



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

AUTUMN TERM – FRIDAY 24TH OCTOBER

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have reached the end of a busy first half term. The children have worked extremely hard in lessons and made good progress with their learning across the curriculum. In celebration assembly this week we added our final team points for the term. The winning teams were RED TEAM in Early Years / Key Stage 1 and YELLOW TEAM in Key Stage 2. When we return after half term, all totals will be reset and we look forward to finding out which team will win next term.

Yesterday we held an Attendance Raffle. All children who were in school on Thursday 23rd October 2025 were entered into the raffle. The winners were:

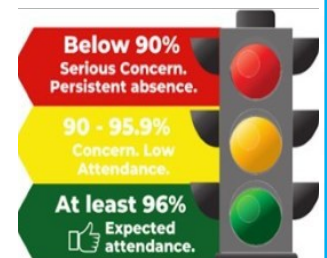
EYFS	Isabelle J
Year 1/2	Quinn H
Year 3/4	Holly R
Year 5/6	Lucas L

Congratulations to all our prize winners who received a certificate and gift voucher.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support this term and I hope you and your child(ren) enjoy the half term break. We look forward to welcoming everyone back to school on Tuesday 4th November 2025.



School Attendance Target: 95.00 %



This week's attendance: 92.87 %

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs Camoccio's class with 98.85 %

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss Gilmore's class with 97.46 %

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.

RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

STAR OF THE WEEK

CERTIFICATE FOCUS: RESPECT

Nursery: April H

Nest: Kasper L

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Arthur S

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Jordyn-Sky M

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Sofia S

Year 1, Mrs King: Aryah-Mae S

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Hunter T

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Maria C

Year 2, Mrs Didham: Leah B

Year 2, Miss Milne: Harper S

Year 2, Mrs Cooper/Mrs Christie:
Aleshia M-Z

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Amira P

Year 3, Miss Gilmore: The Whole Class

Year 3, Miss Medina: Ayyan H

Year 4, Miss Lee: Amelia P

Year 4, Miss Miller: Margot L

Year 4, Miss Atkin: Hunter L

Year 5, Miss Day: Nathan J

Year 5, Mr Taylor: Evie S

Year 5, Miss Osborne: Damilola A

Year 6, Miss White: Max T

Year 6, Mrs Thour: Iulian P

BADGES

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 kindness to their peers.

Congratulations to this week's winners.

Reception	Libby B
Year 1	Jacob D
Year 2	Tyla B
Year 3	Holly W
Year 4	Michael C
Year 5	Penelope R
Year 6	David S Olivia D

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

OCTOBER

Black History Month

Oracy Month

27.10.2025 October Half Term

03.11.2025 Inset Day - School Closed

04.11.2025 Back to School



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HARVEST APPEAL

We would like to say a great big thank you for your very kind donations to our Harvest Appeal. Your generosity means that we have over 30 carrier bags of food to donate to the Happy Hub foodbank. Thank you very much!



GREAT FIRE OF LONDON WORKSHOP

Year 2 enjoyed a Great Fire of London workshop last week.

The children enjoyed some role play of jobs that happened back in 1666 such as a baker, greengrocer and warehouse workers. They also met the Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Bloodworth, and listened to Samuel Pepys and King Charles II.



PUPIL VOICE

On Thursday, Head Girl and Deputy Head Boy went to Whitmore Primary School for a pupil voice meeting where they talked about careers and aspirations of what we would like to be and do in the future.

"We had a tour around the school and saw lots of lovely displays which gave us ideas for our school displays. Finally we did a poster focusing on how we can be confident in talking about our learning. We really enjoyed our visit."

Head Girl Suzanna and Deputy Head Boy Lucas.



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PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Sportsperson of the Half Term...

Lauren James

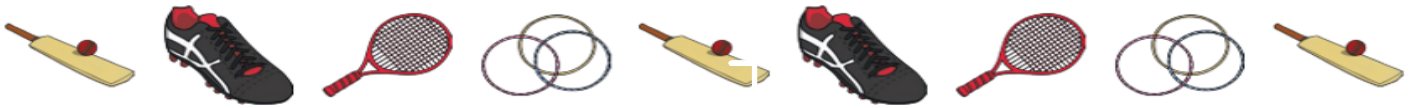


Who is Lauren James?

Lauren James is a professional women's football player who is currently signed to Chelsea and has represented England and the Women's Euros and Women's World Cup as a forward. She was born on the 29th September 2001 and started playing football from a young age, playing with her brother's in the park behind their house.

What has Lauren achieved?

At the age of just 17, Lauren signed for Manchester United and helped the team to gain promotion to the Women's Super League – she scored 14 goals in 18 appearances. In 2021, she rejoined Chelsea and has continued to have a successful career. Some of her achievements include: FA Women's Super League Winner (2021/22), Women's FA Cup (2021/22), Arnold Clark Cup Player of the Tournament (2023) and London Football Awards: Young Player of the Year (2023). In addition to this, she helped England to win the Women's Euros (2025).



Bumble Bee Breath

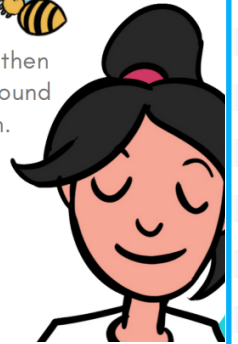


What you need: a quiet space

Breathing techniques help our bodies to relax, slow our heart rate and feel calmer.

How to play:

- Keep your lips lightly sealed.
- Breathe in through your nose and then breathe out making a 'mmmm' sound until you need to breathe in again.
- The longer your 'bee hum', the more relaxed you are likely to be.



Try this breath before school or after lunchtime.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE



STORY AND PICTURES BY MAURICE SENDAK

Reception have been reading, 'Where The Wild Things Are' by Maurice Sendak over the last few weeks and we even had a visit from one of the Wild Things who made a mess in our classrooms!

In the story, the little boy Max imagines that a forest grows in his room and he sails away to an imaginary land where he is made King of the Wild Things. Unfortunately, he misses his home and so he leaves the land and sails back to his room where he finds his supper waiting for him "and it is still hot".



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On Tuesday 4th November 2025 children will return to school 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.

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Lighter Bites



OUR LIGHTER LUNCH OPTIONS OF JACKET POTATO & HAM OR CHEESE BAGUETTE ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL PUPILS EVERYDAY



MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY

WEEK 1

CHICKEN FAJITA WRAP
QUORN FAJITA WRAP
WITH POTATO CUBES & SALAD BAR
DESSERT - RICE PUDDING
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

SAUSAGE ROLL
VEGAN ROLL
WITH SMILEY FACES & SPAGHETTI LOOPS
DESSERT - HOMEMADE ICED SPRINKLE CAKE
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

HOMEMADE CHICKEN PIE
QUORN & VEGETABLE PIE
WITH SAUTE POTATOES, CARROTS & GRAVY
DESSERT - FLAPJACK
FRESH FRUIT & YOGHURT

CHEESE & TOMATO PIZZA
WITH PASTA IN HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE & SALAD BAR
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY
FRESH FRUIT

FISH FINGERS
CHEDDAR WHIRL
WITH CHIPS & BAKED BEANS
DESSERT - STRAWBERRY SWIRL MOUSSE
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

WEEK 2

BEEF MEATBALLS
VEGAN MEATBALLS
WITH PASTA IN HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE & PEAS
DESSERT - AMERICAN PANCAKES & GOLDEN SYRUP
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

BUTCHERS CHICKEN NUGGETS
VEGETABLE NUGGETS
WITH CHIPS & BAKED BEANS
DESSERT - HOMEMADE SPONGE CAKE & CUSTARD
FRESH FRUIT & YOGHURT

BUTCHERS PORK SAUSAGE
VEGAN SAUSAGES
WITH MASH POTATO, YORKSHIRE PUDDING, PEAS, CARROTS & GRAVY
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY
FRESH FRUIT

CHICKEN CURRY
VEGETABLE CURRY
WITH STEAMED RICE & SWEETCORN
DESSERT - GOLDEN OAT FLAPJACK
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

BATTERED FISH
VEGETABLE FINGERS
WITH SMILEY FACES & PEAS
DESSERT - ICE CREAM
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

WEEK 3

BREADED CHICKEN BURGER
QUORN BURGER
WITH CHIPS & SALAD BAR
DESSERT - HOMEMADE CHOCOLATE SPRINKLE CAKE
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

BACON MACARONI CHEESE
MACARONI CHEESE
WITH PEAS
DESSERT - SEASONAL FRUIT & YOGHURT

BUTCHERS ROAST CHICKEN
QUORN FILLET
WITH ROAST POTATOES, YORKSHIRE PUDDING, GREEN BEANS, CARROTS & GRAVY
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY

BEEF BOLOGNESE
VEGETABLE BOLOGNESE
WITH FUSILLI PASTA & MIXED VEGETABLES
DESSERT - HOMEMADE FLAPJACK
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

FISH FINGERS
CHEESE OMELETTE
WITH POTATO WEDGES & SPAGHETTI HOOPS
DESSERT - CHOCOLATE SWIRL MOUSSE
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT



RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

Good Attendance means...

Being in school at least 97% of the time or 184 to 190 days

Remember

Education is important - don't miss out!

Did you know?

A two week holiday in term-time means that the highest attendance a child can achieve is

94.7%



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI-ENABLED SCAMS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is quickly becoming a widely used tool, with lots of positive applications being discussed and developed. Sadly, however, as with most technology tools, there are those who will seek to use it for malicious and dishonest practices, with children and other vulnerable groups particularly at risk.

PHISHING EMAILS: BETTER & QUICKER

Phishing scams – emails designed to trick people into handing over login details or money – are not new, and do not rely on AI; however, AI has made them far more dangerous. Criminals can now generate highly convincing emails at speed, mimicking an organisation's tone, branding and language with ease. This makes phishing attempts harder to spot, especially for young people who may not yet know what to look out for.

ONLINE MARKETPLACE FRAUD

Online marketplaces are now a common way to buy and sell everything, from second-hand clothes to cars. Criminals are exploiting this by using AI to enhance or completely fake product photos and videos, and pressure buyers into paying deposits or full amounts upfront. These tactics are becoming more advanced, making it vital to pause, check, and verify the sale before parting with any money.

VOICE IMPERSONATION

AI can now realistically impersonate a person's voice when given a small sample of someone's speech patterns. This is especially concerning where voice has been enabled as an alternative to password-based logins. One such example was the use of AI deepfake audio as part of a fake kidnapping scam: the criminals used an AI voice clone of a 18-year-old to convince her parents she had been kidnapped and elicit a ransom.

EMPLOYMENT SCAMS

Using AI, criminals can create fake online profiles that seem completely real. These synthetic identities can chat with young people about fake job offers, asking for money to secure a visa or paperwork. In 2023, The Guardian reported a scam targeting young people with promises of quick cash, posing as TikTok staff.

INFLUENCER & INVESTMENT SCAMS

AI tools now make it easy to manipulate video and audio, with technology available that can generate entirely fake content using the likeness of celebrities or influencers. Criminals are using this to create convincing videos of well-known figures promoting fake products or services, which young people can be particularly susceptible to. Cryptocurrency scams are a common tactic, luring people into investing in schemes that do not exist. Once payment is made, the criminal simply disappears with the money.

ROMANCE SCAMS & SEXTORTION

AI chat bots can now mimic real conversations, often accompanied with realistic fake photos and videos, which makes it easier for criminals to build trust with young people – among other things, this can lead to fraud or sextortion. In 2024, the NCA's CEOP Safety Centre received 390 reports of sextortion. Alarmingly, in the first five months alone, police received an average of 17 monthly reports involving under-18s, showing how serious and targeted this threat has become.

Advice for Parents & Educators

THINK CRITICALLY

The key to addressing the increasing growth of AI-enabled scams is to think critically and show caution. Inform children that if something is too good to be true, then it probably is. Encourage them to stop and carefully consider what they are seeing and reading before taking any action. For example, if a social media post expresses urgency, proceed with caution; if content seems unusual, even from a known person, it may be that their account has been hacked.



USE TRUSTWORTHY SITES AND SERVICES

Online marketplaces are useful when buying and selling items; however, where possible, encourage children to use reputable companies and their online shopping sites. These companies are likely to have more sophisticated cyber-security safeguards in place, underpinned by consumer legislation, enabling them to control how products and services are displayed and traded on their sites.



SEEK TO VERIFY

Criminals may breach an influencer's account or spread misinformation and fake content; however, their approach will generally be limited to a single account, site or service. Where possible, show children how to verify information to check its legitimacy before proceeding. Small actions, such as phoning the person who is the subject of a suspicious email, or checking content via an individual or company website or social media sites can make the difference. The greater the risk, the more effort we should expend to confirm whether the information presented is true or false.



REPORT IT

As the sophistication of scams increases, the likelihood of being tricked by them also increases, especially when not paying attention or acting quickly. It is important that young people know how to report incidents as they happen. Show children how to report their concerns to the social media site, Action Fraud, banks, and other individuals or organisations linked or involved. If you are unsure of the most effective reporting channel, contact Action Fraud.



Meet Our Expert

Gary Henderson is the Director of IT at Millfield, a large independent boarding school in Somerset, as well as a member of the Digital Futures Group, Vice Chair of the ISC Digital Advisory Group and an Association of Network Managers in Education (ANME) Ambassador.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College