FRIDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2025

MILWARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY NEWSLETTER







Dear Parents/Carers,

As I walked around the school today visiting each class to award Star of the Week, we all reflected on what a long half term it has been. In all my years working in education, there haven't been many occasions where we've had an eight-week half term — so I think it's fair to say that the children have truly earned a well-deserved rest next week!

Next half term promises to be a busy one, filled with performances, celebrations and festive activities. With the weather turning colder, I fully expect to see coats, hats, gloves and scarves being worn when the children return.

We had fantastic support at our Reading Café this week, and I'd like to say a big thank you to all who were able to attend and support the event. I'm also delighted to share that our Book Fair was our most successful yet, with over £1,000 in sales. This means the school will receive £500 worth of new books for our classrooms and book corners — a wonderful boost for our young readers. A big thank you goes out to Ms Alcock for organising the event which has rightly become a regular fixture in the calendar.

The children also had a brilliant time at the Halloween Disco, and it was lovely to round off the half term with singing, dancing, and a little sprinkling of magic!

A polite reminder that only service dogs are permitted on the school site. Dogs — including those being carried — are not allowed on school grounds.

We also kindly ask that scooters and bicycles are not ridden anywhere on the school premises.

Thank you for your cooperation and support in helping us keep everyone safe.

Finally, in the sporting arena, Milwards pupils represented the school at the Boccia event hosted by Passmores Academy. As always, they did us proud — showing great teamwork, enthusiasm and excellent sportsmanship throughout. Our Year 5 team took home a silver medal - well done to you.

All that is left for me to say is have a lovely week next week, let's hope that we get some nice weather. We look forward to seeing you back on Monday 3rd November at the normal start time.

Kind regards,

Mr M Doughty

Star of the Week

Little Acorns: Alex

Big Acorns: JJ

Cherry: George

Maple: Ayla

Birch: Josh

Willow: Sam

Pine: Frankie

Oak: Osawese



🎒 SECONDARY SCHOOL APPLICATIONS - SEPTEMBER 2026

IF YOUR CHILD IS CURRENTLY IN YEAR 6, YOU WILL NEED TO APPLY FOR THEIR SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACE. THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS 31ST OCTOBER 2025, AND APPLICATIONS CAN BE MADE ONLINE AT: WWW.ESSEX.GOV.UK/ADMISSIONS.

At Milwards, we understand that family life can sometimes be challenging, and we want all our parents and carers to know that support is available. Our school is part of the J9 initiative, which helps people affected by domestic abuse to access help safely and confidentially. If you ever need advice, support, or signposting to services, please speak to a member of our safeguarding team – we're here to help.

📚 RECEPTION ADMISSIONS - SEPTEMBER 2026

APPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN STARTING RECEPTION IN SEPTEMBER 2026 OPEN ON 10TH NOVEMBER 2025 AND CLOSE ON 15TH JANUARY 2026. APPLICATIONS MUST BE MADE ONLINE VIA ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AT: WWW.ESSEX.GOV.UK/ADMISSIONS.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS



At The National College, our #WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

SAFETY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Currently, children are growing up in an immediate and throwaway culture when it comes to content that's consumed online. So much material is now deliberately created to be shorter in nature – and may often contain hidden elements such as advertising, or extreme political and cultural views. With complex algorithms built to keep people on their phones and engaging with social media content, it's becoming increasingly difficult to reduce time spent on these platforms.

1 REDUCE DOOMSCROLLING

It's unbelievably common for young people to spend hours 'doomscrolling': travelling through social media and aimlessly viewing every post they see, many of which might make them feel sad or anxious. Social media can be useful for keeping in touch with friends and family, as well as staying up to date on current events. However, it's important to use it with a clear purpose, instead of endlessly scrolling through content, which could lead to young people accidentally discovering harmful material.

2 TALK ABOUT THE CONTENT

It's important to keep appraised of the kind of content that a young person is being exposed to. Discussing what they're watching online can help you understand why they're using social media in the first place. Furthermore, ensure that children are aware of hidden content, such as advertising of a product – and when they know how to spot that the creator is being paid to talk about it.

3 FIND POSITIVE ASPECTS

Despite all the concerns, there's plenty of wholesome content on social media. It's worth spending time with children to help them find something suitable and enjoyable. Perhaps you'll even discover a joint interest, and you can enjoy the content alongside the child. As part of this, you should also point out why certain things shouldn't be given attention, explaining why it isn't suitable and why it's been created in the first place.

4 REDUCE SCREENTIME

Young people can sometimes be unaware of the exact amount of time they spend looking at social media. Smart phones don't just have the capacity to monitor screentime; they also record how much time is spent on each app. Consider setting targets to reduce this and support children to meet these goals, gradually reducing the amount of time spent on different apps.

5 FILL THE VOID

Monitoring and reducing screentime can create a lot of free time to fill, and young people can even face withdrawal symptoms when made to step away from their phones. To mitigate this, consider what offline activities you could introduce the child to, and what they would enjoy. This can ensure that young users will permanently cut down on their screentime, rather than temporarily doing so while they know it's being monitored.

6 REDUCE NOTIFICATIONS

One way in which social media platforms keep people coming back is through notifications. The algorithms behind these apps track people's daily habits, including the times of the day where they're most likely to engage with the platform. This data is then used to deliver specifically timed notifications to draw them back in. To avoid young users being exposed to this tactic, simply turn off notifications for the app in their phone's settings.

7 LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD

Overexposure to social media can distort someone's perception of the real world – from body norms to social conventions. This filtered environment can make it hard for young people to distinguish reality from online content, which is now becoming even more difficult with the rise of AI. To mitigate this concern, take time to teach young people how to discern truth from fiction, both on and off social media.

8 DIGITAL DETOX

Encouraging young people to take a 'digital detox', from even just a couple of the apps that they use, can result in an overall reduction of screentime and less exposure to potentially harmful content. Alternatively, rather than avoiding the apps entirely, encourage children to take a 'digital detox' from content creators and influencers, and instead, keep in touch with friends and family – which is generally a far healthier use of these platforms.

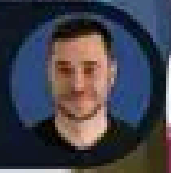
9 MODEL GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Consider the habits that you're demonstrating to your children. How much time do you spend on your phone? How much do you 'doomscroll'? Comparing your own usage with the child's could put things into perspective for them – or if it turns out that you're also overusing social media, it can turn screentime reduction into a joint mission, which you and the child can work on together.

10 BE CLEAR ON THE "WHY"

Research shows that young people can become addicted to social media. There are many schools that are moving towards being 'phone free' due to the negative impacts of using social media and phones continuously. It's important to explain to young people why managing screentime is important. Set out the benefits and ensure they have all the relevant information, so it's not just seen as a punishment.

Meet Our Expert



John Ivaley is a senior leader in a Birmingham secondary school and has vast experience in leading schools over the past 15 years – including the development of computing curriculums across primary and secondary schools, writing e-safety policies and supporting schools with computing and e-safety advice.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

@wake_up_weds /www.thenationalcollege @wake.up.wednesday @wake.up.weds

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 16.12.2024

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Not all Superheroes wear capes, sometimes they volunteer on the school PTA!





WE NEED YOU!

Whether you can help raise much-needed funds, organise exciting events, or simply serve teas and coffees at gatherings, every bit makes a difference. Join us in creating memorable experiences for our children and strengthening our school spirit.

BE A HERO

Contact us at WELFARE@milwards.essex.sch.uk to join our PTA-Team!

Milwards
Primary School
& Nursery







JOIN US AS A SCHOOL GOVERNOR!
THE HARLOW INSPIRATIONAL LEARNING TRUST IS LOOKING FOR ENTHUSIASTIC NEW GOVERNORS TO JOIN OUR TEAM!
IF YOU – OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW – CARE ABOUT EDUCATION AND WANT TO HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR FANTASTIC SCHOOLS, WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.
OUR FRIENDLY HEADTEACHERS ARE HAPPY TO CHAT ABOUT WHAT THE ROLE INVOLVES AND ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE.
BECOMING A GOVERNOR IS A REWARDING WAY TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN LOCAL EDUCATION, SUPPORT OUR SCHOOLS, AND GIVE SOMETHING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY.
TO FIND OUT MORE OR EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST, PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL OFFICE.
THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING THIS WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO INSPIRE CHANGE! 🌟

STAY CONNECTED WITH US! 🌟 JOIN OUR VIBRANT COMMUNITY ON INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK! 📸✨ SHARE OUR POSTS AND SPREAD THE JOY ABOUT THE AMAZING LEARNING HAPPENING HERE. FOLLOW US TO STAY UPDATED ON ALL THE EXCITING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES. LET'S GROW, LEARN, AND HAVE FUN TOGETHER UNDER THE BRIGHT SUN! 🎉

WEBSITE:
HTTP://WWW.MILWARDS.ESSEX.SCH.UK/

INSTAGRAM:
HTTPS://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/MILWARDSPRIMARYSCHOOL/

FACEBOOK:
HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PROFILESFILE.PHP?ID=100091808599928

Privacy Notice Please see the following link to a page on the HILT Academies website where you can view the Privacy Notice for Pupils and Parents.
https://www.milwards.essex.sch.uk/general-data-protection-regulation-2018/

Contact details

A reminder to please keep all of your contact details up to date. This can be done by logging into your Arbor app or via the website: Milwards Primary School and Nursery.



Worried About Your Child's Learning or Development?

Milwards Primary School & Nursery

Scan the QR code to access our SEND Support Padlet – a helpful guide from our SEN Team with advice, available support, and who to speak to in school.



Newsletter Diary

With each newsletter, we'll include a diary featuring important dates. As new dates come up, we'll add them and highlight them for easy visibility. Please keep in mind that our school diary is always evolving, so some dates might need to be adjusted. We'll strive to keep these changes to a minimum!

Date	Event	Additional information
27.10.25-31.10.25	**Half term**	
12.11.25	Flu immunisation day	
14.11.25	Children in Need	Dress down and a cake sale. Contributions can be made via Arbor for the dress down.

21.11.25	Year 4 Roman Day	
21.11.25	Year 6 Shakespeare workshop	
28.11.25	**INSET**	School closed for staff training
02.12.25	Reception to St Marys Church	
02.12.25	Christmas choir in the woods.	4PM
05.12.25	Year 5 Tudor day	
09.12.25	KS2 Christmas show	2pm & 4PM
10.12.25	KS2 Christmas show	9.30
10.12.25	Acorns Christmas show	2pm
11.12.25	Acorns Christmas show	9.30
12.12.25	Pantomime	Whole school trip to see Sleeping Beauty
16.12.25	After school Christmas parties	EYFS and KS1 3.15 - 4.30 KS2 4.45 - 6.15
17.12.25	KS1 Nativity	2pm
18.12.25	KS1 Nativity	9.30am
19.12.25	Christmas Dinner and wear an xmas ooutfit	
19.12.25	**End of Autumn term**	School closes at 1.30pm PM nursery children should attend the AM session this day.

Date	Event	Additional information
05.01.26	**Start of the Spring term**	School opens at the normal time for the new term
16.02.26-20.02.26	**Half term**	
27.03.26	**End of the Spring term**	**School closes at 1.30pm** PM nursery children should attend the AM session this day.
19.05.26	Class photos	Class and team photos
03.06.26	Reception to Pizza Express	Details to follow.
07.07.26	Key Stage 2 Production	2pm and 4pm
8.07.26	Key Stage 2 Production	9.30
09.07.26	KS1 summer showcase	3pm
26.06.26	Whole school Sports Day	Reserve date: 10.07.26
03.07.26	EYFS to Barley Lands Farm	Details to follow
15.07.26	Year 6 leavers BBQ	3.30
16.07.26	Acorns Graduation	2pm - For parents of children leaving Acorns
17.07.26	Year 6 leavers assembly	9.30
17.07.26	**End of the Summer term**	**School closes at 1.30pm** PM nursery children should attend the AM session this day.