



Kettleshulme St James CE (VA) Primary School

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Friday 5th September 2025

Dear Kettleshulme Family,

I'm sure many of you know me already, either from my time as a teaching assistant here or from my PGCE placement in Meadow Class last year. For those I haven't met yet, my name is Mr Birtwistle (Mr B for short) and I feel very lucky to now be the class teacher in Meadow. Having already spent time working in this wonderful school, I feel right at home and am so excited to continue the journey with our amazing staff, supportive parents, and, of course, my brilliant 'Meadowers'. My aim is to create a classroom where every child feels safe, valued and encouraged to succeed. I want their time in Meadow to feel like an adventure, full of opportunities to explore ideas, work collaboratively and develop confidence in their own learning. I cannot wait to see what we get up to this year together!

Over the summer our classroom had a full makeover, with lots of hard work (and plenty of helping hands!). It's been so special to see the children's faces light up as they explored their new space, and I'm sure you'll get the chance to see it for yourselves in the coming weeks.

As we start this new school year together, I'd love to encourage you to keep supporting learning at home in little but meaningful ways. Reading together, chatting about the day, or following up on something your child is curious about can make such a difference. Your encouragement at home really helps to nurture their love of learning, and I'm so grateful to be working in partnership with you.

Here are a few important things that you might like to make a note of:

Staff

In Meadow Class, we are very lucky to have Miss Stevenson, Miss Tomkinson, Mrs Kershaw, Miss Scarlett, Mrs Turner and Gill helping us (what a great team, right?!). I will not be in school on Wednesdays, so on this day Mrs Price will be the Meadow Class teacher up until half term. After that, Mrs Sandres will take over this day as she will be returning from her maternity leave.

Uniform

Just a reminder that our school uniform includes black socks and plain black shoes on school days that we are not doing PE. Please can girls also wear cycling shorts underneath skirts and dresses. Thank you.

Nuts

We are a nut-free school, so please check that any food brought into school does not contain nuts as we have several members of our school family with severe allergies.

Snacks

School snacks are available to buy through Spider (bagel or brioche). If you are sending your child to school with a snack from home, please can we ask that it be a healthy/nutritious snack (e.g. fruit, vegetable sticks, breadsticks etc.)

Forest School

Meadow Class have their first block of Forest School sessions this half term. They will be run by Sam each Thursday afternoon. Please send children with appropriate footwear and waterproofs (it will take more than a little rain to put us off!). Their second block of sessions will be in Summer Term 1, after the Easter Holiday.

PE

We will be having PE every Tuesday afternoon. Please can children come to school wearing their PE kit, which consists of their usual green t-shirt and jumper, along with plain black joggers or shorts and black trainers. Please send your child(ren) to school every day with a water bottle. We also complete a weekly class run and daily fitness challenges and brain breaks.

Reading

The importance of reading for children cannot be overstated. Reading for pleasure opens up new worlds, sparks imagination, and allows children to explore ideas, visit new places, and meet new characters. Books also help them to understand their own identity and provide valuable insight into the world and perspectives of others. At Kettleshulme St James, we see reading as essential, which is why we use our reading record system.

The purpose of the records is to ensure all pupils engage in regular, high-quality reading experiences. Children should record the title of their book, the amount read, and the date. Records will be checked daily by the class teacher, and children will be encouraged to change their book when appropriate. Each Friday, pupils who have logged five or more reads during the week will receive a raffle ticket from their class teacher. Tickets are collected in a special box, and at the end of each half term, pupils with enough tickets will be rewarded with an additional 30 minutes of outdoor play or iPad time. We ask for your support in encouraging your child to read consistently, aiming for at least ten minutes each day.

We also have our Key Stage 2 Reading Challenge, which you can find out about on our school website (Learning Tab, then Reading).

Homework

You will find the Homework Schedule on the Meadow Class Page on our school website. Homework is set weekly and is given out on a Monday and should be completed and handed in by the children on the following Monday - this means they get a whole week to complete it.

Literacy:

Homework consists of 10 minutes of reading every day as mentioned above along with a grammar worksheet to be completed throughout the week and sets of spellings to be learnt in preparation for the weekly test.

Maths:

Homework consists of a maths worksheet based upon the unit we have been covering in class to get further practice. This along with a suggested 20 minutes of times table practice every week will really help to embed the children's skills this year.

We also encourage all our pupils to contribute to the community whenever they can. This may look different for each family – we would love to see extra enrichment activities your child completes!

Punctuality and Attendance

I'd also like to take a moment to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Our learning starts at 8.50am each day, and because lessons build on from one another, being here on time really helps your child keep up and feel confident in their learning. Of course, if your child is unwell and needs to stay at home, that can't be helped, and I'll always make sure to support them in catching up on anything they've missed. If your child is poorly and unable to attend, please let Mrs Blood know (either via School Spider or an email to her) as soon as possible.

If you ever have any questions or would just like to chat about how your child is getting on, please feel free to get in touch. I really value keeping communication open between home and school, and I'm always happy to talk things through. I'm really excited for the year ahead and can't wait to see all that we achieve together. You will find me on the playground at the end of most days, alternatively you can email Mrs Blood to make an appointment.

Mr B and the Meadow Class Team