



11th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the first edition of our weekly Headteacher's Update of 2026/27

For families new to Nailsea a letter will be sent every Friday during term time and is one of our main channels of communication with parents and carers. Each week, it will provide key information about school life, share important dates and reminders, and keep you informed about developments across our community.

At Nailsea School, we firmly believe that students achieve their best when school and home work together. Regular communication is a vital part of that partnership. By taking a few minutes each Friday to read this update, you will be better informed about opportunities available to your child, upcoming events, attendance and safeguarding messages, curriculum developments, and any changes that may affect the school week ahead. Additional letters will be sent relating to the key events that were outlined in each year group's 'Welcome to the Year' letter that was sent last week.

Other messages for the week can be found below:

Attendance Matters because Your Child's Future Matters

As we begin the new academic year, I would like to thank families for the positive start students have made and ask for your continued support in ensuring excellent attendance. Attendance for week one was 96.7%. We are especially impressed with Year 7 who are leading the way, but Year 11 are not far behind demonstrating their commitment towards this important stage in their education - every day counts.

At Nailsea School, we know that attendance is fundamental to both academic success and personal development. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve strong outcomes, build positive relationships, participate fully in school life and develop the habits that will support them long into the future.

Every lesson counts. While an occasional day away from school may seem insignificant, these absences can quickly add up and make it more difficult for students to keep pace with their learning and feel fully connected to their peers and wider school community.

To give every child the best opportunity to succeed, we ask families to help establish strong attendance routines from the start of the year by remembering that:

- Students should attend school every day unless they are genuinely too unwell to do so.
- Medical appointments should be arranged outside of school hours wherever possible. If there is the need to attend during the school day, attending for the morning or afternoon of the appointment is much preferred, rather than missing the full day.
- Family holidays should be taken during school holiday periods and not during term time.



Thank you for your support in helping us ensure that every student is present, engaged and ready to make the most of the opportunities available to them this year. Together, we can therefore give every child the best chance to succeed and thrive.

Mobile Phone Policy: 'Gate to Gate'

In line with Trust expectations and Department for Education guidance, our aim is to create a phone-free environment throughout the school day, ensuring that students are fully focused on learning, social interaction and participation in school life. Our simple expectation is **"Gate to Gate"**.

From the moment students enter the school gates in the morning until they leave the site through the gate at the end of the day:

- Mobile phones should not be seen.
- Mobile phones should not be used.
- Phones must remain switched off and stored securely in bags at all times.

This expectation applies before school, at breaktime, lunchtime, between lessons and during lessons. This week, staff have continued to remind students of these expectations and have been focusing on education and reinforcement. However, from next week, we will be applying the policy more consistently. Any student seen using a mobile phone, or with a phone visible on site, should expect it to be confiscated and returned in line with our school procedures at the end of that school day. We appreciate that many students use their phones on the journey to and from school, and this remains a matter for families. However, once students enter the school gates, they should be switched off and put away until they leave the site at the end of the day.

Thanks, in advance, for your support in helping us create a calm, focused and respectful learning environment for all students.

Start and End of the School Day – Drop off and Pick Up

As we start the new school year, I would like to remind all families of the arrangements for dropping off and collecting students from school. The safety of our students must always be our first priority. This is particularly important this year as the Resource Base expansion works continue at the front of the school. With students currently using a single student entrance, there is increased pedestrian movement across the main gate area and a greater risk posed by high volumes of vehicle traffic.

For this reason, parents and carers must not drive onto the school site between 8:15am and 8:35am, unless there is an exceptional need and a student requires access directly to the entrance because of a physical disability or medical need. We appreciate that this may occasionally be less convenient, but these arrangements are in place to protect the safety of all members of our school community.

Please be reassured that staff are on duty each morning, monitoring the gates and student entrances. Once students have entered the school site, they are supervised and safe, even if they are walking down from MizzyMead Road at the start of the day

Students arriving via external transport services will continue to be permitted on site and are now entering and exiting through the Juice Bar entrance to support the safe flow of students and vehicles.



I would also ask all drivers to be mindful of our disabled parking spaces. These bays must remain available for staff, students, parents and visitors who genuinely need them. Parking in these spaces without necessity, even for a short period, can create significant difficulties for those who rely on accessible parking.

We have also been made aware that the Local Authority will be undertaking increased monitoring of traffic and parking around the school at the beginning and end of the school day. Council officers will be visiting the area periodically to observe driving and parking practices, support road safety and ensure that parking restrictions are being followed. This may include monitoring areas where vehicles are stopping on yellow lines, obstructing junctions, blocking access points or using disabled parking spaces inappropriately.

These measures are not intended to inconvenience families, but to help ensure that students, staff, parents and local residents can access the school safely. With the current building works and the increased concentration of students entering and leaving through a single entrance, it is more important than ever that everyone follows the established traffic and parking arrangements. We ask all drivers to allow a little extra time for drop-off and collection as a few extra moments' consideration can make a significant difference to the safety of over a thousand students arriving and leaving school each day.

Catering Changes and Free School Meals Eligibility

As many parents will be aware, we have recently transitioned to Aspens Services as our new catering provider. Aspens is an external specialist catering company that works with schools across the country to provide nutritious meals and a varied food offer for students. We are pleased with the range of options now available and encourage families to take a look at the current menus, which can be found on the school website [Lunch Menu – Nailsea School](#)

As with any change of provider, there have been some unavoidable teething issues during the first few days of operation. In particular, a number of families have contacted us regarding discrepancies in what is appearing on their ParentPay accounts and concerns about purchases being recorded incorrectly. We understand how frustrating this can be and appreciate your patience. These issues are linked to the implementation of new till systems and processes operated by the catering provider and are not something that the school directly controls. We are working closely with Aspens to identify and resolve the issues as quickly as possible.

We would also like to clarify that meal and food prices are set by Aspens Services, rather than by the school. While we work in partnership with the provider, pricing decisions sit with the company as part of their catering contract. Any enquiries with Aspens can be followed up using the enquiries email josephine.palmer@aspens-services.co.uk.

As has been already communicated, from September 2026 free school meals have been expanded so all children from households receiving Universal Credit may be eligible for a free school meal, regardless of house earnings. It was important that all families registered for this new system, even if their child already received free school meals. During this week there has been the issue that some



families had not yet registered using the portal <https://fsm.lgfl.net> We would ask that this is completed as soon as possible so that the school can access additional funding to support childrens' education and wellbeing and help to ensure that all families receive the support and entitlements available to them.

Families may also notice that the value allocated for Free School Meals is now £3.00 per day. We appreciate that this is different from previous arrangements and may mean that some students need to adapt their purchasing choices. However, we would like to reassure families that the £3.00 allowance fully covers the school's main meal and pudding offer each day.

Importantly, these meal options are nutritionally balanced and designed to meet the Government's school food standards, ensuring that students have access to a healthy, substantial lunch as part of their entitlement. In some cases, students may find that snack items, confectionery, drinks or other less nutritious options are priced above the Free School Meal allowance and therefore require an additional payment.

Whilst this may require a change in habits for some students, we believe this is a positive development. Free School Meals are intended to ensure that all students can access a healthy and balanced lunch during the school day, and the current arrangements support that aim by prioritising nutritious meal choices.

Instrumental lesson and music clubs

All music clubs start back this week, these are free of charge and open to all pupils. Pupils should check the information in tutor time and posters in the Music Department for more information.

Instrumental lessons are also starting up this week and next. It's not too late to sign up! Please find attached a letter with more information. Ms Irwin (Head of Music) can also organise taster lessons for any interested pupils.

Brass Lesson Tasters - if you would like to try playing trumpet, french horn, trombone, euphonium, baritone or tuba now is your chance! Taster lessons are happening this week. Please email Ms Irwin for more details. Cirwin@nailseaschool.com.

YourSpace

The next YourSpace session is for Y7 parents on Tuesday 15th September. An opportunity to meet other parents and ask any questions. Hosted by our Family Support Worker there are 2 sessions in the day: Coffee morning 9-10.30am and After-work social 5.30-6.30pm.

For further information please contact: Mrs Alison Moran at AMoran@nailseaschool.com.

And Finally....as I close this first weekly update, I wanted to return to a story I shared in my presentation to staff on our INSET day at the start of term.

In *Paddington Bear*, Aunt Lucy's advice is simple: *"If we're kind and polite, the world will be right."*

Whilst schools are, of course, about achieving excellent academic outcomes, I have always believed they are also about developing young people who are kind, respectful, resilient and ready to make a positive contribution to their communities.



As I have walked around Nailsea School this week, I have seen countless examples of students holding doors open, helping younger students find their way, welcoming new classmates and treating staff and one another with warmth and respect. These small moments matter. They are the foundation of the culture we want to continue building together.

Our ambition is that every member of our community feels they belong, feels valued and feels able to thrive. If we can combine high standards, hard work and ambition with kindness, community and care for others, we will continue to be a school of which we can all be proud.

Finally, congratulations to students, staff and parents alike for successfully completing the first full week of routines, alarms, packed lunches, homework, PE kits and early mornings once again! If everyone is feeling a little tired this weekend, I suspect that simply means we've had a busy and productive start to the year.

I hope you all enjoy a well-earned rest, and I look forward to seeing us all back in school on Monday.

Yours sincerely,



Dee Elliott,

Head teacher

