



MERRYLANDS

PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

SUMMER TERM – FRIDAY 1ST MAY 2026

MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

Today the children participated in the Mini Marathon. The children had a great time following the route around the school. It was lovely to see the children encouraging and supporting each other during the event. Thank you for the fundraising donations we have received so far. Please send any outstanding fundraising into school as soon as possible.

As the weather continues to improve, you may be considering uniform options including summer dresses or shorts. Here is a brief reminder of the uniform policy:

- white blouse, shirt, or polo shirt
- light grey skirt or pinafore dress
- light grey trousers or shorts (no leggings)
- navy blue checked dress – summer term (no shorts/all in one outfits)
- navy blue sweatshirt or cardigan
- plain white, grey, black or navy socks
- plain white, grey, black or navy tights
- plain black shoes (no white markings/logos)

For health and safety reasons, footwear must support the whole foot and therefore boots, fashion plimsols, open toed sandals and flip flops are not appropriate.

I hope you all have a lovely bank holiday weekend.



School Attendance Target: 95.00 %



This week's attendance: 93.72%.

The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Miss Bagridge's Class with 97.78%.

The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss Gilmore's Class with 99.51%.

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: Ryan K

Nest: Alfie N

ASC: Oskar H

Reception, Mrs Anthony: Jeremiah S

Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Evie P

Reception, Miss Bagridge: Harley Y

Year 1, Mrs King: Mila H

Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Vinny L

Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Avineet B

Year 2, Mrs Didham: Erin P

Year 2, Miss Milne: Jordan M-H

Year 2, Mrs Christie/Mrs Cooper:

Shiloh S

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Nathan C

Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Isaac C

Year 3, Miss Medina: Kevin C

Year 4, Miss Lee: Chelsea T-H

Year 4, Miss Miller: Charlie B-B

Year 4, Miss Atkin: Florence D

Year 5, Miss Day: Hesha P

Year 5, Mr Taylor: Chloe W

Year 5, Miss Osborne: Kamelia V

Year 6, Miss White: Tia M

Year 6, Mrs Thour: Mia A

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	Erin N
Year 1	Rosie R
Year 2	Aurora P
Year 3	Ayaan H
Year 4	Lucas M
Year 5	Charlie H
Year 6	Lily-M P

UPCOMING DIARY DATES

MAY

11.05.2026 - Year 6 SATS Week

20.05.2026 - National Numeracy Day



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PANATHLON

A big well done to Samuel, Luis, Kyle, Logan, Skylar, Mirabel and Chidubem for taking part in the Panathlon challenge at Basildon Sporting Village. All the children received a medal for taking part and they all had an amazing afternoon.

Well done everyone.



ORIENTEERING

On Thursday, Ozan, Jack, Amira, Maisie, Margot and Amraj were invited to take part in an academy orienteering competition. The children had a fantastic time working alongside pupils from other schools across the trust. They were challenged to locate carefully hidden clues around The Willows Primary School and work together to solve missing words by finding the correct letters.

All of the children thoroughly enjoyed the experience and were a great asset to Merrylands Primary School.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Find Three Things



What you need: two or more people

How to play:

- One person says 'find three things that are... blue.' etc.
- The other person then has to collect three things that are blue and bring them back.
- Make this harder by timing the player to see how long it takes them.
- Other things that could be collected include 'find three things that are... spotty, start with the letter 'C', round, soft to touch.'



Play with more people by seeing who can collect the three items first.

Sportsperson of the Half Term...

Keely Hodgkinson

Who is Keely Hodgkinson?

Keely Hodgkinson is a British professional athlete who competes in athletics. She was born on the 3rd March 2002 in Wigan, England and was a keen swimmer when she was younger - nervous to compete in running events. Her father promised to buy her a new pair of running shoes if she gave running a try. She is a resilient athlete who, at 13 years old, Hodgkinson had an operation to remove a tumour on the side of her head. After the operation, she became deaf in one ear and temporarily struggled to walk or run. She now competes in the 800m event.

What has Keely achieved?

In her career so far, Keely has achieved many things. In 2021, she became the youngest British person in history to win a European indoor gold medal. In the same year, she also broke the record for the under-20 indoor 800m as well as the Women's 800m British record set by another of her idols, Dame Kelly Holmes. She has won Olympic gold and Olympic silver medals too.



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BOOK OF THE WEEK

In Year 4, Miss Lee's class have been reading 'The Humans' by Jonny Marx.

It showcases the greatest achievements of ancient civilisations and iconic figures from History. It has a mix of humour and adventure, along with some great illustrations. The book encourages us to think about how ancient civilisations, such as the Nubians and Egyptians, have contributed to ideas and objects that we still use today!

Ruby - "I like this book because it teaches me about new things!"

Freddie - "It is very interesting because we can learn about what was achieved in the past."



MINI MARATHON

Today, Friday 1st May 2026 all children participated in the Mini Marathon. It was lovely to see all children and staff taking part, encouraging and supporting each other during the event. Thank you for the fundraising donations we have received so far and thank you to Kelly's Creations for her amazing balloons.



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MERRYLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Golden Cup

13-15 May

After school in the playground

Come and make an iced drink to impress you and your friends – add sweets, candy floss and boba to your flavoured ice drink.

£2
a drink

GLYCEROL FREE!

**FIND THE GOLDEN STICKER
and WIN A PRIZE!**

Prizes Include:

- **Immersive Gamebox**
Family experience for 2-6 players
- **Rock Hub Climbing Wall**
Two children's taster sessions
- **Two Tickets to Colchester Zoo**
- **Kumon Billericay**
Two weeks of lessons
- **Wallace Kitchen**
Paint your own biscuit set
- **Asda £20 voucher**
- **Partyman Lakesite**
Family of four entry.



On Tuesday 5th May 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.

WEEK 1

WEEK 2

WEEK 3

MONDAY

BUTCHERS CHICKEN NUGGETS
VEGETABLE NUGGETS
WITH CHIPS & BAKED BEANS
DESSERT -
WAFFLES & GOLDEN SYRUP

PEPPERONI PIZZA
CHEESE & TOMATO PIZZA
WITH PASTA IN HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE
& SALAD BAR
DESSERT - CHOCOLATE SWIRL MOUSSE
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

BREADED CHICKEN BURGER
QUORN BURGER
WITH CHIPS & SPAGHETTI HOOPS
DESSERT - STRAWBERRY MOUSSE
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

TUESDAY

BEEF MEATBALLS
QUORN MEATBALLS
WITH FUSILLI PASTA IN A
HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE
DESSERT - HOMEMADE GOLDEN OAT
FLAPJACK

BATTERED CHICKEN PIECES
QUORN DIPPERS
IN SWEET & SOUR SAUCE WITH RICE &
SWEETCORN
DESSERT - HOMEMADE CHOCOLATE CHIP
CAKE

**SPAGHETTI CARBONARA WITH
CHEESE SAUCE & BACON PIECES**
VEGETABLE PASTA BAKE
WITH PEAS
DESSERT - HOMEMADE
FLAPJACK

WEDNESDAY

BUTCHERS ROAST CHICKEN
ROAST VEGAN FILLET
WITH ROAST POTATOES, YORKSHIRE
PUDDINGS, PEAS, CARROTS AND GRAVY
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY & FRUIT
YOGURT

BUTCHERS PORK SAUSAGES
VEGAN SAUSAGES
WITH MASH POTATO, YORKSHIRE
PUDDING, SEASONAL VEGETABLES &
GRAVY
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY & FRUIT YOGURT

ALL DAY COOKED BREAKFAST
ALL DAY QUORN BREAKFAST
WITH HASH BROWNS AND
BAKED BEANS
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY & FRUIT
YOGURT

THURSDAY

BEEF CHILLI
VEGETABLE CHILLI
WITH RICE AND SWEETCORN
DESSERT - HOMEMADE LEMON
DRIZZLE CAKE

CHICKEN FAJITA WRAP
VEGAN FAJITA WRAP
WITH CRISPY CUBE POTATOES AND
SALAD BAR
DESSERT - HOMEMADE OAT FLAPJACK

STICKY BBQ CHICKEN
STICKY BBQ VEGAN PIECES
WITH RICE & SWEETCORN
DESSERT - AMERICAN PANCAKES
WITH GOLDEN SYRUP
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

FRIDAY

FISH FINGERS
CHEESE OMELETTE
WITH POTATO WAFFLES & PEAS
DESSERT - ICE CREAM
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

FISH FINGERS
VEGETABLE FINGERS
WITH CHIPS & BAKED BEANS
DESSERT - HOMEMADE SPONGE CAKE
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

FISH FINGERS
CHEDDAR WHIRL
WITH SMILEY FACES & PEAS
DESSERT - HOMEMADE ICED SPONGE
CAKE WITH SPRINKLES
FRUIT & YOGURT

Lighter Bites



OUR LIGHTER LUNCH
OPTIONS OF JACKET
POTATO & HAM OR
CHEESE BAGUETTE
are available to
ALL PUPILS
everyday



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about GENERATIVE AI SAFETY

Generative AI tools – such as ChatGPT – are now commonly used by children. In fact, 3 in 4 pupils in the 2024 Annual Literacy Survey reported using generative AI, up from just 2 in 5 the previous year. While these tools can boost learning and creativity, they also raise concerns around misinformation, privacy and overuse. This guide explores the key risks and how to support safe use.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

MISINFORMATION AND ACCURACY



Generative AI can sometimes produce false or misleading content. Children – and even adults – may assume the information is accurate and trustworthy. This can affect learning and understanding of important topics. It's vital to teach children to critically assess all information, even when it comes from AI.

EXPOSURE TO INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Because generative AI is trained on vast datasets from across the internet, there is a chance it may occasionally generate harmful or inappropriate content. Without supervision, children could encounter disturbing or unsuitable material. Active monitoring and clear usage boundaries can help reduce this risk.

PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY

Some AI tools ask for personal details or store users' interactions. If privacy settings are not correctly configured, children's personal data could be exposed or misused. Teaching good digital hygiene and setting strong privacy controls is essential for protecting children online.

REDUCED CRITICAL THINKING



Relying too heavily on AI-generated responses may reduce children's willingness to think independently. If they consistently use AI to solve problems or complete tasks, it could impact their ability to reason, analyse and form their own ideas. Encouraging thoughtful reflection is key.

DIGITAL DEPENDENCY



Regular use of generative AI can contribute to increased screen time and less real-world interaction. If left unmanaged, it may affect physical activity levels, sleep, and social development. Striking a healthy balance between online and offline activities is important for wellbeing.

UNCLEAR ETHICAL BOUNDARIES



Children may not fully understand the ethical implications of using AI to complete homework or creative tasks. This can lead to unintentional plagiarism or dishonest academic practices. Conversations around responsible use and academic honesty are crucial.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ESTABLISH CLEAR GUIDELINES

Set clear, age-appropriate rules for when and how generative AI can be used. Reinforce these regularly to help children develop a healthy, respectful and informed relationship with the technology.



ENCOURAGE CRITICAL EVALUATION

Help children to question the accuracy of AI-generated information and seek out additional trusted sources. This builds essential digital literacy skills and supports better decision-making.



PROMOTE ACTIVE SUPERVISION

Keep an eye on how the children in your care use AI tools. Check in regularly to ensure they're using them appropriately and be ready to step in if something doesn't feel right.



ENHANCE PRIVACY AWARENESS

Talk to children about the importance of keeping personal information private. Make sure privacy settings are in place and explain how data shared with AI tools could be used.



Meet Our Expert

Brendan O'Keefe, Deputy Headmaster and Director of Digital Strategy at Eaton House Schools, has extensive expertise in digital safety, safeguarding, and generative AI in education. As an author and speaker on digital literacy and online safety for institutions such as The National College, Brendan guides parents and educators in creating safe digital learning environments.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College