

9th January 2026

Dear Parents/carers

It's been lovely to welcome staff and students back to school this week and, thankfully, we have avoided some of the more severe weather being experienced in other parts of the country. At this point it may be useful to remind you all that if the decision does need to be made to close the school this will be made as early as possible on the day. Decisions will be based on the safety of the school site, but also the ratio of staff to students that would be on site, given the distances that many of our teachers travel to work. The decision will be shared through the MCAS parent app, across our social media accounts and on our website. I would ask, if you have not already, that you add these to the regular sites you visit so you are fully informed if/when a decision is made, as well as other updates throughout the term. Fingers crossed this won't be the case – but always better to be prepared!

Other messages for the week can be found below:

IGNITE programme

This week has seen the launch of our Enrichment Week for 2026 rebranded IGNITE (Inspiring Growth, New Ideas, Talent Explored) programme - details can be found on our website [here](#). All activities will be taking place during wk commencing 22nd March.

As mentioned in the letter, Year 7, 8 & 9 families will be able to book their places when they go live on 12th January at 6.30pm through the My Child at School App. Places are offered on a first-come-first served basis. Bookings close on 19th January. Pupil Premium students will receive a subsidy of £50 per child. A reminder that Year 9 students undertaking their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards will not be required to book a place as this will take place the same week.

Applications to Nailsea Sixth Form

The deadline for applications for current year 11 students intending to start in Nailsea Sixth Form in September closes later today. We have been delighted to see so many of our current students, as well as a large number of students from other centres, applying. We are especially pleased to see the level of interest in the new courses offered this year; Human Biology, Computing, Early Childhood Development and Food Science and Nutrition. Mr Truan, Head of Sixth Form, will be in touch in due course to outline the next stage which is the interview process.

Expectations of movement around the school building

It is hugely encouraging to see that there is an increasing trend for families choosing Nailsea as their preferred choice of secondary school. To contextualise this, In the last 5 years, overall student numbers in years 7-11 have increased by around 250 students. However, looking at things another way, such an increase in numbers (adding what is the equivalent of an additional year group in lower school overall) is placing increasing pressure on the school building. Examples include seating at social times and the number of people in corridors and stairwells and the impact this may have on students' daily experiences.

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We are currently looking at ways that expectations of movement around the school site (both the timing and the placement of this) can ensure the school building is safe for all students and we will share details when these are finalised. Please be assured that any student who has an identified need linked to movement around the building will continue to be supported. I look forward to sharing the details with you in due course.

Attendance Update

Last term we wrote to you about illness and attendance.

Attendance to school is vitally important for your child's success. We at Nailsea school are working hard to increase attendance to improve the successes of our community and our monitoring focuses specifically at attendance bandings as shown below.



This time we are writing to support your understanding of threshold as if your child's attendance drops below 95% attendance, we may be in contact to support you in raising it.

Stage 1: This involves the tutor giving support.

Stage 2: This involves the Assistant Head of House giving support. This may be over email, the phone or inviting to meet you to support.

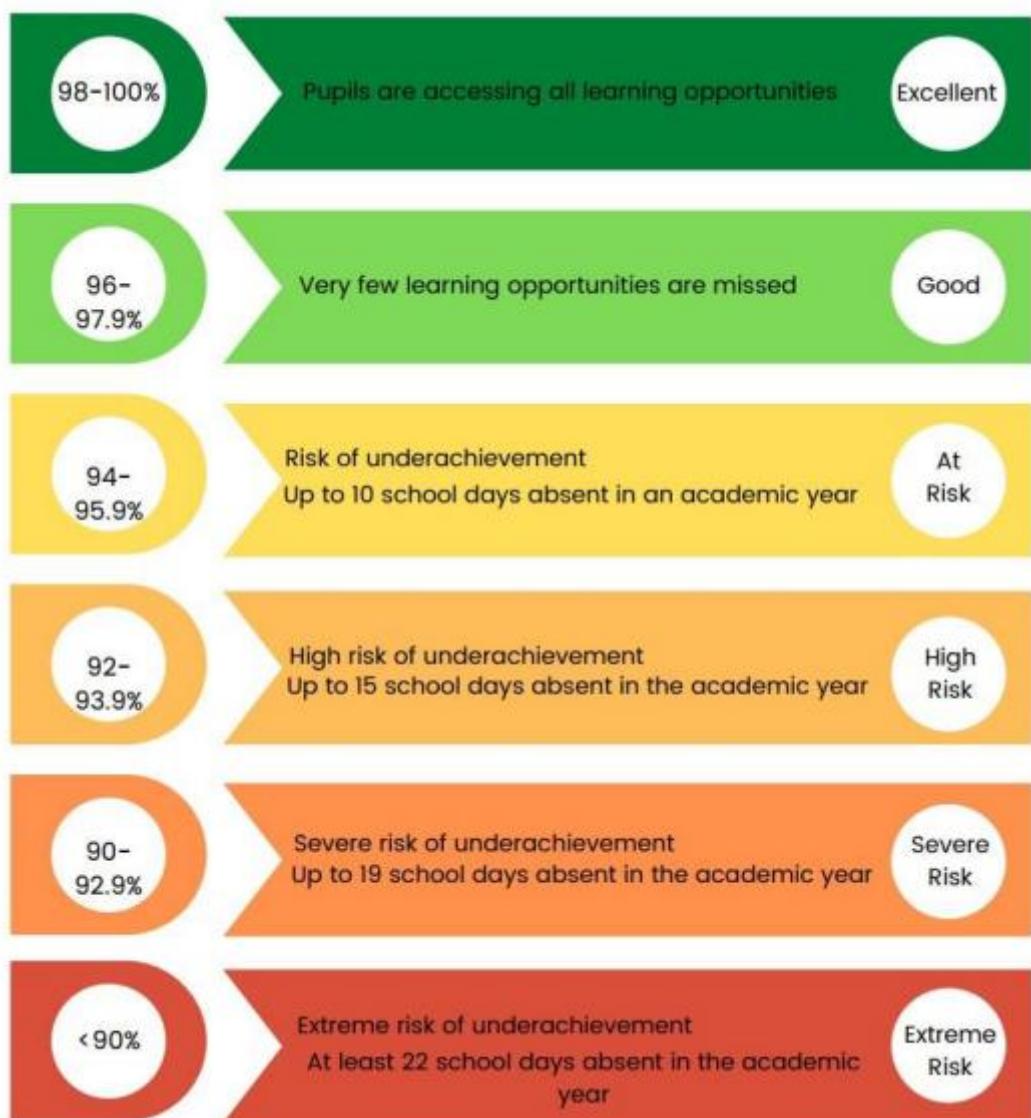
Stage 3: This involves moving to using our Attendance Team. This may include our Parent Family Support Advisor or Attendance Officer providing support.

It is important to note that at stages 2 and above this could involve prosecution.



Why good attendance is important:

- 90% attendance means a student misses half a day every week. Over five years, this results in half a school year missed
- In one school year, attendance at 90% results in four whole school weeks of school missed
- Research shows that 17 missed school days in a year will result in at least one whole GCSE grade drop in achievement – as shown by the graphic overleaf



Finally... the phrase 'you never forget a good teacher' was used by the government in 1997 to encourage more people to apply to become teachers, as some of you may remember. At the time, I was in my final year of my History degree at Exeter University and although I had already applied for my place at Bristol University to train to become a History teacher, the advert where the great and the good of the late '90s spoke about who had inspired them certainly made me feel that I had made the correct career choice.

It was Mr Jeffery, who taught me History for 6 of the 7 years when I was at school, that had fulfilled this role for me. This week I saw on social media that he had gone back to my old school to run an INSET session for current staff and during that session he referenced Dr David Lunn – his colleague during his time there and the only other History teacher I had been taught by. There had always been rumours that Dr Lunn had been a monk (he was also an expert skier – and the merging of both pieces of information always made me smile) but other than that, I knew very little about him. I had no idea, for example, that it was only after falling in love (at first sight) with his later wife that he had to prostrate himself at the feet of The Pope to be released from his vows. Mr Jeffery and Dr Lunn found themselves in the History department at the same time, the former one of the youngest and the latter the oldest, and both had volunteered for a pilot scheme. When Dr Lunn was questioned as to why he had volunteered he replied 'because I want to be a better teacher in my final year of teaching than I was in the previous one'

I couldn't help but want to share this story as an example to us all, especially at the start of a new year. It's a reminder not to just settle and drift through the familiar repeating what works – however effectively that might be – just for an easy life. In 2026 let us all try to channel Dr Lunn's spirit and seek to learn new things to become better skilled and better people. Dr Lunn sadly died of cancer 30 years ago this week in what would have been his final year of teaching before retirement. It just goes to show what an impact individuals can have, irrespective of time passing. We all have the potential to make that kind of difference.

Have a lovely weekend



Dee Elliott,

Head teacher

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