



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

AUTUMN TERM – FRIDAY 12TH DECEMBER

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents / Carers,

It has been another busy week at Merrylands. On Wednesday, the children in Year 2 entertained the shoppers at Basildon Eastgate Shopping Centre. The children were impeccably well-behaved and sang beautifully. Thank you to all the parents, carers and relatives that came to support this event and well done to the children in Year 2.

Also this week, children in Reception performed their nativity play. Considering the children have only been in school for a term, they performed so confidently and were amazing at remembering all the words to each of the songs. Well done to all the children in Reception. In addition, the children in the ASC also enjoyed their Christmas event with their parents / carers. Thank you to everyone who supported these events.

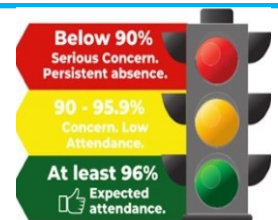
Next week, the children in the Nest and Nursery will participate in their Christmas events and the school choir will be performing songs around the Christmas tree on Wednesday after school in the marquee. You are all welcome to join this after school event and we look forward to seeing you there.

Christmas dinner was the highlight today with the children enjoying their festive meal. The children also enjoyed wearing their Christmas jumpers. Thank you to everyone who donated today or at one of the performances over the last few weeks. In total we have raised £325.90 for the charity 'Save the Children'.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend.



School Attendance Target: 95.00 %



This week's attendance: 94.11%

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs Camoccio's Class with 96.37 %

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss White's Class with 97.10 %

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: Oliver L

Nest: Vinnie A

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Dave J

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Isabel J

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Leya L

Year 1, Mrs King: Elizabeth G

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Henry G

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Jacob D

Year 2, Mrs Didham: Erin P

Year 2, Miss Milne: Iris H

Year 2, Mrs Cooper/ MrsChristie: Robert N

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Harris B

Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Skye K-F

Year 3, Miss Medina: Rory-Paul B

Year 4, Miss Lee: Louis P

Year 4, Miss Miller: Mark O

Year 4, Miss Atkin: Alex D

Year 5, Miss Day: Isla F

Year 5, Mr Taylor: Chloe W

Year 5, Miss Osborne: Annie-May G

Year 6, Miss White: Logan K

Year 6, Mrs Thour: Samuel S

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	Holly L
Year 1	Felicia P
Year 2	Rosie P
Year 3	Henry L
Year 4	Sofia S
Year 5	Georgianna-Rose C
Year 6	Nuwair M

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

DECEMBER

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

17.12.2025

KS2 Christmas Carols around the Christmas tree 3:30pm-4:4:15pm

16.12.2025

Whole School Pantomime

17.12.2025

KS1 & KS2 Choir - Carols around the Christmas Tree 3.30pm - 4.15pm



RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

BOOK OF THE WEEK



In Year 3, Miss Gilmore's class have been reading 'The Witches' by Roald Dahl.

The story is about witches hidden across the world who don't like children. The children in the class are enjoying the story and eagerly waiting for the end of the day to find out what is going to happen next!

Jaiden Y said, "The grand high witch is funny but scary! I can't wait to find out what happens next!"

Stella C said, "This book is fun and interesting. The story line is different and keeps you excited to find out what happens next!"



RECEPTION CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE



On Thursday 11th December, the children in Reception performed their Christmas Nativity to parents and carers.

The children worked hard to say their lines clearly and loudly and to remember all the lyrics to the songs. All the children did an incredible job and put on a wonderful display of the true meaning of Christmas.

Thank you to all the parents/carers who attended the performance. The children worked hard rehearsing and learning their parts and we are very proud of them all.

YEAR 2 EASTGATE SINGING



This week, the children in Year 2 went to the Eastgate Shopping Centre in Basildon Town Centre in aid of St. Luke's Hospice.

The children performed a range of Christmas songs to an audience of parents, carers, relatives and shoppers.

Well done to everyone who took part. The children put on a lovely show and got everyone in the festive spirit.

RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

On Monday 15th December 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

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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



Poppins Early years Bursary

Support to become a childminder

Gateway to Childminding

Grant element

The Gateway to Childminding Grant is a £1,000 grant to support the initial start up costs of becoming a childminder. In order to apply for this, you must be a resident of Essex and meet the earning threshold.

Training

The Level 3 in Preparing to Work in Homebased Childcare
Fully fundable course, with weekly class sessions

The Skills Bootcamp for Early Years Childminding
12-week fully online training programme.

For more information, visit the ACL website or contact poppins.bursary@essex.gov.uk

Essex

ACTIVate

Free holiday clubs, fun activities and food
across Essex and Thurrock!

- ✓ Specialist SEND, mental wellbeing and youth clubs
- ✓ Sports and games, arts and crafts, cooking and so much more!
- ✓ Nutritious snacks and tasty meals
- ✓ Run by qualified, local club providers
- ✓ Family support, resources and guidance
- ✓ Discretionary paid and paid for spaces

WHAT IS ESSEX ACTIVATE?

Essex ActivAte is the name for the exciting activity clubs run by Active Essex! During school holidays, local club providers across the county deliver free holiday clubs and fun activities to get eligible primary and secondary children active, as well as support young people to make friendships and learn new skills, helping to enhance their wellbeing.

Please only book your child/ren a space at an Essex ActivAte club if they will attend. If they are booked on and do not attend, other children may miss out on this beneficial opportunity across the holidays.



Turn this flyer over
to read more on how
to book a space!

SCAN ME



www.activeessex.org

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SETTING UP APPS, GAMES AND SOFTWARE

Millions of new phones, tablets, laptops and games consoles will be nesting under Christmas trees this year. However, even if parents and carers have gone to the trouble of setting up these new devices and enabling the safety features, there are still potential hazards in the apps, games and software that children will want to install and use. Knowing what to look for and discussing those risks with your child may help avoid any nasty surprises this Christmas. Here are our top tips for ensuring that unwrapping this year's presents doesn't unleash any unexpected dangers.

TAKE NOTE OF AGE RATINGS

Back when most games were bought in shops, checking the age rating was easy: it was on the front of the box. Now that most games are downloaded, it's tougher – but not impossible. All reputable download stores show a game's age rating at the point of purchase, and you can check the suitability of a specific title your child wants to play at video-standards.org.uk/RatingBoard/games.

18

FREE ISN'T ALWAYS FREE

The games market has changed radically in recent years. Many titles are free to download, but then tempt players to pay for cosmetic items (as in Fortnite) or to unlock additional content. There can be huge peer pressure for children to pay for these items. Agree a budget for in-game purchases before the game is downloaded, and make sure children can't authorise in-game purchases by themselves.

DISABLE IN-APP PURCHASING

It's not wise to leave children with devices that can make in-app purchases without your permission. Ideally, set up computers, consoles and phones so child accounts need an adult's authorisation to buy anything. On shared devices (like iPads, which don't allow user accounts), check the settings to ensure that in-app purchasing requires the account holder's password, fingerprint or face ID.

APPS ARE AGE RATED, TOO

Like games, apps in the major stores have age ratings, too – so you can see in advance whether an app's appropriate for your child. Additionally, phones' parental control settings allow you to set age limits, preventing young ones from downloading unsuitable apps themselves. These ratings aren't infallible, however: we've seen TV apps featuring adult shows with an age rating of 3, for example.

18

CONSIDER STORAGE

Most apps and games will tell you in the on-line store how much space they need on a device. Check this carefully – especially with games, which can run into hundreds of megabytes and beyond. If you don't have enough free storage on a device to run the game or app, you won't get a refund from the store. You can normally check a device's available storage space through the settings menu.

WATCH OUT FOR IMITATORS

Even in the official stores, untrustworthy rogue apps can slip through the net. Common tricks are apps or games that have a slightly different name to the genuine article (Fortnite rather than Fortnite, for instance) or use logos which deliberately look very similar to the official app. To avoid downloading these imitations, read the app's description and check who the publisher is listed as.

LEGAL APPS THAT BREAK THE LAW

There are many apps that are perfectly legal but enable illegal activity – streaming apps which let people watch football matches, say, without paying for sky or BT sport. Prosecution for using such apps is rare, but they can lead to risky behaviour like viewing rogue streams on sites teaming with malicious links. Watch for children installing unusual apps with "TV", "stream" or "sport" in the name.

IN-APP REGISTRATION

It's common for apps and games to ask users to register: entering personal details like email address, date of birth and other information you might not want your child to divulge. Ask them to get your permission before giving any personal info to an app – and consider using your details rather than the child's, so they're not targeted by marketing spam or put at risk of having their data stolen.

STAY UPDATED

Most games and apps are subject to regular updates, which not only offer new content and features but also provide critical security improvements. Children tend to ignore such updates – usually because they don't understand why they're important, or they simply want to get straight on with gaming. Check your child's devices periodically to make sure these updates are being installed.

CHECK THE SPECS

To avoid let-downs, check a game's specs before buying – especially for PC or Mac, where games often need a particular graphics chip or processor to work. Sites like systemrequirementslab.com can scan your computer to see if it will run certain games properly. On consoles, make sure you're buying the right version: some newer Xbox or PlayStation games won't play on older consoles.

MONITOR IN-GAME COMMS

Voice chat with friends is part of the fun of modern gaming – but danger lurks here too. Many titles have open chat systems, meaning that children could speak to strangers or hear adult language and verbal abuse when games get particularly competitive. Using a shared family area (as opposed to alone in bedrooms) for online gaming is a good way to keep an occasional ear on what's being said.

BE WARY OF GIFTS

Titles like Roblox, Minecraft and Fortnite have in-game currencies, which can be earned through progress in the game – but can also be bought with real money. A common scam is for a young player to be offered currency if they click a link, visit a certain site or contact another user directly. Warn your child about such offers: they should show you if they're in any doubt over an in-game gift.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the Sunday Times, Which?, PC Pro and Computeractive. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on Newswatch, Radio 5 Live and ITV News at Ten. He has two children and has written regularly about internet safety issues.

