



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

AUTUMN TERM – FRIDAY 28TH NOVEMBER

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

Rehearsals have been in full swing this week and we are really looking forward to the Year 1 performance next Thursday. In Nursery the children have been exploring the story 'Lost and Found' and making igloos for the penguin while Reception have been creating and continuing patterns in maths. Year 1 have been busy designing moving vehicles, Year 2 have been finding out about map symbols and Year 3 have been using adverbials to sequence a story. Year 4 have focused on multiplication and division, Year 5 have found out about how mountains are created by the movement of the tectonic plates and Year 6 have explored evolution and inheritance. The children in the ASC have been writing about the characters in the story Jack and the Beanstalk while the children in the Nest have been learning the song Jingle Bells.

Next week is the beginning of December and we are looking forward to a fun-filled month of events including performances to parents/carers, Christmas dinner and the pantomime. Thanks to your fundraising and donations we have been able to book the pantomime of Dick Whittington in the last week of term. Please look out for future fundraising events, including the Christmas coloring, so we can offer more opportunities, experiences and equipment to the children.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend!



School Attendance Target: 95.00 %



This week's attendance: 93.73%

The class with the best attendance in KS1 Mrs King's Class with 98.00%

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss Lee's Class with 98.21%

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: KINDNESS

Nursery: Ruby T
 Nest: Olivia A
 ASC: Teddy R
 Reception, Mrs Anthony: Lottie S
 Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Daisy H
 Reception, Miss Bagridge: Skylar-Rose H
 Year 1, Mrs King: Eliza G
 Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Karlo B
 Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Harrison K
 Year 2, Mrs Didham: Betty-Rose B
 Year 2, Miss Milne: Tife A
 Year 2, Mrs Cooper/Mrs Christie: Scarlett B

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Michelle A
 Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Stella C
 Year 3, Miss Medina: Macie L
 Year 4, Miss Lee: Rosie M
 Year 4, Miss Miller: Tommy C
 Year 4, Miss Atkin: Kevinas G
 Year 5, Miss Day: Maisie B
 Year 5, Mr Taylor: Sofija S
 Year 5, Miss Osborne: William W
 Year 6, Miss White: Tilly B
 Year 6, Mrs Thour: Lucas 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	Sienna C
Year 1	Zoe W
Year 2	Maisie B
Year 3	Nathan C
Year 4	Bonnie-Mae D
Year 5	Nina A
Year 6	Ruby Y

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

DECEMBER

- 04.12.2025 Year 1 Christmas Performance 10.00am - 11.00am
- 10.12.2025 ASC Christmas Performance 2.00pm - 3.00pm
- 10.12.2025 Year 2 Eastgate Singing Performance for St Luke's Hospice - 10.00am - 11:45am
- 10.12.2025 Year 6 Parents/Carers Meeting
- 11.12.2025 Year 6 Parents/Carers Meeting
- 11.12.2025 Reception Christmas Performance 2.15pm - 3.00pm
- 12.12.2025 Christmas Dinner & Christmas Jumper Day for Save The Children
- 15.12.2025 Nursery Carol Singing 10.45am - 11.30am and 2.15pm - 3.00pm
- 17.12.2025 Nest Christmas Performance - 2.00pm - 3.00pm



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BOOK OF THE WEEK



Year 5, Miss Osborne's class are currently reading 'The Magic Faraway Tree' by Enid Blyton as their class book.

This is a story about four children who go on an unforgettable adventure. The class have only just begun to read this story, but the children are already hooked and can't wait to find out more about the magical lands at the top of the Faraway Tree! Miss Osborne's class discussed how there is a film coming out next year inspired by the tale, and the children are very excited for this too.

Will your child be a reading champion?



This week we handed out 103 reading rewards. 5 children received rewards for reading 75 times since the start of the academic year!

Please encourage your child to read 5 times a week and ensure this is recorded on BoomReader to help your child achieve our reading prizes and awards.



SNOW GLOBE COLOURING COMPETITION

Our school councillor's have come up with a fun competition to get us all in the Christmas spirit.

On Monday 1st December, your child will be bringing home their Snow Globe Design Sheet.

If they wish to enter the competition, there will be a cost of 50p which you may attach to the design sheet.

Entries must be returned to school by Tuesday 16th December.

Head Boy, Head Girl and the Deputies will judge each design and choose a winner. There will be a prize winner from each year group!

Good Luck!

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WOW –

The Walk to School Challenge

Since October, Merrylands has been participating in the WOW – Walk to School Challenge. In this challenge, pupils from over 2000 schools are getting more active. The aim is to create healthier pupils by making the most of the opportunity to walk all or part of the way to school (or cycle or scoot!)

Pupils self-report every day how they get to school using our interactive Travel Tracker and if they travel sustainably for at least one day every week, they are awarded a monthly WOW badge. It's that easy.

Data shows that WOW schools see 59% fewer car journeys to the school gates and 18% more journeys walking and wheeling.

The WOW badges are different every year and are made in Cornwall from recycled plastics.



So far our best performing WOW Class is Year 4 Miss Lee's class who have achieved 97% of trips recorded and 94% recorded as active.

What can you do?

1. Continue walking every day if you already do!
2. Think about whether it is possible to scoot or walk to school if you currently drive. The benefits of less congestion and less pollution are massive.
3. If you are too far to walk, park a little further away from the school – about half a mile- which helps congestion, and stroll in the rest of the way. The children will call this Park and Stride when they self-register.
4. Think about other days and how you can walk more. A fun leaflet of walking ideas, games and activities can be found on the website.

https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/0uapjwzx/family-resource-booklet_final.pdf

Thank you to everyone that makes every effort to care more for our environment, be considerate of others and seek to make us a healthier school community.

If you want to know any more about the WOW challenge, please do get in touch.

Mr Andrews – Deputy Headteacher



On Monday 1st December 2025 children will return to school 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.

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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

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PERSEVERANCE



Essex County Council
Special Educational Needs
and Disabilities







SPACE

SPACE offers free support to families of children and young people with SEND.

Delivered by peer educators – all parents and carers with lived experience.

Get support your way:

-  **in person** – meet us at Local Offer roadshows, coffee mornings, and community events
-  **by phone** – talk one-to-one with a peer educator
-  **online** – join webinars on key topics, led by peer educators
-  **on the SPACE website** – find helpful info and guidance anytime



Book your place for an online session, or a phone call today!

parent-send-support.essex.gov.uk

Free Online Safety and Exploitation Awareness Session for Parents/Carers

Tuesday 2nd December 2025

7:00-9:00pm

Delivered virtually via Zoom

If you want to learn more about how young people are spending their time online and how to spot the signs of exploitation – this is the event for you.

The session will provide you with key tips and advice to protect your young people from online grooming and exploitation.

To attend – click on the below link

WALK ONLINE or https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5ecJdZ6uRuKKqVZDFd06tg



The 12 Safety Tips for Christmas



Presented by 'The 2 Johns'

"I Know them"

The Johns would like to invite you to join a complimentary online event. This will provide you with an introduction to a world that we, as adults, did not grow up in but your children are fully embracing.

They will give you tips on: -

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| The Internet Express | Gaming | The Exploiters |
| WhatsApp & Snap Chat | Screen time | Cliff Top Parenting |
| What to do if it goes Wrong | Sexploitation | Where can I Get Help |
| Indecent Images of Children | Stranger Danger | The Power of Influence |

The two Johns, yes, they are both named John and have spent many years working in the police in various overt and covert roles tackling online and offline child exploitation. They are regarded as experts in their field and annually work in hundreds of primary and secondary schools interacting with thousands of children, teachers and parents. They also regularly deliver lunch and learn sessions to parenting networks in the private sector.

Over the past fifteen years, the two Johns have been key speakers at numerous major events throughout the country. In Essex they are regularly commissioned by the Safeguarding Children's Board, Community Safety Partnerships and schools to deliver both staff training and bespoke sessions for large numbers of children. This includes their highly successful 'Walk Online Roadshow' which is delivered to many thousands of children annually.

The 2 Johns



'Keeping Children Safe'

Thursday 11th December
at 20:00hrs

(Scan the QR code to register)



www.esafetytraining.org



EST E Safety Training



@JohnsThe2

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION

13+

(Certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Online videos are often associated with apps such as YouTube, but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a potentially addictive, never-ending stream of short clips tailored to users' interests based on their viewing habits. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while most content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where young people are "most likely to encounter a potential harm".

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

TikTok's Following feed shows videos from known creators, while the default For You Feed serves endless clips based on viewing history. Most are harmless, but unsuitable content can still appear, and watching for long enough signals interest to the algorithm. Although TikTok bans illegal or inappropriate uploads, the volume of posts means some slip through, increasing the chance that children encounter age-inappropriate material before it is detected or removed.

BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Ofcom reports that most online harms for girls involve body image, while boys more often see dangerous stunts. Both types appear frequently on TikTok and spread quickly through its engagement-driven algorithm. Harmful challenges have included the "blackout" trend, where users held their breath until passing out. Families filed lawsuits after children died linked to the trend, showing how extreme or risky content can rapidly reach young people and negatively influence them.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but children can still spend money. TikTok coins, costing £9.99 to £224.99, let users buy gifts for creators. TikTok Shop adds risk by allowing purchases from influencers or companies, sometimes leading to poor-quality items driven by persuasive marketing. A Canadian investigation found TikTok collected personal data from many children for targeting and advertising despite age limits, meaning young users may lose control over their personal information.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Between 1.8 and 1.9 billion people use TikTok, meaning there's a high risk of unwanted attention from strangers. Accounts created by over-18s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public view by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and allows anyone to download or comment on them.

MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

TikTok's short videos may appear lighthearted, but they can expose young people to harmful ideas. Misinformation is common, and Ofcom reports that nearly one-third of 12-15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source, increasing the chance of seeing racist, misogynistic, extremist or conspiracy material. Even brief clips can influence impressionable users and shape their worldview, making discussions about critical thinking, propaganda and online influence especially important for parents and educators.

ADDICTIVE DESIGN

TikTok's fast-paced stream of eye-catching videos can be potentially addictive for young users. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the platform, double the time recorded in 2020. Excessive use can disrupt sleep, increase irritability, and distract from healthier activities. Constantly skipping between short clips may also affect attention span, making it harder to focus on longer tasks such as homework or reading.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's in order to manage settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children cannot alter these settings without parental approval.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure they don't share any identifying personal information or respond to dangerous trends, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's important to talk about misinformation and propaganda.

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.



BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

Parents can restrict in-app purchases on iPhone and Android devices to prevent accidental or impulsive TikTok spending. Young people can easily spend large amounts on TikTok coins or low-quality products promoted through TikTok Shop. If a disappointing purchase occurs, turn it into a discussion about influencer marketing and how online promotions can be misleading.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College