



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 27TH MARCH 2026

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been a very interesting week with sunshine, showers and hailstones! The younger children were certainly surprised by the mix of weather. As we reach the end of the Spring term, I would like to say thank you for your continued support. The children have worked very hard throughout the Spring term and have continued to demonstrate our core values in their class work, on the playground and in their general conduct around the school. In celebration assembly, we congratulated all the children on their hard work and perseverance in lessons and for showing kindness and respect to others.

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

Today, we also celebrated all the children who have achieved 100% attendance in the Spring term. Certificates were handed out in assembly and these children were entered into the 100% attendance raffle. The winners were:

Cezar S	Congratulations to all the prize winners who received a gift voucher. A special attendance reward will take place for all of the children who achieved 100% attendance for the Spring term after the holidays.
George H	
Ollie B	
Freddy C	Finally, I hope you all have a good spring break and for those of you celebrating Easter, I hope you have a lovely time with your family.
Ava H	



School Attendance Target: 95.00 %



This week's attendance: 92.49%

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Miss Milne's Class with 96%.

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Mrs Almond's Class with 97.4%.

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: Teya F

Nest: Olivia A

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Erin N

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: John W

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Skylar-R H

Year 1, Mrs King: Elizabeth G

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Austin B

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Sonny A

Year 2, Mrs Didham: Maisie H

Year 2, Miss Milne: Sienna Y

Year 2, Mrs Christie/Mrs Cooper:

Tiago C

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Fox M-P

Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Sonia P

Year 3, Miss Medina: Caleb J

Year 4, Miss Lee: Freddie C

Year 4, Miss Miller: Bleresa G

Year 4, Miss Atkin: Maira J

Year 5, Miss Day: Sophia C

Year 5, Mr Taylor: Emily I

Year 5, Miss Osborne: Harley M

Year 6, Miss White: David S

Year 6, Mrs Thour: Nuwair 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.

Congratulations to this week's winners.

Reception	Hudson B-S
Year 1	Maria C
Year 2	Skyla-R M
Year 3	Macie L
Year 4	Rose P
Year 5	Evie s
Year 6	Hollie-B W

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

MARCH

30.03.2026 Easter Holidays

APRIL-AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH

13.04.2026 Back To School

23.04.2026 St George's Day Special Dinner



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DOWNHAM SCHOOL VISIT

Head boy, Evan and Deputy Head Girl, Daisy attended a pupil voice meeting at Downham Primary School where they discussed the importance of British Values.

They also had the opportunity to hold real life chicks.

Well done Evan and Daisy—you represented Merrylands very well.



NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

We are delighted to share that we have been able to purchase new playground equipment thanks to the fantastic efforts of the School Council who organised a competition and a raffle last term.

Your support has made this possible, and it is very much appreciated.



EASTER EGG COMPETITION

Thank you to all the children who entered into the Easter Egg Colouring Competition— there were so many wonderful designs to choose from.

After looking through all the entries, we decided on a winner from each class.

Well done to all the children who won, enjoy your Easter Egg prize!



Nursery	Sylvie-H B
Reception	Arthur S, Sofia S and Evie P
Year 1	Jack I, Millie F and Liam B-M
Year 2	Tife A, Georgie P and Georgina P
Year 3	Lydia A, Aria G and George C
Year 4	Teia S, Olivia-R W and Scarlett J
Year 5	Sofija S and Cristina V
Year 6	Logan K and Rosie G

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CROSS COUNTRY EVENT

On Wednesday 25th March 2026 Amelia, Shea, Leon, Louis and Albert attended a cross country event in Southend. The children qualified to take part in the Essex Cross Country event as part of the spring games at Garon Park Southend Leisure Club.

Well done everyone!



DODGEBALL COMPETITION



On Thursday 26th March Robert, Albert, Bonnie-Mae, Ruby, Joris, Louis, Niah and Freddie all attended the Dodgeball Event at Basilidon Sporting Village. They won 4 out of their 7 matches.

Well done everyone!

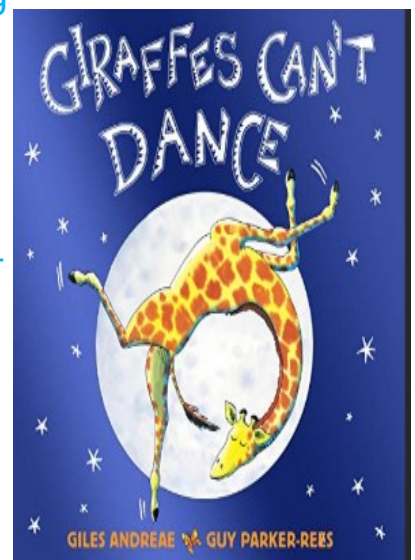
BOOK OF THE WEEK



Mrs Christie, Assistant Headteacher, recommends, 'Giraffes Can't Dance' by Giles Andreae. This is an uplifting story about finding your confidence and being proud of what makes you different.

The story is about Gerald, a giraffe, who dreams of being able to dance, but his long legs and wobbly knees make him feel awkward. When he tries to join in at the Jungle Dance, the other animals laugh at him, leaving Gerald discouraged and sad. With some gentle wisdom from a friendly cricket, Gerald discovers that he can dance beautifully once he listens to his own unique rhythm.

This story is a firm favourite because it has bright illustrations and encouraging messages about courage, kindness, and believing in yourself and the importance of self confidence.



RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

On Monday 13th April 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



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

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING AND REVIEWING PARENTAL CONTROLS

Phones and computers are essential parts of children's lives, but with unfettered internet access comes a multitude of risks. While not foolproof, parental controls can help with this; filtering out inappropriate content, limiting the ability to spend real money, capping screen time and generally making devices safer for young people.

1 KNOW THE TYPES



While parental control software can apply to an entire device, it also pays to know about options on individual apps and websites. TikTok, for example, has Restricted Mode for limiting unsuitable videos, while Snapchat lets you keep an eye on who a child has been talking to. Check the settings of any new app young users want and review your options.

2 COVER ALL DEVICES



Knowing what parental controls cover is crucial, as remaining unaware can run the risk of 'blind spots' in the device's safety measures. Controls on a phone will apply whenever a child's on that device, for instance – but you'll want to ensure that parental controls are set up across any laptops, tablets and potentially other phones, too. Remember, buying a new device may require you to set everything up again.

3 DON'T NEGLECT SHARED TECH



While children often have their own devices, if you have a shared family computer or tablet, for example, you'll need to make sure that's not a weak point in your safety measures. Parental controls for your router, that cover everything connected to your Wi-Fi, are one option – or you can just be thorough with each device and online account. Just ensure that unprotected laptops, phones and tablets are password locked.

4 CONSIDER TIME CONTROLS



Even safe internet content can be harmful if it's viewed in excess. Not only are certain apps addictive enough to distract from other duties, but late-night usage can badly disrupt sleep, which is vital for adolescent brain development. Most parental controls offer some kind of time limit – either blocking access at certain hours or capping the number of minutes it can be used per day – so be sure to consider these.

5 BLOCK APP SPENDING



Seemingly free apps can sometimes include microtransactions: purchases that can be made using real money. While plenty of developers implement these fairly, some companies attempt to manipulate children into paying for additional features or content, which can soon add up to hundreds of pounds if a child gets carried away. Thankfully, iOS and Android's settings allow you to block in-app purchases, preventing any huge bills.

6 NO CONTROLS ARE PERFECT



Parental controls can be very useful, but they're far from infallible. Some unpleasant content can and unfortunately *will* slip through the net, so remember that setting up these measures isn't a substitute for taking an active interest in young people's digital lives. Talk to them, and make sure they're aware of the risks of the internet as well as its benefits.

7 MIND THE GAPS



There'll undoubtedly be some gaps in parental controls, no matter how thorough you intend to be. For example, if you use router-level parental controls, bear in mind that these won't cover WiFi outside the home. For that reason, it's important to keep an open dialogue with children about the many unpalatable aspects of social media and the web.

8 KEEP THINGS SECURE



Some children can react poorly to parental controls and feel tempted to circumvent them. It's important to ensure that the passwords to these settings remain unknown to children, otherwise they can easily modify the restrictions without you knowing. Similarly, make sure your phone isn't left unlocked and unattended.

9 REVIEW CONTROLS REGULARLY



Parental controls shouldn't be a 'set and forget' deal. Not only can parental summaries provide you with a frequent overview of a child's digital life – to let you spot any warning signs – but companies often add new features, and some of these may be useful to enable (or disable). Regularly checking in ensures that if a child has found a way to wiggle out of the controls, you'll be the first to know.

10 KNOW WHEN TO LET UP



The parental controls you install on a computer for a seven-year-old probably wouldn't be appropriate for a child of 16 – and as young people approach adulthood, bubble wrapping the internet can do more harm than good. Consider relaxing parental controls as children get older, so they can learn to manage the risks of the internet themselves, without so many training wheels.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist and the former deputy editor of technology and internet culture website Alphr. Now freelance, he has contributed articles to publications including the New Statesman, CNET, the Evening Standard, Wired, Rock Paper Shotgun, Gizmodo, Pocket Gamer, Stuff, T3, PC Pro, Macworld, TechRadar and Trusted Reviews.



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