



# MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SPRING TERM – FRIDAY 17TH APRIL 2026

## MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents / Carers,

It has been lovely to see the children using the field at lunchtimes this week. They have had a lot of fun with the new playground equipment. Thank you again for your donations that have enabled us to purchase these items.

Year 1 enjoyed their curriculum showcase session on Tuesday where they had the opportunity to complete a range of activities and share their work with their parents/carers. Thank you to everyone who attended.

Across the school, the children have all started new topics. Year 6 have been finding out what factors led to the start of World War II while Year 5 have been thinking about how money is spent. Year 4 learnt about fractions and decimals in maths, Year 3 have been identifying parts of a plant while Year 2 have been exploring how to make music digitally. In Year 1 the children have been retelling the story 'Lost and Found', Reception went on a pirate scavenger hunt and Nursery explored the jungle world through a range of activities. The children in the ASC and Nest also enjoyed exploring their new outside spaces.

Please can I remind all parents/carers if they are collecting children from Year 4, 5 or 6 to ensure that younger siblings are not running up and down or using bikes/scooters on the ramps outside the classrooms. This allows the children to complete their lessons without distractions and also keeps everyone safe. Thank you for your support with this.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend.



**School Attendance Target: 95.00 %**



**This week's attendance: 96.07%**

**The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs Andrade's Class with 98.72%**

**The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss Osborne's Class with 96.97%**

**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: KINDNESS

Nursery: Inaya D

Nest: Whole Class

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Arthur S

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Paige A

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Albie M

Year 1, Mrs King: Jack I

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Jaxon T

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Millie F

Year 2, Mrs Didham: Whole Class

Year 2, Miss Milne: Harper S

Year 2, Mrs Christie/Mrs Cooper:

Harry F

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Luna G

Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Scarlett-R B

Year 3, Miss Medina: Jack B

Year 4, Miss Lee: Louis P

Year 4, Miss Miller: Maisy H

Year 4, Miss Atkin: Leo G

Year 5, Miss Day: Isla C

Year 5, Mr Taylor: Matilda H

Year 5, Miss Osborne: Ameerah M

Year 6, Miss White: Freya W

Year 6, Mrs Thour: Tia-Mae C

## 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	Isabel J
Year 1	Ruby T
Year 2	Maisie H
Year 3	Eva P
Year 4	Hunter L
Year 5	Gracie P
Year 6	David-P

## UPCOMING DIARY DATES

### APRIL

23.04.2026 St George's Day Special Dinner

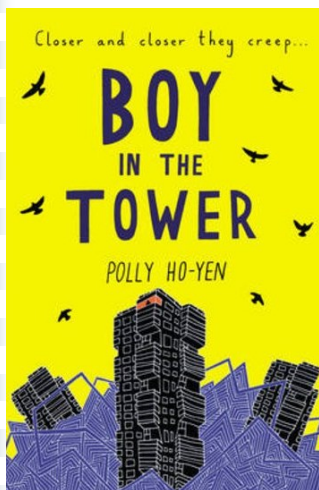


RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

## BOOK OF THE WEEK



In Year 6, we have been reading, "Boy In The Tower" by Polly Ho-Yen which is a dystopian-style book about the mysterious collapsing of buildings in Camberwell, South London.

The book is written from the point of view of a young boy who faces many dilemmas that no child should ever have to face. It is a gripping story recommended for 10-13 year olds. We are looking forward to finding out what happens next.



## DUXFORD WAR MUSEUM



On Friday 27th March, Year 6 attended Duxford War Museum. The children learnt about different aircrafts, military vehicles, types of artillery and navy vessels.

The children had the chance to try on military style clothing and hop aboard the aircrafts used in the war. The children showed great enthusiasm and empathy towards the stories of victory and defeat that they heard.

Well done year 6!

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Over Easter, Matilda H, Freya H, Scarlett D and Daisy H visited Disneyland Paris with Encore Dance Company and performed with the Disneyland Paris Performing Arts Programme.

It was an amazing opportunity and an incredible experience for them all. Well done girls!



Congratulations to Jack W who was awarded Player of the Month at his Football club.

From overcoming surgeries, to going on to score 9 goals across 4 games in a month and showing great sportsman ship!

Well done Jack!



RESPECT

KINDNESS

PERSEVERANCE

On Monday 20th April 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



# ST GEORGE'S DAY



On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026 we will be celebrating St George's Day with a special lunch.

## Dinner

Fish and Chips

Veggie Fingers and Chips



## Dessert

Ice Cream

Jacket Potato, Ham or Cheese Baguettes will still be available for all pupils.

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# TIKTOK

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

(Certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Online videos are often associated with apps such as YouTube, but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a potentially addictive, never-ending stream of short clips tailored to users' interests based on their viewing habits. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while most content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where young people are "most likely to encounter a potential harm".

## AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

TikTok's Following Feed shows videos from known creators, while the default For You Feed serves endless clips based on viewing history. Most are harmless, but unsuitable content can still appear, and watching for long enough signals interest to the algorithm. Although TikTok bans illegal or inappropriate uploads, the volume of posts means some slip through, increasing the chance that children encounter age-inappropriate material before it is detected or removed.

## BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Ofcom reports that most online harms for girls involve body image, while boys more often see dangerous stunts. Both types appear frequently on TikTok and spread quickly through its engagement-driven algorithm. Harmful challenges have included the "blackout" trend, where users held their breath until passing out. Families filed lawsuits after children died linked to the trend, showing how extreme or risky content can rapidly reach young people and negatively influence them.

## IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but children can still spend money. TikTok coins, costing £9.99 to £224.99, let users buy gifts for creators. TikTok Shop adds risk by allowing purchases from influencers or companies, sometimes leading to poor-quality items driven by persuasive marketing. A Canadian investigation found TikTok collected personal data from many children for targeting and advertising despite age limits, meaning young users may lose control over their personal information.

## CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Between 1.6 and 1.9 billion people use TikTok, meaning there's a high risk of unwanted attention from strangers. Accounts created by over-16s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public view by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and allows anyone to download or comment on them.

## MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

TikTok's short videos may appear lighthearted, but they can expose young people to harmful ideas. Misinformation is common, and Ofcom reports that nearly one third of 12-15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source, increasing the chance of seeing racist, misogynistic, extremist or conspiracy material. Even brief clips can influence impressionable users and shape their worldview, making discussions about critical thinking, propaganda and online influence especially important for parents and educators.

## ADDICTIVE DESIGN

TikTok's fast-paced stream of eye-catching videos can be potentially addictive for young users. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the platform, double the time recorded in 2020. Excessive use can disrupt sleep, increase irritability, and distract from healthier activities. Constantly skipping between short clips may also affect attention span, making it harder to focus on longer tasks such as homework or reading.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's in order to manage settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children cannot alter these settings without parental approval.

### DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure they don't share any identifying personal information or respond to dangerous trends, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's important to talk about misinformation and propaganda.

### BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

Parents can restrict in-app purchases on iPhone and Android devices to prevent accidental or impulsive TikTok spending. Young people can easily spend large amounts on TikTok coins or low-quality products promoted through TikTok Shop. If a disappointing purchase occurs, turn it into a discussion about influencer marketing and how online promotions can be misleading.

### READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

## Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



See full reference list on our website

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College