



# MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 9TH JANUARY 2026

## MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back and Happy New Year!

The children have made an excellent start to the new term and it has been lovely to see them working hard in their lessons this week. The children across the school have been excited to start their new topics:

Nursery	Time for Traditional Stories
Reception	Talents and Powers
Year 1	Living on an Island
Year 2	Colossal Castles
Year 3	The Bronze Age and Iron Age
Year 4	The Ancient Egyptians
Year 5	The Anglo-Saxons
Year 6	The Mayans

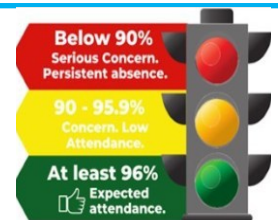
PE lessons continue this term and some lessons will be outside. Please remember that jogging bottoms or a tracksuit in dark colours can be worn, enabling the children to participate in these lessons without feeling cold. Please note, the children are kept active throughout the PE sessions.

We would like to recruit some reading volunteers who can work with us to promote a love of reading and develop children's confidence. Do you have a few spare hours each week and would like to support children with their reading skills? If you are interested, please contact the school office for further information.

After an incredibly cold week, I hope you all have a great weekend!



**School Attendance Target: 95.00 %**



**This week's attendance: 93.43%**

**The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Miss Milne's Class with 99.20%**

**The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss Gilmore's Class with 98.55%**

**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](mailto:admin@merrylands-pri.essex.sch.uk).**

**RESPECT**

**KINDNESS**

**PERSEVERANCE**

# STAR OF THE WEEK CERTIFICATE

## FOCUS: PERSEVEANCE

Nursery: Johnny H  
Nest: The Whole Class  
Reception, Mrs Anthony: Harper G  
Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Otilia T  
Reception, Miss Bagridge: George G  
Year 1, Mrs King: Freya H  
Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Graciella W  
Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Milo N  
Year 2, Mrs Didham: Georgie P  
Year 2, Miss Milne: Brianna O'C  
Year 2, Mrs Christie: George C  
Year 3, Mrs Almond: Albert F  
Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Billy M  
Year 3, Miss Medina: Sebastian P  
Year 4, Miss Lee: Freddie C  
Year 4, Miss Miller: Amelia S  
Year 4, Miss Atkin: Skyler B  
Year 5, Miss Day: Toby A  
Year 5, Mr Taylor: David M  
Year 5, Miss Osborne: Lillie-Ann A  
Year 6, Miss White: Taii L  
Year 6, Mrs Thour: Carter M

## 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.

Reception	Dave J
Year 1	Juvan A
Year 2	Kane S
Year 3	Thinara P
Year 4	Victoria A
Year 5	Sofija S
Year 6	Leo H

## UPCOMING DIARY DATES

### JANUARY

13.01.2026—Year 4 Multiplication Check Meeting at 9.10am  
15.01.2026—Special Dinner and Prize for all children ordering a school lunch  
19.01.2026—Careers and Aspirations Week



RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

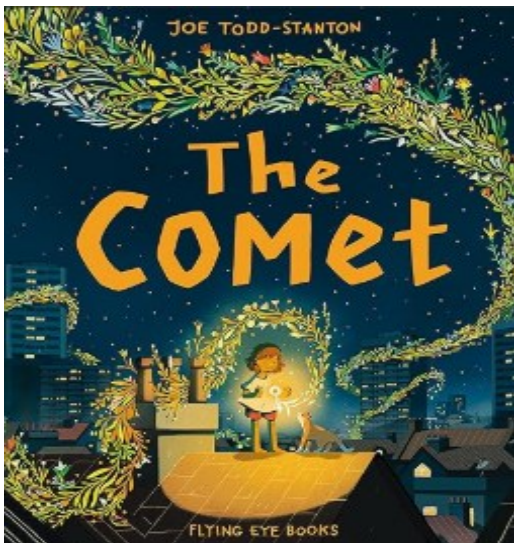
# BOOK OF THE WEEK

Year 1, Mrs King's class have been reading 'The Comet' by Joe Todd-Stanton.

Year 1 have enjoyed reading this book during their English lessons.

The story is about a little girl who has moved to the city and misses her old home. One day she sees a comet and follows it. That is where her adventure begins!

Percy said, "I liked it when she talked about all the things she loves, like watching the shiny stars and making delicious feasts."



# PHYSICAL EDUCATION



## Sportsperson of the Half Term...

### Alex Yee

#### Who is Alex Yee?

Alex Yee is a triathlete from Lewisham, England. He was born on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1998 and has grown up to be the most successful Olympic triathlete ever. Alex was inspired by the 2012 Olympic Games and his father's duathlons which prompted him to start serious training at a young age.

#### What has Alex achieved?

Alex Yee is one of the most successful Olympic triathletes of all time. At the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, Alex won an individual silver medal and a mixed relay gold. At the next Olympics, Alex won an individual gold medal and a mixed relay bronze. He also won a gold medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

In 2025, at the London Marathon, Alex made his marathon debut clocking an impressive time of 02:11:08 to cross the line in 14th place, and the second Brit.



## Complete the Clock



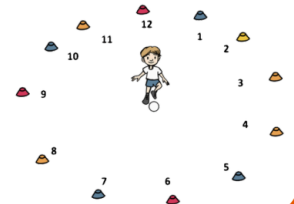
Get Set 4 Education

What you need: twelve markers, one ball

#### How to play:

- Create a circle with the markers. Identify where the numbers would be if it was a clock.
- Kick your ball through each of the gaps.
- Repeat, this time once through 1 o'clock, twice through 2 o'clock, all the way to twelve times through 12 o'clock.

Make this harder by asking someone to time you. How quickly you can complete the clock?



FRIENDS OF MERRYLANDS  
LOTTERY

Next Draw

31<sup>st</sup>  
January

And the Winner is...

CHRIS WILLIAMSON

£28.50

£275.70



raised for Friends of Merrylands in 2025

RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

On Monday 12th January 2026 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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Lighter Bites

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OUR LIGHTER LUNCH OPTIONS OF JACKET POTATO & HAM OR CHEESE BAGUETTE are available to ALL PUPILS everyday

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MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

### WEEK 1

CHICKEN FAJITA WRAP  
QUORN FAJITA WRAP  
WITH POTATO CUBES & SALAD BAR  
DESSERT - 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

Children are using smart devices from a much younger age than ever before. It's why it's essential we talk to our children about how to use them safely. There are so many positive benefits to the new technology at our disposal these days - however there are plenty of downsides too. As a parent, it's important you understand these risks and how you can take steps to protect your family against them.

## 1 PUT YOURSELF IN CONTROL

Make use of the parental control settings available to you. With most devices, you're able to change the settings to control the content your child has access to. This isn't difficult to do, as you'll often find guidance in the instructions that come with the device. By setting a private pin code on certain devices, you can make sure your child can only access it when you allow it.



2

## PROTECTING ANDROID DEVICES



You can set up restricted users on Android tablets through a Google account. Open the settings menu (look for a cog icon) and select the 'Users' option. Here you can add a new restricted user. After setting up a password and username, select which applications you want to restrict access to. On an Android smartphone it's similar, but first select 'Parental Controls' in the play store.

## 3 PROTECTING APPLE DEVICES



For Apple devices, you can simply visit the preferences/settings menu and within 'General' there is an option for 'Restrictions'. Here you can turn off any applications or features on your child's device that you do not want them to have access to.

5

## MAKE SEARCHING MUCH SAFER



Most search engines, such as Google, Bing or Yahoo, have a 'safe search' setting. You should activate this. Otherwise, it's extremely easy for a seemingly harmless search on the Internet to return unexpected and inappropriate results. Depending on the browser you're using, go to the settings and search for 'safe search'. Make sure you save the change so it defaults each time you open the browser. This will seriously reduce the chances of your child being exposed to something they shouldn't be.

4



## THINK ABOUT ALL YOUR SMART DEVICES

As well as tablets and smartphones, you should think about any device in your home connected to the Internet: a games console, a media hub, or a personal computer. In each case you can usually find parental controls in the settings. Think carefully about how much access you want to allow your child, especially when it comes to accessing the Internet.



National  
Online  
Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

# 9 Top Tips To Get Smart About children's devices

6

## REGULARLY CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA SETTINGS



Before you allow your child to use social media, you should discuss the dangers with them. You should also make sure you're able to access their profile and privacy settings and check them regularly. The companies behind social media platforms often make privacy changes without making it very obvious to the user, such as Facebook's introduction of facial recognition software.

7



## DON'T LET PEOPLE SEE WHERE YOU ARE

Location software sounds useful for seeing where your child is, but it also provides the opportunity for others to locate your child too. For safety, it's a good idea to disable location software on all devices or at least turn it off when it's not required. Also, be mindful of specific apps that record running routes or locations where your child might be playing a game. Talk to your child about why these can be dangerous and how to turn the setting on and off as required.

## 8 WATCH OUT FOR FAKE PROFILES

Sadly, social media presents an enormous opportunity for the likes of paedophiles to set up fake profiles and interact with children. Keep a track of the people your child interacts with on social media and if you do not recognise a user as a friend, consider blocking them.



## 9 KEEP A CHECK ON SCREEN TIME

Managing how much time we spend on screens is a new challenge for us all. It's critically important when it comes to children, especially younger children who are still developing. It's not just a case of setting arbitrary time limits. Guidelines published by The Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health suggests it's more important to consider the 'context and content' of what the screen is being used for. Still, it is helpful to put limits on devices using 'Guided Access' functions, which you can find in the settings of certain devices.



## Meet our expert

Emma Davis was a secondary school Computer Science teacher for more than a decade. Since leaving education, she has been working in a cyber security firm delivering cyber awareness training to businesses and carrying out network testing. She is a mother of a five-year-old, she's had vast experience of controlling and managing how children access online services and use apps.

