



# MERRYLANDS

## PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2025

### MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been an action-packed week at Merrylands this week. The KS2 choir performed at the Young Voices concert at the O2 in London and medals were won at the cross-country event at James Hornsby School. Well done to everyone that participated in these two events!

Learning across the school this week has included Reception baking cookies, Nursery children comparing colours, size and shape and Year 1 creating animated stories using drawing tools, adding clipart and using the keyboard to add text. Year 2 have been practising their ball skills and playing target games in PE. In the Nest, the children have used Numicon to support counting while the children in the ASC have been using the part, part, whole model to solve problems in Maths.

In Key Stage 2, Year 3 have been exploring patterns in Aboriginal Art, Year 4 have had Music lessons teaching them to play the ukulele, Year 5 have been creating pulley systems while Year 6 thought about their digital well-being and how they can keep themselves safe online. Year 3 also had a visit from the fire brigade who delivered workshops on Home Safety.

This week was Children's Mental Health Week. In school, PSHE lessons focused on the Inside Out characters and the emotions they represent. The children also explored their feelings and what makes them happy.

It was great to see so many parents/carers attend parent consultation meetings this week. I hope these meetings gave you a picture of your child's current progress and achievements and the Spring Term Progress report was a helpful summary of your child's attainment and next steps.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend!

### ATTENDANCE

School Attendance Target: 97.00 %



**This week's Attendance: 93.76 %**

**The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs Camoccio's class with 98.40 %**

**The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Mrs Didham's class with 98.46 %**

**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](mailto:admin@merrylands-pri.essex.sch.uk)**

RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE



## STAR OF THE WEEK

Nest: Kasper L  
 Nursery, Mrs Tobin: Safiya H  
 Reception, Mrs Anthony: Graciella W  
 Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Albina G  
 Reception, Miss Bagridge: Luena M  
 Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Belle D  
 Year 1, Mrs Fairman/Mrs Christie: Erin D  
 Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Maisie B  
 Year 2, Mrs King: Holly R  
 Year 2, Miss Gilmore: Alexander G  
 Year 2, Mrs Jarvis: Alice I

## CERTIFICATE FOCUS : KINDNESS



Year 3, Mrs Almond: Francesca A  
 Year 3, Mr Taylor: Aria S  
 Year 3, Miss Medina: Kevinas G  
 Year 4, Miss Lee: Maisie B  
 Year 4, Miss Miller: Elaine M  
 Year 4, Mrs Didham: Teddy K, Samantha E, Sofija S, Mila B and Samantha E.  
 Year 5, Miss Day: Tia M  
 Year 5, Miss Osborne: Ruby Y  
 Year 6, Miss White: Grace G  
 Year 6, Mr Hayward: Maya B

## UPCOMING DIARY DATES

11.02.2025	Safer Internet Day
12.02.2025	Nursery Parents Meeting
13.02.2025	Nursery Parents Meeting
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



## 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 unauthorized, 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.

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# YOUNG VOICES

On Tuesday 4th February 2025, some children from the key stage 2 choir represented Merrylands Primary School at the Young Voices concert at the O2 in London.

Everyone involved were singing their hearts out with the whole of the O2, it was a fantastic feeling and shows how music brings people together. It was a fantastic day of singing and dancing!

A big thank you to all the children involved for showing perseverance and dedication when rehearsing and performing.

Well done!



# CROSS COUNTRY COMPETITION



26 children went to the Cross-Country event on Wednesday at James Hornsby School. They represented the school with pride and showed some outstanding running. Max in year 5 achieved 1<sup>st</sup> place in his race and Amelia in year 4 achieved 2<sup>nd</sup> place in her race. Well done to everyone that competed.



# 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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.



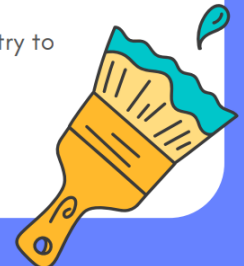
# Name Dance



### How to play:

- Imagine that your body is a paint brush.
- Move as though your body it is writing your name in space.
- Once you have created a movement for each letter, join them all together so that it becomes one dance.
- Add music to your dance and try to move in time to it.

Show your dance to a family member or friend.



[www.getset4education.co.uk](http://www.getset4education.co.uk)

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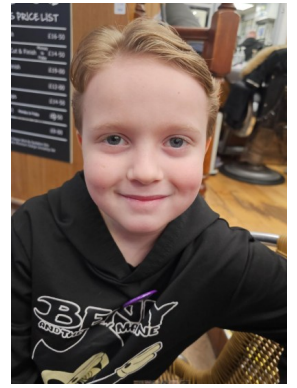


## LITTLE PRINCESS TRUST

On 2nd February 2025, Erniee donated his hair for the Little Princess Trust.

Erniee raised an amazing £550.

Well done Erniee.



## WINTER READING CHALLENGE

If your child hasn't already signed up it's not too late.

The Winter reading challenge runs until Saturday 22nd February.

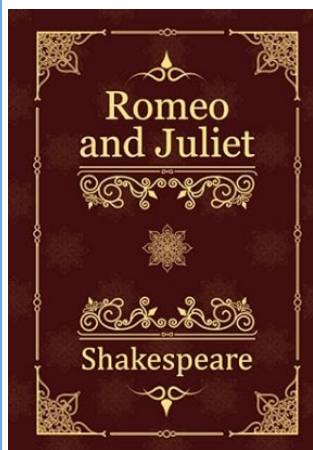
The challenge is aimed at children aged 0-12 (although older children are welcome to take part if they want to). Children need to complete 6 challenges from a choice of 12. For each challenge they complete, they will get a sticker and if they complete 6, they get a certificate and a pencil. Everyone who completes the challenge can also enter a prize draw with a chance to win some larger prizes such as tablets, book tokens, art and craft kits and Dragon themed toys. More information about the challenge can be found on:

<https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/news/winter-reading-challenge>.

There is also a promotional video: <https://youtu.be/yyZ9VMnzuLc>



## BOOK OF THE WEEK



In Year 6 Mr Hayward's class, we are reading William Shakespeare's tragedy Romeo and Juliet. Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare's most famous plays and the book is named after the two main characters, called Romeo Montague and Juliet Capulet. The play begins with a fight between two families (the Montagues and the Capulets). Later, a group of Montagues sneak into a masquerade ball at the Capulets' house. Romeo and Juliet fall in love and they plan a secret wedding. Unfortunately, this story does not have a happy ending.

Evie said, "I love Romeo and Juliet, it is such an interesting story with some great characters and the storyline is great. The genre is one of my favourites, tragedy and romance."

Maya said, "I think that Romeo and Juliet is a great story with love and a tragedy of star crossed lovers. I loved it because of the suspense and location, Verona is such a beautiful place."



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# 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 10th February 2025, we will be returning on Week 3.

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.



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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](http://nationalcollege.com).

## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# YOUTUBE

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Almost anyone with an internet connection knows YouTube. The Google-owned site lets anyone upload videos to be shared around the world, and as a result, it's an incredible resource with instant free access to material covering every conceivable topic. But with over 500 hours of video uploaded every minute, not all of it will be appropriate for young eyes.

### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

YouTube is free and can be accessed via numerous devices, even without creating a YouTube account. Some content is flagged as 'age-restricted' (requiring the user to be logged into an account with a verified age of 18), but children can still view some mildly inappropriate content. This can include profanity and violence, which some young users may find upsetting.

### CONNECT WITH STRANGERS

YouTube recommends videos related to what the user has previously watched on their account, aiming to provide content that will interest them. This is intended to be helpful but it can also lead to binge-watching and screen addiction – especially if 'auto-play' is active. Users without an account are shown popular videos from the last 24 hours, which might not always be suitable for children.

### RADICALISATION

YouTube's algorithm tends to promote content that's getting the most traffic – a lot of which can be quite extreme. This can be fine for harmless topics, but YouTube isn't regulated like television, and that means that conspiracy theories, fake news and hateful ideologies can occasionally surface to warp impressionable minds all too easily. Remember – the more they watch, the more they'll be recommended.

### CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

YouTube is a social media platform which allows people to interact with other (usually unknown) users. Account holders can leave comments on any video they have access to, as well as message other users directly. Connecting with strangers online can potentially lead to children being exposed to adult language, cyberbullying and – in the worst cases – online predators. If a child is creating content themselves, this can increase the likelihood of them becoming a target.

### TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

YouTube is teeming with trends and challenges, some of which are fun to watch and join in with. Children often find these immensely entertaining and might want to try them out. Most challenges tend to be safe, but many others may cause physical or emotional harm children who watch or copy them. The painful 'seit' and 'ice challenge' – where people use these two ingredients to burn their skin – is just one of many examples.

### SNEAKY SCAMMERS

The comments sections of popular content creators regularly have scammers posing as that influencer, attempting to lure users into clicking on their phishing links. Scammers impersonate YouTubers by adopting their names and profile images, and often offer cash gifts or 'get rich quick' schemes. Children may not realise that these users aren't who they claim to be.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### APPLY RESTRICTED MODE

For older children, Restricted Mode is an optional setting that prevents YouTube from showing inappropriate material (such as drug and alcohol abuse, graphic violence, and sexual content) to underage viewers. To prevent children from changing across age-inappropriate content on the platform, we would recommend enabling Restricted Mode on each device that they use to access YouTube. It's worth also turning the auto-play feature off, to prevent YouTube's algorithm automatically recommending something inappropriate.



### TRY GOOGLE FAMILY

Creating a Google Family account allows parents and carers to monitor what their child is watching, uploading, and sharing with other users. It will also display their recently watched videos, searches, and recommended videos. In general, a Google Family account gives a parent or carer oversight of how their child uses sites like YouTube and helps to ensure that they are only accessing appropriate content.

### MONITOR ENGAGEMENT

YouTube is the online viewing platform of choice for billions of people, many of them under 18. Younger children will watch different content to older ones, of course. You may want to keep an eye on how children interact with this material – and, if applicable, with content creators – to understand what they're interested in. Remember that creators often share content outside of YouTube, so don't ignore their web presence elsewhere!

### CONSIDER YOUTUBE KIDS

It's possible to sidestep most inappropriate content completely via Google's own YouTube Kids app for Android handsets and iPhone. This lets you filter content by 'preschool' (4 and under), 'younger' (ages 5 to 8) and 'older' (ages 9 to 12). This isn't a perfect substitute for parental supervision, as the app's filtering system is automated, and Google can't manually review all videos.

### CHECK PRIVACY SETTINGS

YouTube gives users the option of uploading videos as 'private' or 'unlisted' – so they could be shared exclusively with family and friends, for example. Comments on videos can also be disabled and channels that a child is subscribed to can be hidden. If the child is only uploading videos set as 'private', they are far less likely to receive direct messages from strangers.

### LIMIT SPENDING

Although YouTube is free, it does offer some in-app purchases. For example, users can rent and buy TV shows and movies to watch. If you'd like to avoid children purchasing content online, limit their access to online payment methods. Many parents have discovered the hard way that a child happily consuming a paid-for series quickly leads to an unexpected bill!

### Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



The National College

## VACANCIES



### BERLESDUNA ACADEMY TRUST – JOB VACANCIES

BERLESDUNA – TRUSTEES/GOVERNORS closing date 14<sup>th</sup> February  
CRAYS HILL – SEND LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANT closing date 17<sup>th</sup> February  
DOWNHAM – PART TIME CLASS TEACHER (FIXED TERM MATERNITY COVER) closing date 12<sup>th</sup> February  
FELMORE – MIDDAY ASSISTANT closing date 7<sup>th</sup> February  
FELMORE – CATERING ASSISTANT closing date 7<sup>th</sup> February  
MERRYLANDS – CLEANING SUPERVISOR closing date 14<sup>th</sup> February  
MERRYLANDS – CLEANER closing date 7<sup>th</sup> February  
MERRYLANDS – MIDDAY ASSISTANT closing date 2<sup>nd</sup> March  
ST MARYS – EXECUTIVE DEPUTY HEADTEACHER closing date 27<sup>th</sup> February

For more information and to apply for any of our roles, please follow the link to our website [Vacancies – Berlesduna Academy Trust](#)

## INFORMATION



### **Nurturing Harmony:** **FREE Wellbeing Courses for Every Household**

Are you looking to strengthen your family bonds and enhance your overall wellbeing?  
Perhaps you want to improve your own wellbeing?  
Our free wellbeing courses are designed just for you!

**Sign Up!**  
Scan the QR code, OR  
Visit our website [aclessex.com](https://www.aclessex.com)  
and type 'Family Wellbeing' in to the  
'Find a course...' box

**COMMUNITY &  
FAMILY LEARNING**



# HERO

**Here, every day, ready and on time**

## Minutes lost per day

5 minutes

10 minutes

15 minutes

20 minutes

25 minutes

equates to a yearly loss of:

**3**

days lost



**6.5**

days lost



**10**

days lost



**13**

days lost



**19**

days lost

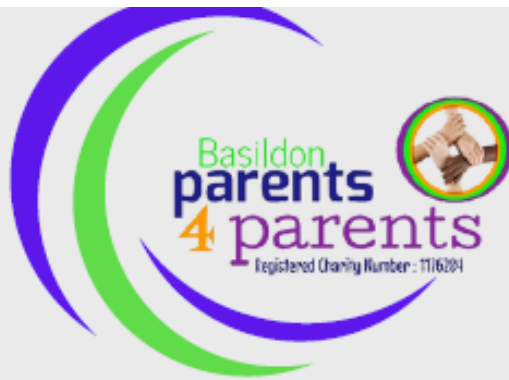


Five minutes late per day adds up to three learning days lost in a school year

If 15 minutes late each day you will miss two full weeks of school in one year

**Poor timekeeping means less chance of success!**





*Supporting Families  
in our Community*

# CONNECTED PARENTING COURSE



We all know that parenting can be a challenging experience

The aim of this 6 week course is to provide practical tools and strategies to help you navigate your parenting role with confidence and positivity

It will help you to understand the role of behaviour in communication and help you to develop a stronger connection with your child

**Mondays: 24th February**  
**3, 10, 17, 24, 31 March**  
**12.00 pm - 2.30 pm**  
**King Edward Community**  
**Centre, Laindon**  
**SS15 6GY**

**We have 3 ways to book:**  
**CLICK HERE to book via Eventbrite!**  
**Call/Text/Whatsapp -**  
**07923 426 502**  
**Email - basildonp4p@outlook.com**

