**Welcome back!**

We hope you had a lovely holiday and a big thankyou for sending the children back looking so smart in their uniforms. A big welcome to our new Reception children who are settling in well. We also welcome new members of staff this term, Mrs Connolly in Y4, Mrs Copley in Y4/5 and Miss Brown in Y1. We wish them very well in their time at Mereside.

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**Is your child 3 years old or are they in Y6?**

**Applying for a school place - deadlines**

If your child is currently in Y6 you need to apply for a secondary school place by 31st October 2017. If you miss the deadline you may not get the choice of school that you want so it is very important that you make the application in time.

If your child was born between 1st September 2013 and 31st August 2014 you need to apply for a primary school place by 15th January 2018. The easiest way to apply is online at [www.blackpool.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/schooladmissions)

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**School closure**

Thankyou to all parents for your co-operation in collecting the children on Tuesday when the burst water main meant we had no water in school and had to close. Luckily the text message got through to most people and though it must have caused significant difficulties for some of you, all the children were collected quite quickly. Residents of the estate must have found it difficult managing with no water until the late evening so fingers crossed nothing similar happens again for quite a few years!

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**Holiday dates**

****Holiday dates for this year are at the end of this newsletter. They are also available on the school website. Please remember that holidays in term time can only be authorized in exceptional circumstances. You can get a form from the school office to ask for your circumstances to be considered but please be aware that unauthorized absences can lead to a penalty notice. We are trying very hard to get to our 96% target again this year and if we can reduce the number of absences due to holidays, both authorized and unauthorized, it will make a big difference to our overall attendance. We reached 95.9% last year so we are nearly there but we rely on the support of all our parents in getting their children to school every day and on time.

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**School Behaviour System**

We have made a few changes to our rewards and consequences system in school so please watch out for the leaflet that will be sent home next week. The main changes are that the children are collecting raffle tickets for the ‘Superstar’ raffle every Friday with a prize draw in assembly; and that the Marvels the children collect will be added up for certificates as before but also if they reach a certain number by the end of each term they will be invited to our super ‘Marvel party’. This is replacing Golden Time as a reward for the majority of children whose behaviour is always good. The dojo system will still be available but we will count the Marvels every Thursday and the total number your child has received that week will be put on the system on Friday. We are trying to avoid the confusion we had with ‘Dojos’/Marvelos/Marvels by just using ‘Marvels’ so although the system you will see will be the online Dojo system, we are just referring to them as ‘Marvels’ in school.

**School Meals from Chartwells**

Our school meals are now being provided by a new company and though we’ve only had two days of meals so far the food has looked very tasty and the children seem impressed. Chartwells are going to meet the School Council (soon to be re-named the Pupil Parliament) in a few weeks and will be listening to their opinions. Don’t forget, if your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 they can have a school meal absolutely FREE under the Government’s Infant Free School Meals programme.

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**Free School Meals and Pupil Premium**

Pupil Premium is funding that is paid to the school based on the number of children eligible for Free School Meals. All children in Reception, Y1 and Y2 are now entitled to a free school meal; however if their parents do not register the school does not receive the funding. This money is very important to the school as we use it to pay for speech therapy, psychology services, and extra staff so we can have smaller classes. If you think you meet the criteria for Free School Meals, please can you register on **https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Benefits/Forms/Helpwithfreeschoolmeals.aspx**

to make sure the school doesn’t lose out.

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**Paying fees**

Don’t forget that any fees such as After School Club or school meals can be paid online.

Please see or phone Mrs Lydon in the office who can give you details.

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**Important dates for your calendar**

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Friday 22nd September | Jeans for Genes Day – come to school in your jeans |
| Wednesday 27th September | **Parents’ Evening** |
| Wednesday 11th October | Harvest Festival |
| Tuesday 17th October | School Photos (individual and families) |
| Friday 27th October | Break up for half term |
| Tuesday 7th November | Return to school |

**HOLIDAYS 2017-18**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Term** | **School closes at 3.15 pm on these days (unless stated otherwise)** | **School re-opens at 8.45am on these days** |
| **Summer 2017** |  | Tuesday 5th September 2017 |
| **Autumn Half Term 2017** | Friday 27th October 2017 | Tuesday 7th November 2017 |
| **Christmas 2017** | Thursday 21st December 2017  (2pm close) | Monday 8th January 2018 |
| **Spring Half Term 2018** | Friday 9th February 2018 | Monday 19th February 2018 |
| **Easter 2018** | Thursday 29th March 2018  (2pm close) | Monday 9th April 2018 |
| **May Day 2018** | Monday 7th May 2018 | |
| **Summer Half Term 2018**  **2 WEEKS** | Friday 25th May 2018 | Monday 11th June 2018 |
| **Summer 2018** | Friday 20th July 2018  (2pm close) |  |