



Diocese of Norwich  
Education and  
Academies Trust

## The Nar Valley Federation of Church Academies

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Neary

Web: [www.narvalleyfederation.co.uk](http://www.narvalleyfederation.co.uk)

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

As this year draws to a close, it is always a time of reflection on all our achievements and the culmination of everyone's hard work. We are part of a local and wider community at this Federation, and I am always proud to see each of our schools being an active part of the local community, through tree planting or Remembrance services or visiting care homes. Joint residentials, trips and our new NVF Sports Day Finals were also a real joy having the whole Federation family together. Listening to the Y6 Leavers' speeches reminded me of how vital these residential and trip experiences are for the children so thank you to our families for your support financially for these.

As always at this time of year there are so many 'thank you's to say. With the very financially challenging times for Education as a whole currently, we rely more and more of our fabulous PTFA and Friends' groups and they have been absolutely magnificent – small but mighty, they work so hard, put on great events and raise money so that our children can have equipment and coach travel to the many trips and visits we do throughout the year. A huge, heartfelt thank you to all our members, and to all the families who have supported these events.

Our staff team are incredible. They give tirelessly of their time and energy to ensure that school is firstly about excellent quality teaching and learning but also about so much more – taking part in drama workshops, singing in the Cathedral, camping, lying in rivers catching crayfish, performing on a theatre stage, watching productions, hearing live music, taking part in so many sporting competitions, learning First Aid and so much more. So to every single team member of Nar Valley Federation, an enormous 'thank you' for all you do, it is much appreciated.

I am also very lucky to be well challenged and supported by our Governors, who give their time once a half-term to our meetings and read our documentation and ask very tough questions! All Governors also generously give their time, whether that is one report a term or coming into school, to carry out monitoring activities, all of which I am most grateful for. If you are interested in becoming a Governor, we do have a vacancy, particularly for a Parent Governor at Narborough, so please let me know. It honestly isn't onerous and is an excellent opportunity to support school in the evenings. (6-8pm on a Tuesday once every six weeks!) I am delighted to report that our new Rector for Castle Acre and Narborough, Angela Hammett, is going to join our Governing Body, which is wonderful.

Attendance at school; the expectations for this are changing in September from the Government. Please see this link to their policy:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2024 .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf)

It is really important to note that if your child's attendance falls below 90% and they are Persistently absent, then legal matters of some form may ensue, through the Family Court. It is very important that you talk to us about your child's attendance if there is any issue so that we can work together. We have had to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for term time holidays this year – these are going up to £80 per child. We do not want to have to issue these, so please, please avoid term time holidays as there are very few reasons for authorisation. I would particularly draw your attention to this section regarding Fixed Penalty Notices:

*Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided.*

*The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).*

Most of our children have excellent attendance (more than the standard 96%). However, if your child's attendance this school year was less than 90%, I would urge you particularly to read the information on the link above, which comes into effect from 19<sup>th</sup> August.

We have a fundraising challenge for you all! You will have seen that preparations in our car park have begun, as we approached Eagles and asked if we could buy a bus from them and they generously gifted us a double decker. The bus is going to be in our car park whilst we raise money for a concrete base and the conversion into a wonderful and exciting library space that can also be used at lunchtimes. Please start having a think about how we can all follow the example of the Parable of the Talents and use our talents to turn a few pounds into many. Any ideas, or offers of 'concrete' support (both a good pun and a literal plea!) would be gratefully received.

As well as a bus, we will also be saying hello to some new staff, some of whom are joining our Maple group. Maple room will be extended to include what is the current library, to provide space for some of our children with more complex additional needs, who need more individual support. Mrs Helen Sloan, Teaching Assistant, joins us from a primary school in Essex and Miss Lucy Davison, Apprentice TA is also joining our team.

We are saying goodbye to Mrs Nevill and Mrs Dunkley and want to thank them for their valued contribution over their time at Castle Acre. Our very much beloved Mrs Bridgeman is finally hanging up her clipboard after many, many years of dedicated service to so many children, all of whom remember her for her kindness, care, high expectations and it seems from the Leavers' speeches, talk of chocolate cake! I personally will never forget her choice of music to leave the end of year service in Church to last Summer – 'School's Out' by Alice Cooper! Well Mrs Bridgeman, school is out, but you will always be 'in' so from the bottom of our hearts, thank you and please come back and see us soon.



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We have Premiere Sports this year offering Summer camps at each school for one week of the holidays; your child is welcome to attend all three. These are funded for children who are entitled to Free School Meals and offered to all children, so please do make the most of this childcare. Details have been in the school newsletters, which are on our website, or contact Premier Sports directly.

I would like to thank all our families for your support for your child's learning and for our schools and Federation. The best outcomes in education come when home and school are a partnership for your child and this is always a pleasure of working at Nar Valley Federation. Thank you for all you do and we wish you a happy Summer and hope you can have some lovely family time.

With very best wishes for the Summer,

Allergy Aware Schools – Please do not send nuts into Nar Valley Federation Academies