



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2026

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been a positive start to the beginning of Spring Term 2 particularly with some signs of spring and the warmer weather in the middle of the week. This term we have organised curriculum showcase sessions for Year 1 to Year 6 and Reception will continue with their weekly reading sessions. I know the children will enjoy sharing their work and completing a range of activities with you. It would be great to see as many parents and carers in attendance as possible.

Good school attendance is key to children's educational success. When a child is absent from school, they miss out on learning and gaps in their knowledge and skills appear. Understandably, the more often a child is absent from school, the bigger the gaps in learning become. We fully appreciate that absence cannot always be avoided when children are really unwell but if they have a cold, cough, sore throat or haven't slept well please continue to send them to school. If they are feeling unwell and are not well enough to remain in school, we will contact you. We are looking forward to celebrating our second 'Attendance Week' this academic year during the week commencing 9th March 2026.

A reminder that next Thursday is World Book Day. We are looking forward to seeing the children dressed as their favorite book characters!

I hope you all have a lovely weekend.



School Attendance Target: 95.00 %



This week's attendance: 95.62%

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs King's Class with 97.60%

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss Medina's Class with 99.11%

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 : PERSEVERANCE

Nursery: Zac H

Nest: Henry S

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Primrose R

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Matteo S

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Conor F

Year 1, Mrs King: Krystal Y

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Hunter T

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Alice A

Year 2, Mrs Didham: Sebastian W

Year 2, Miss Milne: Jacob W

Year 2, Mrs Christie/Mrs Cooper: Skyla M

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Luis D-C

Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Ozan C

Year 3, Miss Medina: George C

Year 4, Miss Lee: Amraj B

Year 4, Miss Miller: Francesca A

Year 4, Miss Atkin: Maira J

Year 5, Miss Day: Sienna H

Year 5, Mr Taylor: Ashleigh B

Year 5, Miss Osborne: George D

Year 6, Miss White: Isla W

Year 6, Mrs Thour: Aaliyah E

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	Jeremiah S
Year 1	Louis L Elizabeth G
Year 2	Noella A
Year 3	Ozan C
Year 4	Victoria A
Year 5	Vinnie L
Year 6	Violet H

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

MARCH

05.03.2026 World Book Day

13.03.2026 Mother's Day Sale

17.03.2026 St Patrick's Day Special Dinner

20.03.2026 Comic Relief Red Nose Day (Red Non-Uniform)

30.03.2026 Easter Holidays

APRIL

13.04.2026 Back To School



BOOK OF THE WEEK

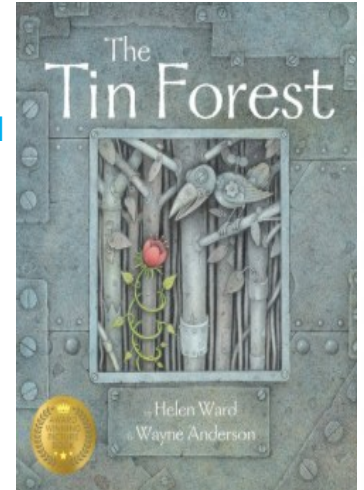


Miss Medina's class have been reading *The Tin Forest* by Helen Ward and Wayne Anderson. The children have really enjoyed the story so far, as well as the wonderful illustrations.

They were especially interested in how the main character transformed a dull, grey place into a colourful forest by reusing old metal and rubbish.

The book helped us have thoughtful discussions about the importance of recycling and reusing materials instead of throwing things away.

One child spoke about how they enjoyed the creativity of the story, as well as the magical illustrations. Another said that they were very happy when they found out the man finally got his wish!



ACHIEVEMENTS



A huge well done to Betty-Rose in Year 2 who was awarded an Everyone Active Sports Star of the Month Award at Basilston Sporting Village for her commitment to Trampolining.

Betty received a certificate and a medal for all her hard work.

She has put her all into developing her techniques and was praised by her sports coach for consistently trying her best. Well done Betty-Rose!



PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Sportsperson of the Half Term...

Alice Tai MBE

Who is Alice Tai MBE?

Alice Tai MBE is a British Paralympic swimmer who was born on the 31st January 1999. She competes in the S8 category of the sport. At the age of eight, Alice joined a swimming club, however, it wasn't until the winter of 2010 that her parents discovered she could be classified as a disability swimmer. Before she was 12 years old, Alice has undergone 14 operations. Her main swimming event is backstroke.

What has Alice achieved?

Alice is a very accomplished athlete who has won many medals during her career so far. She has won medals in the Paralympics, World Championships, European championships and is a Commonwealth champion. At the World Para Swimming Championships in 2019, she won seven gold medals. At Paris 2024 Alice won S8 100m backstroke gold with a new Paralympic record, finishing nearly six seconds clear of her rivals.



Change it



Get Set 4 Education

What you need: someone to time, four cushions and three socks.

How to play:

- Place the cushions randomly in a space. Place a sock on three of the four cushions, leaving one cushion empty.
- Time one minute.
- Collect one sock from a cushion and place it on top of the empty cushion. Then collect another sock from another cushion and place it on the new empty cushion. How many socks can you move in one minute?
- Play again, can you improve your score?
- Make this harder by moving the cushions further apart.



RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

On Monday 2nd March 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



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 - FRESH FRUIT &
YOGURT

SAUSAGE ROLL
VEGAN ROLL
WITH SMILEY FACES & SPAGHETTI LOOPS
DESSERT - CHOCOLATE CHIP
SHORTBREAD
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

HOMEMADE CHICKEN PIE
QUORN & VEGETABLE PIE
WITH SAUTE POTATOES, CARROTS
& GRAVY
DESSERT - MINI SUGAR RING DONUTS
FRESH FRUIT & YOGHURT

CHEESE & TOMATO PIZZA
WITH PASTA IN HOMEMADE
TOMATO SAUCE & SALAD BAR
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY
FRESH FRUIT

FISH FINGERS
VEGGIE FINGERS
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 - BELGIAN WAFFLES WITH
SQUIRTY CREAM
FRESH FRUIT & YOGHURT

BUTCHERS PORK SAUSAGE
VEGAN SAUSAGES
WITH CRISPY CUBE POTATOES, YORKSHIRE
PUDDING, PEAS, CARROTS & GRAVY
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY
FRESH FRUIT

CHICKEN CURRY
VEGETABLE CURRY
WITH STEAMED RICE & SWEETCORN
DESSERT - 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 - PANCAKES WITH GOLDEN
SYRUP
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 - BELGIAN WAFFLE WITH SQUIRTY
CREAM
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

FISH FINGERS
CHEESE OMELETTE
WITH POTATO WEDGES & SPAGHETTI
HOOPS
DESSERT - CHOCOLATE SWIRL MOUSSE
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

Forest School

What to Wear



Waterproof Jacket
with hood



Long Sleeves:
T-shirt or
fleece

**Waterproof
Trousers**



Warm Hat:
Beanie or
Sun Hat



**Layers to Stay
Warm**
(Fleece, jumper)

prassers:



Sturdy Boots:
Wellies or
Hiking Boots



Old Clothes



Woolly Socks



**Gloves for
Cold Days**



**Sun Cream &
Sun Hat** (in hot weather)

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about DIGITAL DEVICES & WELLBEING

Children aged 7 to 14 now spend roughly 3 to 5 hours a day on phones, tablets, consoles, and computers. That much screen time has parents and educators worried – not just about the hours logged, but about online safety and the knock-on effects on mental health. This guide brings together practical, expert-backed strategies so adults can nurture healthier digital habits and help young people thrive both on and offline.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

SLEEP DISRUPTION

Excessive screen time, especially before bed, can interfere with melatonin production and delay sleep onset. Children may struggle to concentrate or regulate emotions due to poor sleep hygiene linked to late-night device use.

ONLINE PEER PRESSURE

Social media platforms expose children to unrealistic standards and peer validation loops. Likes, comments, and follower counts can influence self-worth and lead to anxiety or risky behaviour to gain approval.

CYBERBULLYING EXPOSURE

Children may encounter bullying through messaging apps, games, or social media. This can be persistent and anonymous, making it harder to detect. Victims often feel isolated and reluctant to report incidents.

REDUCED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Time spent on screens often replaces outdoor play and physical activity. This sedentary lifestyle can contribute to obesity, poor posture, and reduced cardiovascular health.

EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

Fast-paced digital content can overstimulate young brains. Children may become irritable, impatient, or struggle with boredom and emotional control when not engaged with screens.

PRIVACY AND SAFETY RISKS

Children may unknowingly share personal information or interact with strangers online. Without guidance, they may not understand the long-term consequences of digital footprints or unsafe online behaviour.

Advice for Parents & Educators

SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Establish screen-time limits and device-free zones, e.g. classrooms and dinner tables. Use parental controls and co-create a digital use agreement with children to encourage accountability. Trying a visual schedule or timer app can help children understand and stick to limits.

MODEL HEALTHY HABITS

Children mirror adult behaviour. Demonstrate balanced device use, take regular screen breaks, and prioritise face-to-face interactions to reinforce positive behaviours. Making a habit of putting your phone away during meals and conversations can show that real-life interactions come first.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DIALOGUE

Create a safe space for children to talk about their online experiences. Ask open-ended questions like, "What did you enjoy online today?" to build trust and awareness. Try setting aside 10 minutes each day for a digital check-in where children can share what they've seen or done online.

PROMOTE DIGITAL LITERACY

Teach children how to evaluate online content, recognise misinformation, and understand privacy settings. Empower them to think critically and act responsibly in digital spaces. You could use real-life examples from the news or social media to help children practise spotting fake information.

Meet Our Expert

Adam Gillett is Associate Vice Principal for Personal Development at Perisfens Grammar School and works on a secondment one day a week for Minds Ahead, which works with schools on improving their mental health provision.

