



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY
SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 6TH MARCH 2026

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents / Carers,

The highlight of the week was most certainly World Book Day yesterday. The children enjoyed a variety of book-based activities, a whole school assembly, live World Book Day lessons, a special dinner and much more. There was such a wide range of costumes and all the children looked fantastic. Thank you for your efforts and hard work with costumes, face painting and props!

On Tuesday we had a review of the school. The day involved lesson observations and discussions with staff, pupils and some parents/carers. The day went really well with lots of positive feedback. The reviewers praised the children for their behaviour in class and how they conduct themselves around the school, the positive relationships between staff and pupils and how the children work hard in lessons and want to do well.

This week we have also held Year 3 and Year 4 Curriculum Showcase sessions. Thank you to all the parents/carers who attended. The children thoroughly enjoyed sharing their work and completing learning activities with you. Next we are looking forward to the Year 5 and Year 6 showcase sessions.

Good attendance is vital for learning, wellbeing and friendships. During Attendance Week next week, we will be recognising pupils with excellent attendance, running activities to highlight why every day matters, and offering practical tips for families. Please aim for your child to be in school every day – together we can make every lesson count.

I hope everyone has a lovely weekend.



School Attendance Target: 95.00 %



This week's attendance: 94.44%

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs King's Class with 97.69%

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss Medina's Class with 98.57%

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: Safiya H

Nest: Priyom A

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Oscar W-M

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Ayan C

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Rosalina R

Year 1, Mrs King: Handel O

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Ollie B

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Adaobi E

Year 2, Mrs Didham: Thomas H

Year 2, Miss Milne: Eden D

Year 2, Mrs Christie/Mrs Cooper: Bodhi H

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Cillian D

Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Joshua L

Year 3, Miss Medina: Erniee P

Year 4, Miss Lee: Emily L

Year 4, Miss Miller: Dorit T

Year 4, Miss Atkin: Whole Class

Year 5, Miss Day: Dan J

Year 5, Mr Taylor: Haiden C

Year 5, Miss Osborne: Zac A

Year 6, Miss White: Lily-Mae P

Year 6, Mrs Thour: Rosie G

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	TJ B
Year 1	Louis L
Year 2	Freddie E
Year 3	Piper M
Year 4	Louis P
Year 5	Maria I
Year 6	Elianna E

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

MARCH

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



RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

BOOK OF THE WEEK

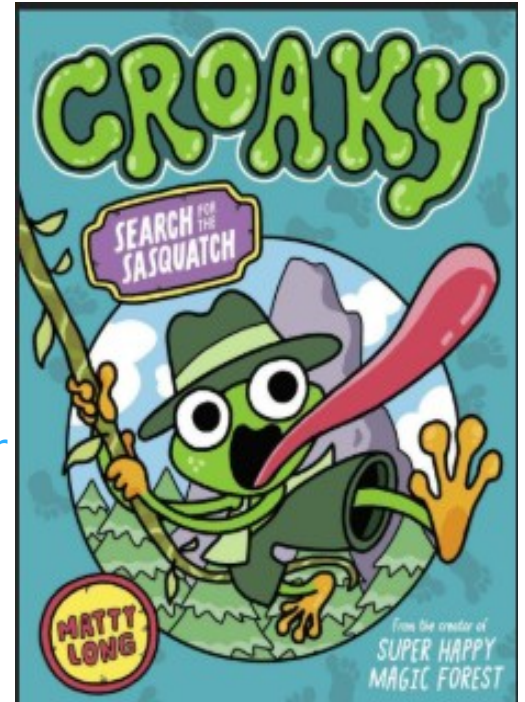


In Year 2, Miss Milne's class have been reading 'Croaky - Search for the Sasquatch' by Matty Long.

When Croaky Hopper joins the Woggle Scouts it is not long before he is whisked away on his first camp to the Crystal Creek National Park.

Croaky has always longed for adventure, but he gets way more than he bargained for when scout leader Winston the Puffin reveals the real reason they are in the forest...they are going to search for a Sasquatch!

Eden said, "Croaky is super brave and funny. The part where they look for the sasquatch in the forest was a little bit scary but really exciting, and I wish I could go on an adventure with the Woggle Scouts too!"



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.



Body Parts



Get Set 4 Education

What you need: a ball that bounces

How to play:

- Explore dribbling the ball. Can you dribble:
 - With one hand
 - The other hand
 - Changing hand
 - Changing speed
 - Changing direction
- Challenge yourself to keep the ball bouncing the whole time whilst touching different body parts to the floor then standing up again. Try these:
 - Knees
 - Bottom
 - Back
 - Stomach
 - Forehead



www.getset4education.co.uk

RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE



On Monday 9th March 2026 children will return to school on Week 3.

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





WORLD BOOK DAY



On Thursday all pupils and staff had a fantastic time celebrating World Book Day at school!

The children arrived in an array of amazing costumes, bringing their favourite book characters to life and filling the school with colour and excitement. Throughout the day, classes took part in a variety of creative reading activities that helped inspire a love of stories and reminded us all how enjoyable reading can be. We were also thrilled by the incredible entries for our World Book Day Character Competition – the creativity and effort have been truly impressive.

The winners will be announced next week!



ATTENDANCE WEEK

Daily attendance creates healthy habits such as punctuality, reliability and consistency which will help children thrive in the future.

Will your child achieve 100% attendance during attendance week?

Children develop a solid understanding of their subjects when they are attending each day. Work will be produced with greater detail.

Monday 9th March 2026 – Friday 13th March 2026

Encouraging your child to attend school on time each day will help raise their individual attendance as well as the whole school's attendance.

With your help and encouragement, we can ensure all pupils are achieving their best in all areas of school life.

As a school we believe each child is capable of achieving their goals.

Children who attend school each day will be entered into an Attendance Raffle which will be picked daily!

All children who achieve 100% attendance next week will receive an attendance certificate.

Being in school helps your child create trusted relationships. A child who feels supported and seen is more likely to thrive in their work.



Your child being 5 minutes late each day adds up to a whole three school days missed.

ATTENDANCE

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Children are required by law to attend school 190 days per year. The Government states that every pupil's attendance should be at least 95%.

How do YOU measure up?

Attendance	Days Absent	Weeks Absent	Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons
85%	29 Days	6 Weeks	150 Lessons
80%	38 Days	8 Weeks	200 Lessons
75%	48 Days	10 Weeks	250 Lessons
70%	57 Days	11.5 Weeks	290 Lessons
65%	67 Days	13.5 Weeks	340 Lessons

89% & Below
Drastic effect on academic achievement

95% - 90%
Cause for concern

100% - 96%
Excellent



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about WHATSAPP

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

WhatsApp is a free messaging app owned by Meta, allowing users to send text and voice messages, share multimedia, make video calls, and chat in groups. With end-to-end encryption, only the sender and receiver can view messages. This may offer privacy, but it also comes with risks that parents and educators need to be aware of.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

GROUP CHAT PRESSURES

Group chats enable multiple users to message in the same space, but this can also make it easier for young people to feel excluded or overwhelmed. Negative comments can escalate quickly, and young people may feel pressure to respond or stay engaged even when the conversation is uncomfortable or upsetting.

SCAMS TARGETING YOUNG USERS

Scammers are increasingly using WhatsApp to trick users into sharing personal information. Common scams include fraudsters posing as family members in an emergency or tricking users into revealing security codes. These can lead to identity theft or access to private conversations.

DISAPPEARING AND HIDDEN MESSAGES

WhatsApp offers features like disappearing messages and 'Chat Lock', which can give users a false sense of security. While intended to protect privacy, they can be used by young users to hide inappropriate conversations or content, making it harder for adults to spot potential issues.

EXPOSURE THROUGH CHANNELS

'Channels' are an optional feature that allows users to follow updates from public figures or organisations; however, there is no way to block this feature or filter its content by age. Young users may encounter adult or distressing content, including misinformation and harmful ideologies.

UNWANTED CONTACT AND LOCATION SHARING

WhatsApp users can share their live location, and if not managed carefully, this can allow others – even those in mutual groups – to track someone's whereabouts. Also, without the right privacy settings, young users may be contacted by strangers.

COMMERCIAL AND AI CONTENT

WhatsApp now includes ads in the 'Updates' feed and has introduced an AI assistant – Meta AI – across the app, which cannot be removed. These additions raise concerns about targeting, privacy, AI use, and the type of content children and young people might interact with.

ONLINE

...ONLINE...

Advice for Parents & Educators

SECRET CODE

REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER

Help young users check who can see their profile photo, status, and location. Activate the 'Silence Unknown Callers' setting and set group chat invitations to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except...' for added safety.

BE OPEN ABOUT HIDDEN CHATS

Discuss why children and young people might use features like disappearing messages or 'Chat Lock'. Encourage them to share if something made them uncomfortable, even if the messages are gone. Let them know that privacy should not mean secrecy.

TEACH HOW TO SPOT SCAMS

Encourage caution around unusual and unexpected messages, especially if they involve money or codes. Help young users understand the signs of scams and what to do if they receive a suspicious message. Enable two-step verification to add an extra layer of protection.

TALK ABOUT ADVERTISING AND AI

Explain that WhatsApp now includes ads and AI tools. Discuss the difference between genuine and sponsored content, and the potential for AI to share inaccurate or age-inappropriate responses. Encourage young users to think critically before trusting or interacting with these features.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College