



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 14TH FEBRUARY 2025

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

This week we gave out our first Merrylands badges in celebration assembly. These badges celebrate children who consistently demonstrate the school's core values and are good role models to their peers. We look forward to giving out more of these badges and seeing the children wearing them proudly on their uniform. Well done to this week's Merrylands badge winners!

This week we added our final team points for the term and compared the totals. The team point trophies were presented to the winning teams – Blue team were the winners in both Early Years / Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 this term. When we return after half term, all totals will be reset and we look forward to finding out which team will win next term.

It has been another productive week across the school with a wide range of curriculum subjects being delivered. In Nursery, the children have enjoyed a range of activities linked to the story 'Jack and the Beanstalk', in Reception the children used sentence stems to find totals in maths and in Year 1, the children explored the suitability of different materials in science. Year 2 have been busy finding out how they can keep themselves safe online while Year 3 have been comparing life in the Stone Age, Bronze Age and the Iron Age. In the ASC, the children have been learning about respect, tolerance and friendship while the children in the Nest have been developing their sound knowledge through sensory and tactile activities. Year 4 and Year 5 have been completing Design and Technology projects this week with Year 4 building robots and Year 5 building wells with working mechanisms. Finally, in Year 6 the children have been exploring shadows and how they change size depending on the distance the object is from the light source.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support and I hope you all have a good half term break.

ATTENDANCE

School Attendance Target: 97.00 %



This week's Attendance: 93.06 %

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs Jarvis' class with 98.00 %

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Mrs Didham's class with 100.00 %

If your child is absent, contact must be made to the School Office EVERY school day that your child is absent.

Please report your child's absence by phone 01268 417893, ParentMail or by email: admin@merrylands-pri.essex.sch.uk

RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE



STAR OF THE WEEK

CERTIFICATE FOCUS: PERSEVERANCE



Nest: Rex P

Nursery, Mrs Tobin: Mason H

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Russell H

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Krystal M-Y

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Jaxon P

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Jacob W

Year 1, Mrs Fairman/Mrs Christie: Georgie P

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Tiago C

Year 2, Mrs King: Freya T

Year 2, Miss Gilmore: Albert F

Year 2, Mrs Jarvis: Violet H

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Cody A

Year 3, Mr Taylor: Leon L

Year 3, Miss Medina: Oscar A

Year 4, Miss Lee: Nina-Florence A

Year 4, Miss Miller: Ameerah M

Year 4, Mrs Didham: Samantha E

Year 5, Miss Day: Scarlett D

Year 5, Miss Osborne: Olivia D

Year 6, Miss White: Cristian C

Year 6, Mr Hayward: Amelia A

MERRYLANDS BADGE WINNERS

Our Merrylands badges are given to the pupils who demonstrate the school values at all times. They are good role models to other pupils and work hard to improve every single day. They try their best and persevere in all lessons, complete homework on time, have good school attendance and show respect and kindness to their peers.

Congratulations to this week's winners:

Reception	June L
Year 1	Charlie G
Year 2	Jude B
Year 3	Rose P
Year 4	Keira B
Year 5	Donald T
Year 6	Parth P

SPRING DISCO

Friends of Merrylands are looking to arrange a Spring Disco after the Easter break. In order for this to take place we require parent volunteers to help at the event - if you are able to volunteer, please email:

friendsofmerrylands@gmail.com.

Further information will follow if there are enough volunteers to run this event.

RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

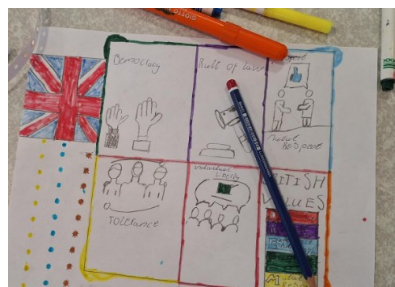
PUPIL VOICE

On Wednesday 12th February, Head Boy and Head Girl went to Downham Primary School to discuss British Values with other children from the trust.

Through discussions with Mr Mackman (local artist) the children produced artwork displaying the British Values.

Pippa said, "I really enjoyed expressing my ideas on British Values through art."

David enjoyed this session too and said, "I liked drawing my ideas on British Values."



TAG RUGBY COMPETITION

On Friday 7th February, children from Years 5 and 6 attended a Tag Rugby competition at James Hornsby School. The weather was very cold and wet, however each and everyone played really well - winning 2 out of 4 games.

Well done everyone!

PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Sportsperson of the Half Term...

Beth Mead MBE

Who is Beth Mead?

Beth Mead is a professional footballer who was born on the 9th May 1995 in Whitby (Yorkshire). Currently, Beth plays for Arsenal in the WSL (Women's Super League) as a forward as well as playing for the England women's team.

She started playing football at the age of six for her local village team, when she attended her first session she was the only girl to attend.

What has Beth achieved?

Beth Mead's career so far has been incredibly successful. In 2015, Beth was the FA Women's Super League Golden Boot winner as well as the Vauxhall England Women's young player of the year. After the 2022 Women's Euros, Beth won the golden boot as well as the player of the tournament award. She helped the England Lionesses to win their first major trophy at the same tournament. Unfortunately, at the end of 2022, Beth had an ACL injury which forced her to miss the 2023 world cup. She is now recovered and is back to playing for England and Arsenal.



Stickman



Get Set 4
Education

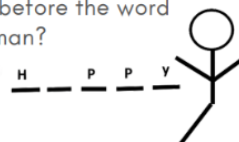
What you need: A pen and piece of paper, one player, one person to choose the words.

How to play:

- One person (the word master) chooses a word and draws lines on the paper, one for each letter.
- The player guesses a letter that could be in the word. If they are correct, the word master writes the letter on the correct line.
- If the named letter is not in the word, the word master draws part of a stickman and the player must complete 10 of one of the below exercises.

star jumps / hops / sit ups / jumping twists / press ups

- Can the player guess the word before the word master draws a complete stickman?
- NB. stickman to include head, body, two arms and two legs



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PERSEVERANCE

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

w/b 17.02.2025	February Half Term
24.02.2025	Back to School
28.02.2025	St. David's Day Special Dinner
06.03.2025	World Book Day
14.03.2025	Science Day
17.03.2025	St. Patrick's Day Special Dinner
21.03.2025	Red Nose Day—Comic Relief—Red non-uniform
28.03.2025	Mother's Day Sale



BERLESDUNA TRUST SPELLING BEE COMPETITION

Children from Years 2 and 6 took part in the Berlesduna Trust Spelling Bee competition with 10 other schools in the Trust.

The children had to compete in different rounds including making words from a wheel of letters, individual spelling and spelling as a team.

KS1 placed 7th and KS2 placed 4th overall.

Well Done to Grace, Halle, Henry and Holly.

STORYTELLING WEEK

Last week was storytelling week and the Year 2 children visited the Reception classes to read some of their own stories to them. Everyone had a great afternoon and enjoyed reading or listening to different stories.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

For our Shared Reading lessons we have been reading, *When the Stars Come Out*. This is a non-fiction book with beautiful illustrations all about the night time, the stars and the moon. We have really enjoyed reading this book in Shared Reading and have learnt lots of new information, even learning about different constellations. We would recommend this book to anybody who is interested in learning about the magic and mysteries of the night.

Year 5 - Miss Day's class



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CLOTHES DONATION BOOK

As you may have noticed, there is a clothes donation bank located by the main office.



This clothes bank only accepts what is displayed on the front of it, nothing else please. All items that you place in the bank must be in a bag. Please also make sure the bag is done up so nothing falls out and cannot be retrieved. The reason we have decided to put this bank in the school grounds is because it will help to save the environment and help people who are less fortunate than us. This will also help to make sure people are not dumping clothes on the roads, paths and anywhere in the area. They really do go to a good place to help families when they are feeling down and have not got a variety of clothes or anything.

Many thanks, please check it out! Evie - Year 6

WE ACCEPT	WE DO NOT ACCEPT	
clothes	pillows	
paired shoes	duvets	
blankets	glass	
handbags	metal	
	belts	paper
towels	carpet	
CDs	soiled rags	
DVDs		
video games		
books	rubbish	
bric-a-brac	shoes	

INFORMATION



TIME4YOU... MIND, BODY, SOUL SOUND BATH EXPERIENCE



A sound bath is an immersive meditation where you are bathed in soothing sound waves produced by various instruments.

This helps to relax and rejuvenate the senses to harmonise mind, body and soul.

Wed 26th February 2025

12.30 - 2.30pm

Beech Community Hub
8 Austen Road, SS14 3RZ



We have 3 ways to book:

[CLICK HERE](#) to book via Eventbrite!

Call/Text/Whatsapp
07923 426502

Email - basildonp4p@outlook.com



ACL Drop In Session

Join us to find out about our volunteering opportunities as an ACL Ambassador, as well as FREE sessions and courses for your family. From family fun sessions, to parent and carer support, we have something for you!

Every other Wednesday starting 12/02/2025
10:30am - 1pm
The HAPPY Hub, Unit 11, Eastgate Shopping Centre, Basildon, SS14 1AE

COMMUNITY &
FAMILY LEARNING



Essex County Council



Sanctuary Group

Lunch at a glance...

The option of Jacket Potato with Cheese or Beans, Ham Baguette and Cheese Baguette are available each day

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Monday	Sticky BBQ Chicken or Sticky BBQ Quorn with Steamed Rice and Sweetcorn Dessert – Fresh Fruit or Yogurt	Chicken Curry or Vegetable Curry with Steamed Rice and Peas / Sweetcorn Dessert – Fresh Fruit or Yogurt	Cheesy Chicken Pasta Bake or Vegetable Pasta Bake with Sweetcorn Dessert – Homemade Flapjack
Tuesday	Butchers Chicken Nuggets or Vegetable Nuggets with Chips and Peas / Spaghetti Hoops Dessert – American Pancakes and Syrup	Sausage Roll or Vegan Roll with Smiley Faces and Baked Beans Dessert – Chocolate Cake and Chocolate Custard	Butchers Pork Sausages or Vegan Sausages with Mashed Potato, Peas, Yorkshire Pudding and Gravy Dessert – Fresh Fruit or Yogurt
Wednesday	Homemade Mince Beef Pie or Homemade Vegetable Pie with Mashed Potato, Seasonal Vegetables and Gravy Dessert – Fruit Flavour Jelly	Butchers Roast Chicken or Vegan Fillet with Roast Potatoes, Peas / Carrots, Yorkshire Pudding and Gravy Dessert – Fruit Flavour Jelly	Homemade Chicken Pie or Quorn and Vegetable Pie with Roast Potatoes, Carrots and Gravy Dessert – Fruit Flavour Jelly
Thursday	Cheese & Tomato Pizza and Fusilli Pasta with Homemade Tomato Sauce Dessert – Homemade Flapjack	Beef Bolognese or Vegetable Bolognese with Fusilli Pasta and Mixed Vegetables Dessert – American Pancakes and Syrup	Chicken Fajita Wrap or Quorn Fajita Wrap with Diced Potatoes and Salad Bar Dessert – Homemade Lemon Drizzle Cake
Friday	Fish Fingers or Homemade Cheddar Whirl with Wedges and Baked Beans Dessert – Fresh Fruit or Yoghurt	Battered Fish or Omelette with Chips and Peas Dessert – Fresh Fruit or Yoghurt	Fish Fingers or Homemade Cheddar Whirl with Smiley Faces and Spaghetti Hoops Dessert – Fresh Fruit or Yoghurt

Salad Bar is available Daily

On Monday 24th February 2025, we will be returning on Week 2.

Please ensure all school lunches are paid for in advance on ScoPay.

Please let the office staff know if there are any changes to your child's dietary needs.



FRIENDS OF MERRYLANDS LOTTERY

For just £3.00 per ticket, you have the chance to win BIG every month.

Sign up here: <https://www.fundingwall.org.uk/members/merrylands-monthly-lottery-ss156qs>

Share with friends and family - everyone can join in!



Monthly Draws: Each month, a winning number is drawn.

Fantastic Prizes: 40% of the total pot goes to the lucky winner.

Support our School: 40% of the total pot goes to supporting Merrylands Primary School.

You will be entered every month until you cancel. Join the fun, support our school and you could be the next big winner!

CONGRATULATIONS TO FEBRUARY'S WINNER, CLAIRE LEWIS.

CLAIRE WON £13.20.



RESPECT

KINDNESS

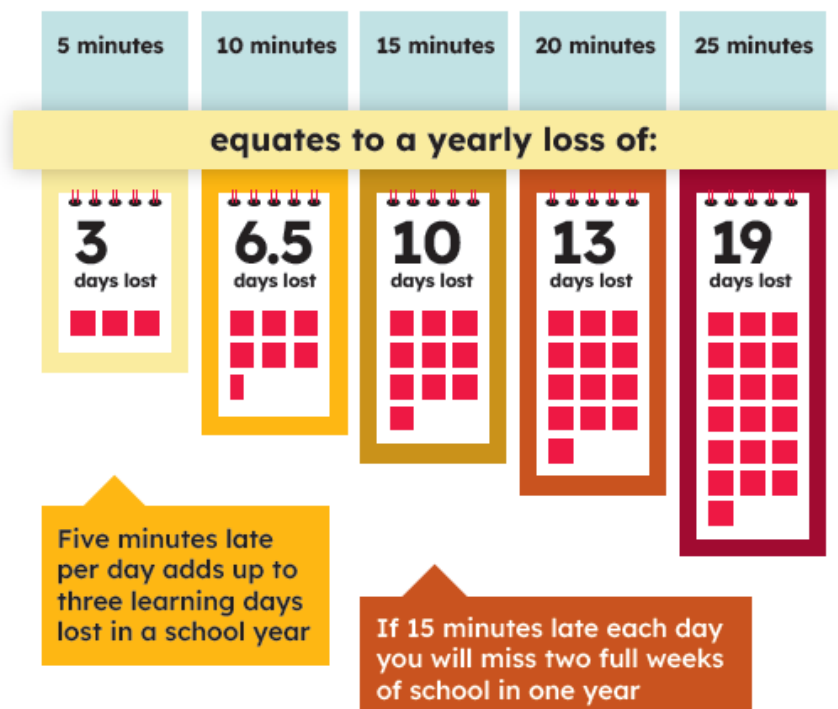
PERSEVERANCE

ATTENDANCE



Here, every day, ready and on time

Minutes lost per day



Poor timekeeping means less chance of success!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION – TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

Improving school attendance is a key priority for all schools across Essex. Where families choose to take a family holiday during term time, this can detrimentally impact a pupil's progress and can prevent them from fulfilling their true academic potential. Applications should only be made, if you feel that there are exceptional circumstances meaning the leave cannot be taken during the school holidays. We ask that all parents note that where families choose to go on holiday during term time and the absence is coded as unauthorised, Essex County Council may not issue penalty notices and may instead proceed straight to prosecution and place the case directly before the Magistrates for their consideration in court. If found guilty by the Magistrates, parents could face a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

SNAP STREAK
97
DAYS

SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

Snapchat is a messaging app which allows users to send images, videos and texts to others. Its best-known feature is that anything sent 'disappears' 24 hours after it's been viewed; however, users are known to take screenshots or use another device to obtain a photo of their screen. In 2023, Snapchat added a chatbot function called 'My AI'.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

My AI is Snapchat's new chatbot, which replies to questions in a human-like manner. However, the software is still in its infancy and has significant drawbacks, such as biased, incorrect or misleading responses. There have already been numerous reports of young users turning to AI for medical help and diagnoses, which could be inaccurate and therefore potentially dangerous.

PREDATORS AND SCAMS

Predators can exploit Snapchat's disappearing messages by, for example, telling a user they have naked photos of them and will post them unless they're paid. Snapchat's own research found that 65% of teenagers had experienced this – on this app or others. This likely isn't helped by 'SnapMaps' – a feature which highlights your exact position in real-time. This is meant to help friends keep track of each other, but could be used for more sinister reasons.

MY EYES ONLY

Snapchat has a hidden photo vault called 'My Eyes Only'. Teens can conceal sensitive photos and videos from parents and carers in this folder, which is protected by a PIN. You can check for this by clicking on the icon which looks like two playing cards. This takes you to the 'Memories' folder which stores photos, stories and the My Eyes Only folder.

SCREEN TIME ADDICTION

Snapchat prioritises user engagement, with features like streaks (messaging the same person every day to build up a high score). The app also has sections called 'Discover' and 'Spotlight', which show tailored content to each user. However, this could also be seen as an attempt to hook users into watching videos endlessly. Furthermore, constant notifications can lure people into using the app.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some content on Snapchat simply isn't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature also makes it easy for young people to share explicit images on impulse – so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

ONLINE PRESSURES

Although many of Snapchat's filters are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beauty' effects on photos can set unrealistic body image expectations – creating feelings of inadequacy in younger users. Snapchat now also has 'priority' notifications (which still get displayed even if a device is in 'do not disturb' mode), increasing the pressure on users to log back in and interact.

Advice for Parents & Educators

UTILISE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Snapchat's 'Family Centre' lets you view the details of the child's account – their friends list and who they've spoken to in the last week – and report any concerns. You must invite a child to the Family Centre for them to join. To keep the child's location hidden on the app, go into settings and turn on 'Ghost Mode' and 'Hide Live Location', and ensure they know not to share their location with anyone.

BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger does connect with a child on Snapchat and begins to make them feel uncomfortable through bullying, pressure to send explicit images or by sending sexual images to them, the child can tap the three dots on that person's profile and report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user – such as annoying or malicious messages, spam or masquerading as someone else.

FAMILIARISE YOURSELF

Before you allow a child to download Snapchat, download it yourself and familiarise yourself with the app. Snapchat has produced a parents' guide to the app to help you understand how it works and any protections they have in place. A link for this can be found in the sources below.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you nurture an open dialogue. For example, discuss My AI's responses to questions and how reliable they are. Talk about scams and blackmail before letting children sign up. If they're lured into a scam, encourage them to tell you immediately. Talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting, emphasising its inherent risks. Furthermore, explain how popular 'challenges' on the platform can have harmful consequences.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/snapchat-2021>

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