to share their skills. Even a few hours a week is very much appreciated. Perhaps you may like to join us by:

- signing up as a regular classroom helper

- helping on school visits
- supporting the PTA at fundraising/social events
- helping with out of school activities and clubs
- helping to prepare materials for children to use

## Communication

**Email address:** [office@meldreth.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@meldreth.cambs.sch.uk)

**Website:** [www.meldreth.cambs.sch.uk](http://www.meldreth.cambs.sch.uk)

A fortnightly newsletter is emailed to all parents/carers and placed on the school website. On the website there is a school calendar of events which is updated regularly.



eschools is a communication service we use in school which enables us to email parents any important information. Please keep us up to date with any changes to your email address or contact numbers.



My Child At School (MCAS) is an online portal for our parents which enables you to view their child's performance at school, pay for trips and make school lunch payments.

To access MCAS, simply visit [www.mychildatschool.com](http://www.mychildatschool.com) and log in using your supplied login details.

If your child is ill whilst at school, or involved in an accident, we will attempt to contact you immediately. Please make sure that contact numbers are kept up to date. We will ring the named persons, in priority order, as stated on your child's record details form.

## Our Home School Agreement

We believe it is essential to have strong links between home, school and the community. All children, parents and teachers are asked to sign a Home School Agreement that outlines the intentions of all three parties. The Head Teacher also issues each class with a signed copy of 'The Rights Of A Child Charter'.

## Why do we need policies?

Policies are also useful to parents. Please visit the school website: [www.meldreth.cambs.sch.uk](http://www.meldreth.cambs.sch.uk) and click on 'school information' and then scroll down to 'School Policies' to read some of our policies.

## Working with parents

### Pupils with a disability

All pupils are admitted to our school in the same way regardless of ability or disability. School has disabled access and accessible toilet facilities. This procedure is detailed in our Admission Policy and includes home visits and liaison with outside agencies in order to discuss specific areas of concern.

New parents and children are welcomed into school for preliminary visits. We always aim to meet the needs of any pupil in the most appropriate way to ensure that everyone, whatever their needs and capabilities, is included and catered for with compassion and respect.

## Health and Welfare

### School Nurse Team:

**To Contact your local School Nurse** please ring:  
Melbourn Health Centre. Telephone - 01763 260827

### School Nurse Continence Team

The School Nurse Service provides community based clinics for children experiencing problems with enuresis (night-time wetting) and soiling. Please contact the School Nurse continence team- 01223 884180

We liaise closely with the school nursing team and Area Health Authority who oversee a wide range of services such as medicals, hearing /vision tests and health interviews. The nurses' team is also available for any advice or issues you may want to discuss.

## Medicines

A medical form must be filled in when children start school or have a change to their medication. Where a child has a short-term illness such as an infection and requires antibiotics, parents may make arrangements to come into school to administer it, or alternatively request that the child goes home for lunch. **On no account should medicine be sent to school with your child as school staff are not allowed to administer any medication or creams.**

If your child is asthmatic and requires medication during the day, then an inhaler should be kept at school. Please make sure your child's teacher is aware of any inhalers used. The inhaler should be marked with the child's name and will be taken on any visits off the premises. The majority of our staff have completed an Emergency First Aid at Work course and a number of staff hold a specialist Paediatric First Aid Certificate.

***"Our daughter has settled in quickly to school having started in September. She loves going to school and is always happy to share what she has been up to and learnt that day."***

***Parent survey 2022***



**Meldreth Primary School,  
High Street,  
Meldreth,  
Nr Royston,  
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**Headteacher: Mrs Sasha Howard**

**Chair of Governors: Mrs Emma Tidby**

**School Office staff: Mrs Anne McCrossen and Mrs Janet Wiloughby**

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