



The Henry Moore Primary School

Dear Parents/Carers,

10th December 2025

What a wonderful start to the festive season we have had! Our first Christmas shows have truly captured the spirit of the holidays, and it's been a joy to see the children's hard work and enthusiasm shine on stage. Thank you to everyone who has supported these events so far. We still have more exciting performances and activities coming up, so we hope to see you at some of these events!



Opal Update

We'd love your support and donations!

The Henry Moore Primary School logo and Opal logo are in the top corners. The text reads: "DONATIONS NEEDED We're collecting brushes, brooms, dustpans for lunchtime play." Below this are four images: a black dustpan, a broom, a set of brushes, and another broom. At the bottom, it says: "Please send any unbroken donations into school All items will be carefully checked for safety before use!"

The Henry Moore Primary School logo and Opal logo are in the top corners. The text reads: "WANTED Old pots, pans, utensils, microwaves, kettles, toasters, colanders" with a "Wanted" icon. Below are images of "Sandpit toys" (shovels, buckets) and "Wellies and waterproof trousers (all sizes for ages 4-11)" (rain boots). It asks: "Having a clear out before/over Christmas? The children would also love small world toys e.g:" followed by images of a cow, figures, and toys. A LEGO logo is at the bottom left. The bottom text says: "Please send all donations into school".

The Henry Moore Primary School logo and Opal logo are in the top corners. The text reads: "Cardboard boxes/tubes needed. Please send them into school." Below the text are images of stacks of cardboard boxes and rolls of cardboard tubes.

Primary School Applications

The primary school (Reception) admission round is now open for parents/carers of children to apply for a Reception school place for the academic year that starts in September 2026.

The statutory national closing date for applications is **15 January 2026**.

Even if you already have a sibling at the school, you need to apply if you have a child due to start Reception next September.

The website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions also has a copy of the Primary Education in Essex 2026-27 booklet and the Schools Admissions Policies Directories contain details of all admission policies.

The booklet cover features a photo of a man and a woman looking at a document. A yellow speech bubble says: "Closing date: 15 January 2026". The title is "Primary Education in Essex 2026/2027". Below the title, it says: "Your guide to starting primary education or transferring from infant to junior school. Closing date for applications: 15 January 2026. Apply online at: www.essex.gov.uk/admissions". At the bottom are icons of children and a person in a wheelchair, with the Essex County Council logo.

Is your child interested in learning an instrument?

Last Tuesday, we were delighted to enjoy the musical talents of many children from across the school at our Winter Instrumental Concert. The children showcased pieces they have been working on with their music tutors, featuring piano, guitar, and drums. It was a fantastic celebration of their hard work!

While these instruments were the stars of the show, we would love to see even more variety in the future. This term, the children have had the opportunity to experience live demonstrations from visiting musicians during assemblies, sparking lots of interest and inspiration.



Did you know we have a selection of instruments available for hire in school? These include clarinets, flutes, saxophones, trumpets and trombones. If there is enough interest, Essex Music Services may be able to provide a tutor for lessons within school—either individually or in small groups.

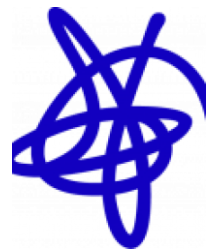
If your child would like to learn one of these instruments, please contact Essex Music Services to register your interest. musichub@essex.gov.uk

Mind In West Essex

Are you a Parent/Care Giver looking for effective ways to help your young person navigate anxiety and manage big emotions? The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) works with your child's school and is here to help you if your child is between the ages of 5 to 11.

Please see expression of interest form and further information below:

<https://forms.gle/9Mbp6PobYvfuGWmg6>



SPACE – Supporting Parents and Carers in Essex for all schools

SPACE is a new service in Essex. It provides support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND (aged 0 to 25). What makes SPACE unique is the team of Peer Educators — parents and carers all with lived experience. How SPACE can support families:

- One-to-One Support: telephone support
- Weekly webinars bring families together to share experiences.
- Attendance at School and Community Events
- Website providing resources and guidance.

For more information visit: www.parent-send-support.essex.gov.uk Contact: SPACE@essex.gov.uk

Calendar Autumn Term 2025

Thursday 11 th December	Christmas Performances at Epping Church. Yr 3 - 5.00pm Yr 6 – 6:30pm
Wednesday 17 th December	KS2 Pantomime at Harlow Playhouse KS1 Christmas dinner (KS1 - £1.00 Dress Down Christmas Theme) KS2 bring Packed lunch
Wednesday 17 th December	Christmas Parties/Discos KS1 3:20 - 4:30pm KS2 4:45 – 6:15pm
Thursday 18 th December	KS1 Pantomime at Harlow Playhouse KS2 Christmas dinner (KS2 - £1.00 Dress Down Christmas Theme) KS1 bring Packed lunch
Friday 19 th December	School Closes at 1:30pm for Christmas Holidays
Monday 5 th January 2026	Children return to school

Kind regards

Sarah Cowley
Head Teacher



Essex Fire Museum
Open Days 2025

Sunday 14th Of December
10:30AM To 4:00PM
Fire Station, Hogg Lane, Grays
RM17 5QS

Book Now

Museum@essex-fire.gov.uk

LEAVING THE TAP RUNNING WASTES UP TO 6 LITRES PER MINUTE THAT'S 9,000+ LITRES PER HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR!

IMAGINE IF WE ALL TURNED OFF THE TAP WHILE BRUSHING!

Become a water saving hero!

SHOWERBOB
Saving water & energy in the home
AXOR · hansgrohe

waterwise
WATER SAVING WEEK

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 concerning how common for young people to spend hours 'doomscrolling': trawling 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 apprised 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 that 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 app 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 Insley 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

Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/top-tips-for-safety-on-social-media>

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