



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

AUTUMN TERM – FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have finally reached the end of a very busy Autumn term. This week we have had Christmas events and performances for the Nursery and the Nest as well as the KS1 and KS2 choir singing around the Christmas tree. All of these events were really successful – well done to all the children involved.

Also this week, the children enjoyed the pantomime Dick Whittington, there was plenty of laughing, cheering and booing! Thank you again for all your fundraising last year which enabled us to give the children this exciting opportunity. Thank you also for supporting the fundraising events this term. Just this week we have raised £388.00 through the Christmas raffle and the Christmas coloring competition. This money will go towards more playground equipment for the children to use at lunchtime.

Last week we held an attendance week. It was really positive to see 400+ children achieve 100% attendance during this week. We are looking forward to another attendance week next term. In celebration assembly today, we also celebrated all the children who have achieved 100% attendance for the whole of the Autumn term – well done everyone!

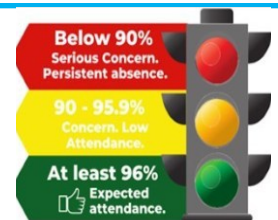
Also in celebration assembly today, we announced this half term's team point winners. The winning teams were Green team in Early Years / Key Stage 1 and Blue team in Key Stage 2. When we return after half term, all totals will be reset and we look forward to finding out which team will win next term.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your continued support this term. I hope you all have a good winter break and for those of you celebrating Christmas, I hope you have a lovely time with your family.

I look forward to seeing you all on Monday 5th January 2026 when we return to school.



School Attendance Target: 95.00 %



This week's attendance: 85.5%

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs Andrade's Class with 95.6%

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Mr Taylor's Class with 86.8 %

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: Logan M

Nest: Whole Class

ASC: Zekria S

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Beau D

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Ruby J

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Libby B

Year 1, Mrs King: Santiago D-C

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Harry H

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Ariaiah C

Year 2, Mrs Didham: Maisie H

Year 2, Miss Milne: Logan D

Year 2, Mrs Christie: Leonisa G

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Daria C

Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Kiki C

Year 3, Miss Medina: Henry L

Year 4, Miss Lee: Scarlett J

Year 4, Miss Miller: Ayan C

Year 4, Miss Atkin: Florence D

Year 5, Miss Day: Carmella A

Year 5, Mr Taylor: Billyray W

Year 5, Miss Osborne: Roseleah T

Year 6, Miss White: Amira G

Year 6, Mrs Thour: Elizabeth 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	John W
Year 1	Karlo B
Year 2	Sophia S
Year 3	Oliver B-D
Year 4	Tommy C
Year 5	Teddy O
Year 6	Max T

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

JANUARY

05.01.2026—Back to School



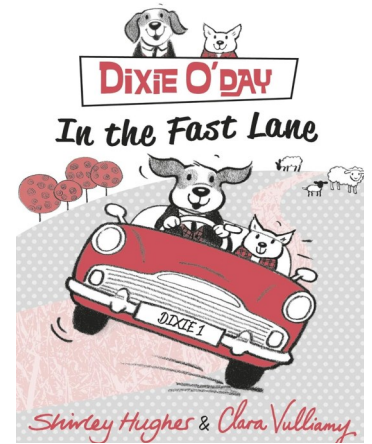
BOOK OF THE WEEK



Mrs Didham's class have been reading 'Dixie O'Day In The Fast Lane' by Shirley Hughes and Clara Vulliamy.

Year 2 have enjoyed reading this book during their shared reading lessons. Dixie O'Day and his friend Percy are a dashing duo who enter the 'all day' car race against their arch enemy Louella!

Jem said, "I liked it when they were ahead and the route changed paths."



WHOLE SCHOOL PANTOMIME



On Tuesday 16th December, the children had the treat of watching the pantomime, Dick Whittington. The whole day was filled with laughter, screams and a Christmas feel. The children thoroughly enjoyed watching the performance and ended the day with a foam light up wand and jelly bean filled candy canes! Well done to all pupils for their excellent behaviour and for showing respect when watching the pantomime.

CHOIR CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE

On Wednesday, children from the KS1 and KS2 choir sang festive songs around the Christmas tree for parents/carers and staff. The children sang beautifully and put on a wonderful display of Christmas magic.

Well done to all of you!



CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

We are thrilled to announce that our Christmas Raffle was a huge success, raising a whopping £305!

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated and supported this event. Your generosity truly makes a difference.

A special thanks to Barret & Coe, Cineworld Basildon, Wagamama Basildon, Hollywood Bowl Basildon, 360 Play Basildon, Basildon Sporting Village, and Sweet Tasty Treats for their outstanding contributions.

RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

SNOW GLOBE COMPETITION WINNERS

Thank you to all the amazing children who entered our Christmas colouring competition. Your creativity and effort were truly inspiring and School Council, head boy, head girl and deputies loved seeing every entry.

After much deliberation, we are excited to announce the winners.

Congratulations to our winners and a big round of applause to everyone who participated, you made this competition a huge success.

The winners are :

Nursery— Stefan M

Reception - Isabel K

Year 1—Buster F

Year 2—Leonisa G

Year 3—Murtaza H

Year 4—Rose P

Year 5— Wiktorija M

Yea 6—Olivia H



ATTENDANCE RAFFLE WINNERS

Well done to all the children who achieved 100% attendance this term. Each child who achieved 100% attendance was entered into an attendance raffle today.



Well done to George H, Isla P, Teia S, Cody A and Millie C.

On Monday 5th January 2026 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

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



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Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>