



# MERRYLANDS

## PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 30TH JANUARY 2026

### MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents / Carers,

It has been another busy week at Merrylands with Year 6 finding out how shadows are created, Year 5 producing spreadsheets in computing, Year 4 exploring different ways of communicating and Year 3 finding out what life was like in the Iron Age. In Key Stage 1, Year 2 have been solving division problems and Year 1 were creating animated stories on the laptops. In Reception, the children were learning about capacity while the children in Nursery made porridge for Goldilocks. The children in the ASC solved multiplication questions and the children in the Nest were exploring different foods with their senses.

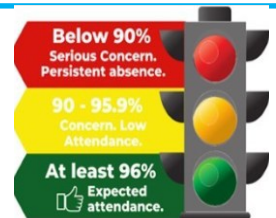
Next week, we have parent consultation meetings for children in Reception to Year 6. If you haven't already, please book an appointment with your child's class teacher on Parentmail. If you have any problems booking an appointment, please contact the school office. The travelling book fair will once again be available during these evenings.

Please can I remind all parents/carers that children should not be using scooters or bikes on the paths or playgrounds before or after school. These areas are very busy and we do not want anyone being tripped over or hurt. Thank you in advance for your support with this. Next week is National Storytelling Week. The theme for 2026 is 'Soundtrack your Story', which encourages participants to explore the connection between music and storytelling. The theme highlights how music can enhance narratives and engage audiences.

I hope you all have a good weekend.



**School Attendance Target: 95.00 %**



**This week's attendance: 92.97 %**

**The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Miss Milne's Class with 98.67 %**

**The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss Gilmore's Class with 96.30 %**

**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 : PERSEVERANCE

Nursery: Macie T

Nest: Henry J

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Primrose R

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Laevion C-T

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Rares P

Year 1, Mrs King: Buster F

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Francesca B

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Dexter W

Year 2, Mrs Didham: Jem S

Year 2, Miss Milne: Jordan M-H

Year 2, Mrs Christie/Mrs Cooper: Freddy E

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Lola W

Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Viniee T

Year 3, Miss Medina: Ivy H

Year 4, Miss Lee: Leon L

Year 4, Miss Miller: Heidi D-O

Year 4, Miss Atkin: Kayden-L H

Year 5, Miss Day: Finley B

Year 5, Mr Taylor: Eva P

Year 5, Miss Osborne: Alaine M

Year 6, Miss White: Eliana E

Year 6, Mrs Thour: Leo B

## 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	Aryah-Mae S
Year 2	Roxanne O
Year 3	Jack B
Year 4	Louie L
Year 5	Sophia B
Year 6	Donald T

## UPCOMING DIARY DATES

### FEBRUARY

02.02.26 National Story Telling Week

04.02.26 Parents Evening & Book Fair 3.30pm—7.30pm

05.02.26 Parents Evening & Book Fair 3.30pm—5.30pm

11.02.26 Safer Internet Day

13.02.26 Chinese New Year Special Lunch

16.02.26 February Half Term

23.02.26 Children return back to School



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# BOOK OF THE WEEK



Book of the Week this week has been chosen by Mrs Cooper, Assistant Headteacher.

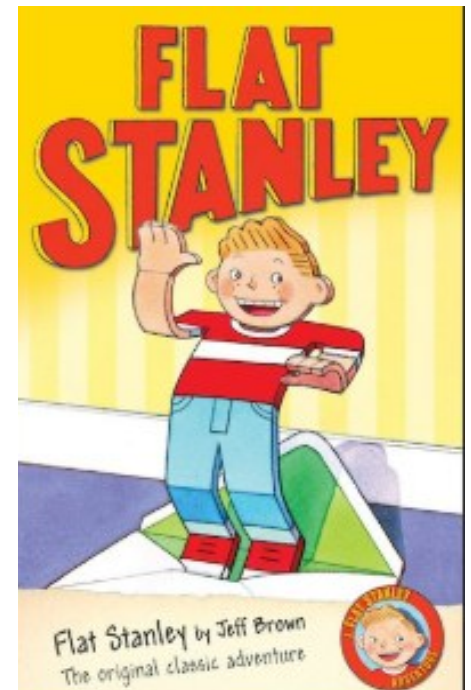
One of my favourite books is Flat Stanley by Jeff Brown. It's a fantastic book about the adventures of a flat boy called Stanley Lambchop.

Stanley Lambchop was just an ordinary boy –until a noticeboard fell on him. Now he is as flat as a pancake!

Being flat is fantastic – he can be rolled up, sent in the post and even fly like a kite. But it's not all fun and games ... there are thieves in town.

Can the flattest boy in the world be its biggest hero?

Hope you enjoy it.



# 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 14<sup>th</sup> place, and the second Brit.



## Bottle Skittles



Get Set 4 Education

**What you need:** plastic bottles, a pair of socks, 1 or more players

#### **How to play:**

- Use empty plastic bottles as skittles. Set them up approx. 5m away.
- Use a pair of socks rolled into a ball and try to hit as many skittles as possible down.

Playing with more people?  
See how many throws it takes each player to knock down all of the skittles.



[www.getset4education.co.uk](http://www.getset4education.co.uk)

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RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

# CAREERS AND ASPIRATIONS



Last week, we held our Careers and Aspirations Week.

We had a fantastic time listening to a wide range of visitors talk about their careers. The week started with a visit from Richard Holden MP for Basildon and Billericay.

Then children in Reception and Year 6 enjoyed sessions with chefs, while pupils in Years 1 and 5 met Police Officers. Paramedics visited Year 2 and Year 3 also welcomed a dental practitioner/manager to talk about her role.

Year 4 took part in a local visit to the library, where they learned about the role of a librarian. Nursery children also enjoyed a variety of activities throughout the week, including exploring the text 'Think Big'.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part and helped make the week such a huge success.



On Monday 2nd February 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

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ROBLOX

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Roblox is an online platform where users can play and create games known as 'experiences' made by other users. Roblox has a large UK audience. ITV News has reported that millions of people in Britain use the platform regularly, with children forming a significant proportion of its users. The sheer scale of it makes it extremely difficult to moderate effectively, creating risks for unsupervised children.

### A PLATFORM RATHER THAN A GAME

Roblox differs from traditional video games in that it hosts millions of user-created experiences rather than a fixed set of developer-produced content. Each experience is self-rated by its creator rather than independently age-rated in advance, as is the case with PEGI-rated games. With millions of user-created experiences, moderation is largely automated which means that inappropriate content may reach younger players and have a harmful effect.

### MATURE CONTENT

With much of Roblox's moderation automated through AI and creators self-certifying suitability, inappropriate content frequently appears on the platform. Some experiences may include content intended for older players. While Roblox has tools to restrict access based on age settings, these systems are not always perfect. Younger players are likely to encounter content you may deem unsuitable.

### IN-GAME SPENDING

Roblox is free to play, but many experiences and cosmetics include optional purchases using Robux, the platform's virtual currency, to get advantages in games. This business model is common across online games, but reporting has highlighted cases where children have spent large amounts of money unintentionally or without understanding the real-world cost.

### RISK OF ADDICTION

Roblox encourages repeated and extended play. Many experiences are made of short tasks, rewards, and progression systems that can prompt users to keep playing for longer periods of time. Some games also use reminders, daily rewards, or timed events to encourage frequent logins. These designs can make it difficult to stop playing. Spending long periods online may affect sleep, schoolwork, or other activities if boundaries are not in place.

### COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER USERS

Roblox includes text and voice features that allow players to chat in shared game spaces. While the platform uses automated filters and moderation tools, media investigations have found that inappropriate and potentially harmful messages can still get through. There are risks that children could be targeted by groomers. In response, Roblox has announced changes to how chat works. The platform plans to use facial age-estimation technology to restrict chat access between adults and children they do not know.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Roblox's parental controls provide an important starting point. Linking a child's account to an adult account allows parents to apply spending controls, limit communication features, and review recent activity. Regular supervision, use of parental controls, and conversations with children about what they see online can help reduce the risk of exposure to inappropriate content.

### CONSIDER LIMITING OR DISABLING CHAT

Although Roblox is introducing tighter age-based chat restrictions, some parents and educators may prefer to disable chat entirely for younger children. Children can still play games while communicating with friends they know through other supervised platforms.

### PLAY TOGETHER WHERE POSSIBLE

Playing Roblox with a child can help adults understand the types of experiences available, how monetisation works, and how children interact online. This shared engagement can also make it easier for children to raise concerns if something feels wrong. Parents and educators should monitor all games played on Roblox due to its self-rating nature.

### ENCOURAGE OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Many Roblox experiences are creative and age appropriate, and for many children, the platform is an important way to socialise with friends. Rather than banning it outright, parents and educators should talk openly with children about online safety, spending, and how to respond to inappropriate behaviour.

### Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is a technology journalist who has written for publications including Wired, TechRadar, The Telegraph, The Evening Standard, The Guardian and The New Statesman.



The National College

See full reference list on our website



**BERLESDUNA**  
ACADEMY TRUST

# **TIMES TABLES ROCK STARS**

**SPRING COMPETITION**

Starting: 26/01/26  
Ending: 30/01/26

**ROCK YOUR  
TIMES TABLES!**



**Who Will Be the Ultimate Rock Star?**



# **SEND School Age Drop-in**

**An opportunity to get advice and support  
in a relaxed and non judgemental  
environment**

Parents and carers of both diagnosed and non-  
diagnosed children welcome.

**1st Wednesday of the month  
12:00 - 13:00**

**No need to book - Just drop in!**

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**Northlands Park Family Hub  
Davenants, Basildon Essex SS13 1QX**

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**Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service**