

## Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Please refer to the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Guidance when completing this form.

### Basic Details

#### 1. Title of proposal (include budget reference if applicable)

Proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate it to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.

#### 2. Service(s)

Education - Children, Young People and Partnerships.

#### 3. Lead officer (name, job title and date of IIA training)

Craig Murrin, Business Support Officer. Date of IIA Training: 17 April 2024

#### 4. Other officers/partners involved (name, job title and date of IIA training)

Katy Johnstone, Learning Estate Resource Officer.

Date of IIA Training: 17 April 2024

#### 5. Date IIA completed

22/10/2025

#### 6. Nature of proposal

Introduction of a new service or function

Other (please specify)

#### 7. Brief description of proposal

What are its main aims and objectives? What, if anything, will change as a result of this proposal?

The proposal is to close Mount Esk Nursery School as a standalone establishment and re-designate it as Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class from August 2026. This change aims to improve continuity of learning and leadership by integrating nursery provision within the primary school setting, under the leadership of the Head Teacher at Hawthornden Primary School. The proposal supports the strategic direction of the Council's learning estate and seeks to enhance operational efficiency and best value in service delivery. It will provide a modern, inclusive, and well-resourced learning environment that supports early years development, facilitates smoother transitions from nursery to primary education, promotes collaboration among staff, and increases opportunities for parental and community engagement. As a result,

Mount Esk Nursery School will cease to operate independently, and its services will be delivered as part of Hawthornden Primary School's nursery class.

## Equality and Rights

8. Could the proposal have an impact on any of the following groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010? (select all that apply)

Protected characteristics	
<u>Age</u> (older people, young people and children)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Disability</u> (people with disabilities)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Gender reassignment</u> (trans people, anyone whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Marriage and civil partnership</u> (people who are married or in a civil partnership)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Pregnancy and maternity</u> (women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Race</u> (people defined by their colour, ethnicity or nationality – e.g. Asian and black people)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Religion and belief</u> (people with different religions and beliefs, including no belief)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Sex</u> (men or women)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Sexual orientation</u> (lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight)	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Could the proposal have an impact on children and young people under the age of 18?

Yes

10. Could the proposal have an impact on human rights?

See pages 14-15 of the IIA Guidance.

Yes

11. Is the proposal a 'strategic decision' under the Fairer Scotland Duty to actively consider how to reduce socio-economic disadvantage (i.e. poverty)?

Please select from the list below. The proposal is strategic if it falls under any of the headings.

Decisions about the shape, size and location of the organisation's estate

Yes

No

Don't know

If you answered yes to any of questions 8-11, you must also answer questions 12-15.

If you were unsure about any of questions 8-11, it is advised that you answer questions 12-15.

If you answered no to all of questions 8-11, please advance to [\*\*question 16 \(Environment\)\*\*](#).

## Equality and Rights

12. What kind of impact could the proposal have on groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act? (please explain your answers)

Protected characteristic	Potential impact	Explanation
Age	Positive	<p>The proposal primarily affects children aged 3–5. Integrating nursery provision within a primary school setting can support continuity of learning, smoother transitions, and social development. Mount Esk has provided a nurturing and inclusive environment for early years education, and Midlothian Council's Education Authority is committed to carrying forward this good practice into the new nursery class at Hawthornden. While some disruption may occur for children currently attending Mount Esk, transition planning will be carefully managed, with support from education officers and clear communication with families on timescales, dates etc.</p> <p>Updates will be provided following decisions made by elected members and the Scottish Government to ensure families are well-informed and supported throughout the process.</p>
Disability	Neutral	<p>The impact on disabled children and parents will depend on the accessibility of the new nursery provision at Hawthornden Primary School. As Hawthornden does not currently have a nursery class, the design and development of the new provision offers an opportunity to embed accessibility from the outset. Midlothian Council has a duty to make reasonable adjustments and ensure full compliance with accessibility standards. Transition planning will include individual needs assessments and tailored support for children with disabilities, ensuring that the new nursery environment is inclusive, safe, and responsive to a range of needs. The Council will work closely with families and professionals to ensure that the new setting promotes equity and participation for all.</p>
Gender reassignment	Neutral	<p>No direct impact is anticipated. The proposal does not relate to gender identity or transition processes. However, inclusive practices and safeguarding policies will continue to apply within the new nursery class.</p>

Protected characteristic	Potential impact	Explanation
Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	The proposal does not directly affect individuals based on marital or civil partnership status. However, inclusive engagement and communication with all parents and carers will be maintained.
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral	Parents and carers may benefit from improved integration and communication within a single school setting. This can support those on maternity leave or expecting children by simplifying access to early learning and childcare services.
Race	Neutral	The proposal does not specifically address race, but inclusive practices will be upheld. The Council's commitment to equity ensures that children from all racial and ethnic backgrounds will be supported equally.
Religion or belief	Neutral	No direct impact is anticipated. The proposal does not affect religious practices or beliefs, but the school will continue to respect and accommodate diverse faiths and beliefs.
Sex	Neutral	The proposal does not differentiate based on sex. Staffing and service delivery will continue to follow inclusive and equitable practices.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	No direct impact is anticipated. The proposal does not relate to sexual orientation, but inclusive policies will remain in place to support all families and staff.

## Equality and Rights

13. What kind of impact could the proposal have on children and young people in terms of the requirements of the [UNCRC \(Scotland\) \(Incorporation\) Act 2023?](#)

A full list of the UNCRC Articles can be found on pages 12-13 of the IIA Guidance.

UNCRC Article	Particular groups of children affected	Potential impact	Explanation
Article 3 <a href="#"><u>(best interests of the child)</u></a>	Children currently attending Mount Esk Nursery; future nursery-aged children; children with additional support needs	Positive	The integration of nursery provision into the primary school setting may improve continuity of learning, transitions, and leadership. However, disruption due to closure and relocation could affect children's sense of security and belonging. The best interests of the child must be

			central in planning the transition, including ensuring emotional wellbeing, maintaining relationships, and providing a familiar and nurturing environment.
Article 6 <u><a href="#">(life, survival and development)</a></u>	Children currently attending Mount Esk Nursery; future nursery-aged children; children with additional support needs	Positive	The proposal may enhance developmental outcomes by improving access to educational resources, specialist staff, and smoother transitions. However, careful planning is needed to ensure that no child's development is disrupted during the transition. The physical environment, staffing ratios, and support services must meet children's developmental needs to uphold their right to survival and development.
Article 12 <u><a href="#">(respect for the views of the child)</a></u>	Children currently attending Mount Esk Nursery; future nursery-aged children; children with additional support needs	Positive	The proposal affects children's learning environment and relationships. Their views should be actively sought and considered in decision-making. Meaningful involvement in consultations and transition planning supports their rights and can lead to better outcomes. If not, it risks undermining their sense of belonging.
Article 19 <u><a href="#">(protection from violence, abuse and neglect)</a></u>	Children currently attending Mount Esk Nursery; future nursery-aged children; children with additional support needs	Positive	Integrating nursery provision into a primary school setting offers an opportunity to further strengthen safeguarding through unified policies, shared leadership, and enhanced oversight. Mount Esk has established robust safeguarding procedures and a nurturing environment that prioritises children's safety and wellbeing. Midlothian Council's Education Authority is committed to maintaining and building upon these standards in the development of the new nursery class at Hawthornden. The transition will be carefully managed to ensure continuity in safeguarding practice, including comprehensive staff training, secure physical environments, and clear protocols. Any changes to staffing or routines

			will be planned to uphold the protection and wellbeing of all children, with particular attention to those who may be more vulnerable.
Article 23 <u>(children with a disability)</u>	Children with disabilities	Positive	<p>Integrating nursery provision into a primary school setting is anticipated to enhance access to inclusive education by embedding early years provision within a broader framework of specialist staff, inclusive teaching practices, and shared resources. Mount Esk has demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting children with additional needs, and Midlothian Council's Education Authority will ensure that this inclusive ethos is carried forward into the new nursery class at Hawthornden.</p> <p>Although Hawthornden Primary School does not currently have a nursery, the Council has a strong track record of designing new schools and early years settings that meet accessibility standards and promote inclusive learning environments. The development of the new nursery will be informed by this experience, with careful attention to physical accessibility, sensory needs, and inclusive pedagogy. Transition planning will include individual needs assessments and collaboration with families to ensure that no child is disadvantaged by the change in setting.</p>
Article 27 <u>(adequate standard of living)</u>	N/A	Unknown	N/A.
Article 29 <u>(goals of education)</u>	Children currently attending Mount Esk Nursery; future nursery-aged children; children with additional support needs	Positive	Integrating nursery provision into a primary school setting is expected to enhance educational continuity and broaden learning experiences by embedding early years education within a well-resourced and inclusive school environment. This approach

			<p>supports smoother transitions, shared pedagogical practice, and access to a wider range of learning opportunities. Midlothian Council has successfully managed similar transitions in the past, including the opening of new schools and nursery classes, through structured consultation processes, clear communication with families, and careful planning around closures and changes. These experiences have shaped a consistent and child-centred approach to managing educational change. For the proposed integration at Hawthornden, Education Authority officers will play a key role in supporting the transition, working closely with nursery and primary teams to ensure continuity in curriculum, pedagogy, and relationships. Investment in experienced staff and appropriate resources will help safeguard the integrity of early years educational goals and ensure that children's development is nurtured throughout the change.</p>
<p><b>Article 31 <u>(leisure, play and culture)</u></b></p>	<p>Children currently attending Mount Esk Nursery; future nursery-aged children; children with additional support needs</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Although Hawthornden Primary School does not currently have a nursery, the integration of nursery provision presents a valuable opportunity to enhance access to indoor and outdoor play spaces, cultural activities, and community events within the wider school environment. In line with Article 31 of the UNCRC, which affirms every child's right to rest, leisure, play, and cultural participation, Midlothian Council's Education Authority will ensure that any new nursery provision retains a strong focus on play-based learning. The physical and pedagogical environment will be designed to support creativity, exploration, and inclusive cultural engagement, ensuring that the</p>

			distinctive nature of early years education is not overshadowed by more formal school structures.
Other (please specify)		Choose an item.	

## Equality and Rights

14. What kind of impact could the proposal have in terms of the Articles of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)?

See pages 14-15 of the IIA Guidance.

Article of ECHR	Particular groups of people affected	Potential impact	Explanation
Article 2 (right to life)	Children currently attending Mount Esk Nursery; future nursery-aged children; children with additional support needs	Positive	While this article is not directly engaged by the proposal, the right to life includes the obligation to ensure a safe and secure environment for children. The transition to a new nursery class must uphold high standards of health and safety, including emergency procedures, safeguarding protocols, and staff training. These measures are essential to protect life and wellbeing, particularly for children with additional support needs who may be more vulnerable.
Article 8 (respect for private and family life)	Children and families currently using Mount Esk Nursery; future users of Hawthornden nursery class	Positive	Changes to nursery provision may affect family routines, relationships with staff, and access to familiar services. If the transition is well-managed, with clear communication and inclusive engagement, it can strengthen family-school relationships and support children's emotional wellbeing. However, poor planning or lack of consultation could interfere with family life and disrupt children's sense of stability. The Council must ensure that families are supported throughout the transition and that privacy and dignity are respected.

Article 14 (protection from discrimination)	Children with disabilities; children from minority ethnic backgrounds; children from low-income families	Neutral	While the proposal is not expected to have an adverse or disproportionate impact on children based on disability, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, there is limited evidence to suggest it will actively advance equality or reduce discrimination. There is no indication that the current provision at Mount Esk has disadvantaged any group, and it is important not to imply otherwise. In fact, Mount Esk has demonstrated a strong commitment to inclusive practice, which Midlothian Council's Education Authority will seek to maintain and build upon in the development of the new nursery class at Hawthornden. The new provision will be designed to be inclusive and accessible, with culturally responsive practices and appropriate support for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Implementation will be monitored to ensure equitable access and participation.
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15. What kind of impact could the proposal have on people experiencing or vulnerable to socio-economic disadvantage (i.e. poverty)?

An explanation of the different features of socio-economic disadvantage and information on vulnerable population groups can be found on page 18 of the IIA Guidance.

<b>Socio-economic disadvantage</b>	<b>Potential impact</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Low income	Neutral	Families with low income may benefit from improved facilities and integration into a primary school setting, which could enhance access to services and reduce long-term costs. However, if the new location is less accessible or incurs additional travel costs, this could pose a barrier. Mitigation includes ensuring transport and support services remain affordable and accessible.
Low and/or no wealth	Neutral	The proposal does not stem from concerns about quality or access at Mount Esk, which is a well-performing nursery. However, families with limited financial resilience may be concerned about changes to a trusted setting. Since the change is strategic rather than service-driven, the impact on wealth-related

Socio-economic disadvantage	Potential impact	Explanation
		disadvantage is likely minimal, provided continuity of care and access to support remains stable.
Material deprivation	Neutral	Mount Esk already provides a high-quality environment with access to outdoor learning and essential services. The redesignation is not expected to significantly improve or reduce access to basic goods and services. The impact will depend on how well the new nursery class replicates or enhances existing provision.
Area deprivation	Neutral	Both Mount Esk and Hawthornden are located in Bonnyrigg, so the geographic shift is unlikely to significantly affect area-based deprivation. The proposal does not involve relocation to a more or less deprived area. However, future use of the Mount Esk site should be considered to avoid contributing to local decline.
Socio-economic background	Positive	Integration into a primary school may improve educational continuity and aspirations for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. It supports smoother transitions and aligns with national frameworks aimed at closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
Other	Choose an item.	

## Environment

### 16. What impact could the proposal have on the environment?

Considerations relating to the environment, climate change and sustainability are described on pages 19-20 of the IIA Guidance.

Potential impact	Affected populations	Explanation
Neutral	Children, families, staff, and local community	The proposal does not have a significant impact on the environment.

If the proposal is likely to have a significant impact on the environment (positive or negative), it is advised that you undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Further information on when an SEA is required can be found on page 19 of the IIA Guidance and on the [Scottish Government website](#).

If you have identified any impact (positive, negative or neutral) on protected characteristic groups, children and young people, human rights, socio-economic disadvantage or the environment, you must complete all of the remaining sections.

If you have not identified any potential impact on protected characteristic groups, children and young people, human rights, socio-economic disadvantage or the environment, please advance directly to **question 29 (Recommendation)**.

## Evidence

### 17. What data, research and other evidence informed the proposal?

Evidence can include, for instance, surveys, databases, census and population figures, focus groups, in-depth interviews, pilot projects, reviews of complaints, user feedback, academic publication and consulting reports.

Evidence source	Explanation (what does the evidence tell us about nature and scale of the potential impact?)
Midlothian Learning Estate Strategy 2017–2047	This long-term strategic framework sets out the Council's vision for a modern, efficient, and inclusive learning estate. It advocates for the integration of early years provision within primary schools to improve continuity of learning, leadership, and operational efficiency. The proposal to re-designate Mount Esk Nursery School aligns with this strategy by transitioning away from standalone nursery models and supporting a more cohesive educational experience. The strategy also highlights the importance of maximising occupancy and delivering best value, both of which are addressed by the proposed change.
Mount Esk Nursery School Status	Mount Esk is currently the only standalone nursery school in Midlothian, making it an outlier in the Council's learning estate. Its closure and re-designation reflect a strategic move to bring all early years provision in line with the integrated model. This status underscores the significance of the proposal in completing a broader transformation and achieving consistency across the estate. It also highlights the need to ensure that the transition is managed sensitively, given the unique identity and history of the setting.
Previous Midlothian Consultations and Feedback	Although the consultation is yet to commence, insights from previous consultations have informed the approach to engagement and impact assessment. These consultations revealed common themes such as concerns about disruption, the importance of communication, and the value placed on continuity of care and relationships. This evidence helps anticipate potential challenges and shape a proactive response to stakeholder needs.
National Improvement Framework & Realising the Ambition Guidance	These national policy documents provide a foundation for high-quality early learning and childcare. They emphasise the importance of transitions, inclusive environments, and child-centred pedagogy. The proposal supports these principles by aiming to create a seamless learning journey from nursery to primary, under consistent leadership and within a shared educational ethos. The guidance also supports the use of integrated settings to promote equity and excellence.
Care Inspectorate Regulations and Staffing Standards	These regulatory frameworks ensure that early years settings meet minimum standards for safety, staffing, and quality of care. The proposal must comply with these standards during and after the transition. This evidence helps assess the feasibility of the re-designation and ensures that the new nursery class will continue to meet the needs of children and families, particularly those with additional support needs.

## Consultation and Engagement

## 18. How has the proposal been informed by consultation and engagement?

Please explain who was consulted/engaged during the development of the proposal, the extent of their involvement, what their views were and how these have been taken into account.

The proposal has been shaped by learning from previous consultations, particularly the successful transition of a nursery school within the Mayfield community campus. In that case, a standalone nursery was integrated into a primary school under the leadership of the Head Teacher, and the process highlighted the importance of early engagement, clear communication, and robust transition planning. These lessons have directly informed the current approach to the Mount Esk Nursery School proposal.

Midlothian Council will undertake a comprehensive statutory consultation process in accordance with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. This process is designed to ensure transparency, accessibility, and meaningful participation. It will include:

- A formal public meeting chaired by an independent facilitator
- Online and paper-based surveys to gather views from a wide range of stakeholders
- A dedicated email mailbox for written submissions
- Drop-in sessions to allow informal discussion and feedback
- Targeted engagement with community councils, trade unions, professional associations, and other relevant bodies

The consultation will actively seek views from:

- Parents and carers of children currently attending or expected to attend Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School
- Nursery and school staff, including leadership teams and support staff
- Pupils, where appropriate, using age-appropriate methods to gather their views
- Community councils and local residents
- Trade unions and professional bodies representing staff
- Other stakeholders with an interest in early years education and community development

In addition, Education Scotland will conduct a three-week consultation period focused on the educational aspects of the proposal. They will review stakeholder feedback, visit affected settings if required, and produce an independent report summarising their findings and recommendations. This report will be made publicly available and included in the final consultation report presented to elected members.

All feedback gathered during the consultation will be analysed to identify themes, concerns, and opportunities. This analysis will inform the final decision-making process and ensure that community voices are reflected in the outcome. Where appropriate, mitigating actions will be developed in response to concerns raised, and the Council will communicate how feedback has influenced the proposal.

## Mitigating Actions

### 19. Could the proposal, in its current form, discriminate against people in a protected characteristic group? No

20. Could the proposal, in its current form, violate the rights of children and young people under the UNCRC Act? No
21. Could the proposal, in its current form, violate human rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)? No
22. Could the proposal, in its current form, entrench or increase inequality of outcome due to poverty? No
23. If applicable, please describe any actions which could be taken to remove or mitigate the potential negative impact of the proposal.

Please provide estimates of the resource implications of adopting these actions.

N/A

24. If you have identified any potential negative impact which cannot be removed or mitigated, please clearly state your justification for continuing with the proposal.

N/A

**NOTE:** If the proposal could be deemed discriminatory under the Equality Act, UNCRC or ECHR, you must revise the proposal to ensure that the Council acts lawfully.

### Monitoring and Review

25. How will the implementation and impact of the proposal be monitored? How frequently and by whom?

The implementation and impact of the proposal will be monitored through a structured and multi-phase approach led by Midlothian Council's Education Leadership Team. Monitoring will begin during the statutory consultation period and continue through the transition and post-implementation phases.

26. How will the results of this monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

The results of monitoring will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the transition from Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class and to identify lessons learned that can inform future decisions about early years provision and wider learning estate planning. Feedback from staff, parents, carers, and children will help assess the success of the integration in terms of educational outcomes, wellbeing, accessibility, and operational efficiency.

Any issues identified—such as barriers to access, staffing challenges, or gaps in support—will be documented and addressed through improvement planning. These insights will contribute to the refinement of Council strategies, including the Learning Estate Strategy and future proposals involving nursery re-designation, school mergers, or service redesign. The Council will also use the findings to strengthen its consultation and engagement practices, ensuring that future proposals are shaped by community input and reflect the needs of diverse stakeholders. Monitoring outcomes will be shared with elected members

and relevant directorates to support evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement.

## 27. When will the proposal be reviewed?

The proposal will be reviewed at multiple stages throughout its development and implementation to ensure it remains responsive to stakeholder feedback and aligned with strategic objectives.

- **Initial Review:** Following the statutory consultation period (3 November – 14 December 2025), all feedback will be analysed. Education Scotland will conduct a three-week review focused on the educational aspects of the proposal. Their independent assessment will be used to refine and finalise the Final Consultation Report.
- **Council Consideration:** The final proposals, incorporating consultation feedback and Education Scotland's recommendations, will be presented to elected members of Midlothian Council for approval on **24 February 2026**.
- **Ministerial Review Period:** If approved, the proposal enters a Scottish Ministers call-in period (24 February – 21 April 2026), during which further scrutiny may occur. If called in, a School Closure Review Panel may be convened to assess the proposal.
- **Post-Implementation Review:** If the proposal proceeds, the changes will take effect from **August 2026**. The Education Leadership Team will monitor the transition and implementation.

## 28. If the proposal is to be delivered wholly or partly by contractors, what arrangements are in place to ensure equality, human rights and environmental issues are properly considered?

N/A

## Recommendation

### 29. What is your recommendation for the proposal?

Adopt proposal with no amendments

Adopt proposal with mitigating actions (outlined above)

Reject proposal due to disproportionately negative impact on equality, human rights or the environment

### 30. Please give the reasoning behind your recommendation

- Include reference to any potential impact you have identified during the IIA process.
- **If you have not conducted a full impact assessment by completing all sections of this form, please explain why.**

This recommendation is based on a full Integrated Impact Assessment which has considered the potential effects of the proposal on equality, children's rights, human rights, socio-economic disadvantage, and the environment.

The proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate it as Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class aligns with Midlothian Council's Learning Estate Strategy and national policy guidance. It is expected to deliver positive impacts across several domains:

- **Equality and Rights:** The proposal supports inclusive education and continuity of learning, particularly benefiting children in early years. While the impact on disability is currently unknown due to accessibility considerations, mitigating actions such as reasonable adjustments and inclusive design have been identified.
- **Children's Rights (UNCRC):** The proposal advances key UNCRC articles, including the best interests of the child, development, participation, and protection. Transition planning and consultation with children will ensure their rights are respected.
- **Socio-Economic Disadvantage:** The integration of nursery provision within a primary school setting may reduce financial strain, improve access to services, and promote inclusion for families experiencing poverty or deprivation.
- **Environment:** The proposal has a neutral environmental impact, with no significant changes to infrastructure or land use. Opportunities to promote sustainability through efficient use of existing facilities have been noted.

#### **Monitoring and Review:**

The proposal will be reviewed at key stages, including post-consultation, Council decision-making, and post-implementation. Feedback from stakeholders who engaged during the consultation period and assessments by Education Scotland will be used to refine the final report and ensure the proposal reflects stakeholder needs. The final decision will be made by elected members, and if approved, the changes will take effect from August 2026.

#### **Full Impact Assessment:**

A full impact assessment has been conducted, with all sections of the IIA form completed. This ensures that the Council has met its statutory duties and that the proposal is informed by robust evidence, which will involve stakeholder engagement, and a commitment to equity and excellence.

### **Authorisation by Director/Chief Officer/Head of Service**

Name and job title

Michelle Strong, Chief Education Officer, Young People and Partnerships

Date

16/01/2026

Signature

