



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 28TH MARCH 2025

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been another busy week at Merrylands ending with a successful Mother's Day sale and the choir singing at Basildon Eastgate Centre to raise money for St. Luke's Hospice.

In lessons this week, Year 1 have been writing non-chronological reports about space, Year 2 have been exploring Rangoli patterns in art, Reception have been learning about odd and even numbers while in Nursery the children have been playing in the home corner and writing shopping lists. The children in the ASC have been learning about subtraction while the children in the Nest have been ordering numbers. In Key Stage 2, Year 3 have been comparing urban and rural areas, Year 4 have been learning about Ancient Egyptian mummification, Year 5 have been comparing different poems and Year 6 have been using symbols to represent electronic circuits.

Further Curriculum Showcase sessions have taken place this week in Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and the ASC. Thank you to all the parents, carers, grandparents and other relatives that attended these sessions.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend.

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

07.04.2025 - 21.04.2025 Easter Holidays

22.04.2025 Return to School



ATTENDANCE

School Attendance Target: 97.00 %



This week's Attendance: 93.84 %

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs King's class with 98.67 %

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss Day's class with 97.33 %

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

Nest: Alfie N
 Nursery, Mrs Tobin: Natalia M
 Reception, Mrs Anthony: Francesca B
 Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Crystal Y
 Reception, Miss Bagridge: Aria H C
 Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Isla P
 Year 1, Mrs Fairman/Mrs Christie: Erika G
 Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Sophia S
 Year 2, Mrs King: Jack S
 Year 2, Miss Gilmore: Eva P
 Year 2, Mrs Jarvis: Evie-Mae G

CERTIFICATE FOCUS: PERSEVERANCE



Year 3, Mrs Almond: Benas B
 Year 3, Mr Taylor: Louis P
 Year 3, Miss Medina: Teddie C
 Year 4, Miss Lee: Hesha P
 Year 4, Miss Miller: Laila H
 Year 4, Mrs Didham: Kiera B
 Year 5, Miss Day: Vinnie V
 Year 5, Miss Osborne: Jacob S
 Year 6, Miss White: Atarah S
 Year 6, Mr Hayward: Aaron C

Reception	Avineet B
Year 1	Amarylis R
Year 2	Alex G
Year 3	Emily L
Year 4	Alaine M
Year 5	Lucas L
Year 6	Elsie W

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.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Sportsperson of the Half Term...

Ashley Facey

Who is Ashley Facey?

Ashley Facey was born on the 31st of January 1995 in London. He is a Paralympian who plays table tennis for team GB. Ashley was born with a condition called Erbs palsy which has affected the nerves in the right side of his body. This has mainly impacted his arm and his shoulder.

He has always been a keen sports fan and in Year 7, started playing table tennis. Ashley impressed his coaches with his talent and they suggested he try for the Paralympic GB team. He has said his disability does not hold him back.

What has Ashley achieved?

In 2009, Ashley joined the Great Britain performance squad. He just missed out on selection for the London 2012 Paralympic Games but was selected for the Inspiration Programme and competed at Rio 2016. Ashley has won a number of medals including a silver at the China Open (2019) and team bronze medal at the European Championships in the same year.



Home Base 1, 2, 3



People: 2 or more

How to play:

- One person starts at a home base and counts to 60.
- All other players hide.
- Once the counter has finished counting they attempt to find the players who are hiding.
- All players who are hiding attempt to get back to the home base without being tagged by the counter.
- If they make it back to the home base, they shout 'home base 1, 2, 3.'
- The first player caught by the counter becomes the counter on the next round. If all players successfully make it home without being caught, the same counter counts again.



www.getset4education.co.uk

RESPECT

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WONKA Week

31st March -
4th April

£2
a bar

Grab a Wonka Bar and see if you
have a Golden Ticket inside.

PLUS meet and have your photo
taken with one of the Friends of
Merrylands Easter Pals



LITTLE PRINCESS TRUST

Freya in Year 6 will be donating her hair to the Little Princess Trust on the 27th April 2025.

Please find details for Freya's just giving page.

On Thursday 3rd April 2025, Freya will be selling lucky bags, phone charms, bracelets and a tombola. Prices will start from £1.00.

More details to follow.



Help us reach our £1,000 target!
Make a donation with **JustGiving**

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.

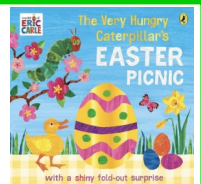
You will be entered every month until you cancel. Join the fun, support our school and you could be the next big winner!



BOOK OF THE WEEK

Nursery's story this week is 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar Easter picnic.'

The story is all about spring time and an Easter surprise. We are going to have a picnic in Nursery. Follow the link to read along - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvkN-XJQ-TY&cbrd=1>



RESPECT

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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 Bolognaise or Vegetable Bolognaise 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 31st March 2025, we will be returning on Week 1.

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.



SNACKS

As part of the National School Fruit Scheme all children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1, and Year 2 are provided with free fruit each day. They can also bring in their own fruit or a healthy snack as set out below. In KS2 children can bring their own snack for break time. Below is a list of suitable options that you could provide for your child:

- fruit
- vegetables
- plain rice cakes
- plain crackers
- bread sticks
- nut free granola bar or oat bar



Snacks should not contain chocolate chips, chocolate coating, nuts, artificial sugars and colourings or have a high sugar, fat or salt content eg crisps, fruit winders, pretzels, mini cheddars etc.

RESPECT

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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.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about **BLUESKY SOCIAL APP**

AGE RESTRICTION
13+
With an App Store rating of 17+ & Google Play rating Mature

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

While Bluesky has been around since 2018, it's suddenly taken off in a big way thanks to a significant exodus from X (formerly Twitter). Indeed, it looks and behaves a lot like Twitter before Elon Musk bought the platform. Bluesky has been touted in recent months as a safer, more open-minded alternative to X – but like any social media site, it still has its share of risks.

NO PRIVATE ACCOUNTS

While most social networks allow accounts to be private, at the time of writing, all Bluesky accounts must be public. The development team has indicated this might change in the future, but the app is built on a public-first protocol. If private accounts are ever introduced, it may only be in a limited way – such as through the implementation of group chats.

INTERACTIONS WITH STRANGERS

Every account being public means that anyone can be contacted by anyone else. While users don't have to respond and can easily block people and move on, it does mean that youngsters are at particular risk of being contacted by scammers, messaged by predatory adults or exposed to others with ill intentions. These hazards can be compounded by the fact that Bluesky doesn't require its users to provide their real name.

TROLLING AND BULLYING

While Bluesky currently feels a lot friendlier than X seems to have become, its lack of private accounts means that there's nothing to stop users from trolling and cyberbullying younger people. While accounts can be blocked and reported, a persistent bully could simply create a new profile, potentially making their victims feel unsafe in continuing to use the app.

DANGEROUS MISINFORMATION

Established news organisations have fact-checking and editing processes, but social networks have no such controls and can often serve as breeding grounds for misinformation and disinformation. Bluesky will possibly be no different once it reaches a certain size, and children may not have the critical thinking skills to tell fact from fiction – or to discern an informative, honest user from a malicious one.

ADULT TARGET AUDIENCE

Bluesky isn't designed with children in mind, and there aren't many parental controls on the platform. In an interview with the BBC, Bluesky's CEO originally said that the app would only allow users aged 18 and above to sign up, but a spokesperson later clarified its age restriction as 13+. This could imply the app was originally meant for an adult audience and suggests that making the platform more child-friendly might not currently be a priority.

RAPID GROWTH

At the time of writing, Bluesky seems calm in comparison with other social networks where moderation is lax and the atmosphere toxic – but that's due at least in part to its smaller community. The app has recently been adding as many as a million users per day, and if that continues, there'll be more unpleasant users to handle, and moderators could struggle to maintain the pleasant environment Bluesky is currently known for.

Advice for Parents & Educators

USE THE ADULT CONTENT FILTER

Bluesky doesn't have much in the way of parental controls, but there are content filters which can hide sexual and graphic imagery. These are enabled by default for underage accounts but can be manually turned on in the 'Moderation' section of the app's settings. The 'advanced' Bluesky Moderation Service lets you restrict content even further, hiding – for example – self-harm content, extremist rhetoric, and even rude posts.

ENCOURAGE BLOCKING AND REPORTING

Another tool that Bluesky uses to ensure a decent experience is muting and blocking accounts. The former prevents you from seeing a specific user's content, while the latter stops them from seeing yours. If a child is encountering trolls or bullies on the platform, encourage them to use this function, while also reporting the offenders to help make the platform a nicer place for everyone.

LOOK OUT FOR FAKES

Impersonation is a problem on all social networks. While the consequences are usually benign, imposters sometimes attempt to scam or groom children by pretending to be a popular influencer or online personality. Bluesky is unique in that it can be connected to official domains, with users' handles linking to other sites; while this isn't widely used right now, it could be a reliable way to verify celebrities and public figures in future.

KEEP AN OPEN DIALOGUE

As with all social media platforms, moderation and content filters can only do so much; it's highly likely that a child will eventually face something unsavoury. For that reason, it's important to make sure that young people are aware of the risks and know how to handle the technology if anything they see on the app makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Meet Our Expert

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



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

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

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AGES
4-14

Sports multi-skills
camp 4 ☆
champs

Ofsted Registered

Join us!

We run Sports multi-skills camps during the school holidays for children aged 4 - 14 years.

book online!
Camp4champs.co.uk


EXTENDED DAY
UNTIL 6PM


CHILDCARE
VOUCHERS



Essex County Council

FREE EASTER HOLIDAY CLUBS IN BASILDON

Book onto a free holiday club with Essex ActivAte this EASTER in Basildon!

Offer your children a memorable holiday experience filled with exciting and fun activities.

We provide FREE spaces for children who receive income related free school meals.

Book on with your emailed/text HolidayActivities voucher code!

CENTRAL BASILDON

Premier Education - Basildon Sport & Leisure Club (5-12 yrs)

Basildon Sport & Leisure Club, Gardiners Way, SS14 3UJ
RClark@premier-education.com & 07387196392

ATF - Millhouse (5-14 years)

Millhouse Primary School, Tavistock Road, SS15 5QF
kherring@atfcommunity.com & 07701365822

BILLERICAY

Camp 4 Champs (4-14 years)

Mayflower High School, Stock Rd, Billericay, CM12 0RT
bookings@camp4champs.co.uk & 02081030101

Mega Camps (4-14 years, SEND Level 1)

St John's School, Stock Road, Billericay, CM12 0AR
03330124378

FELMORES & VANGE

Southend United (5-13 years, up to SEND Level 2)

Eversley Leisure Centre, Crest Ave, SS13 2EF
info@southendunited-cet.co.uk & 01702341351

ATF - Briscoe (5-12 years)

Briscoe Primary School, Felmores End, SS13 1PN
c.mcalden@heartscademy.uk & 07956770446

ATF - Vange (5-12 years)

Vange Primary School, London Road, SS16 4QA
smartin@atfcommunity.com & 07989515757

ATF - Northlands (5-12 years)

Briscoe Primary School, Felmores End, Basildon, SS13 1PN
kherring@atfcommunity.com & 07701365822

Sports Cool East London (4-11 years)

Cherry Tree Primary School, Long Riding, SS14 1QP
sout Essex@sportscool.org & 07707861027

WICKFORD & SHOTGATEE

Jack Of All Sports - Wickford (4-12 years)

North Crescent Primary School, Wickford, SS12 9AP
jackofallsports@btinternet.com & 07919888093

Jack Of All Sports - Wickford FC (4-12 years)

Bartlett Part, Shotgate, Wickford, SS11 8RZ
jackofallsports@btinternet.com & 07919888093

Crafty Katies Make and Move Holiday Club (4-12 years)

Abacus School, Tresco Way, Wickford, SS12 9GJ
craftykatie10@gmail.com & 07929044960

LAINDON, FRYERNS & ST MARTIN'S

Kidbusterz - Janet Duke (4-13 years, up to SEND Level 2)

Janet Duke Primary School, 105 Markhams Chase, SS15 5LS
info@kidbusterz.co.uk & 07519079628

Sports Cool East London (4-11 years)

Fairhouse Community Primary School, Long Riding, SS14 1QP
sout Essex@sportscool.org & 07707861027

SPECIALIST SEND & MENTAL WELLBEING CLUBS

Butterflies Club - Laindon, SEND Level 4 (8-16 years)

Presidents Hall, Laindon, SS15 6LF
jasmine@butterfliesclub.co.uk & 07884700124

Motivated Minds!

Mental Wellbeing & SEND Level 2 (6-16 years)

Happy Hub, Eastgate Shopping Centre, Basildon, SS14 1AE
thrive@motivated-minds.co.uk & 07429224971

JTD Arts SEND Level 1-3 (5-11 years)

Northlands Primary School, 45 Winifred Road, SS13 3JQ
activejtd@hotmail.com & 07856869296

Share SEND Level 4 (5-16 years)

The Fryth, Beeleigh E, SS14 2RR
admin@sharerespite.co.uk & 0126852169

Find out more: activeessex.org