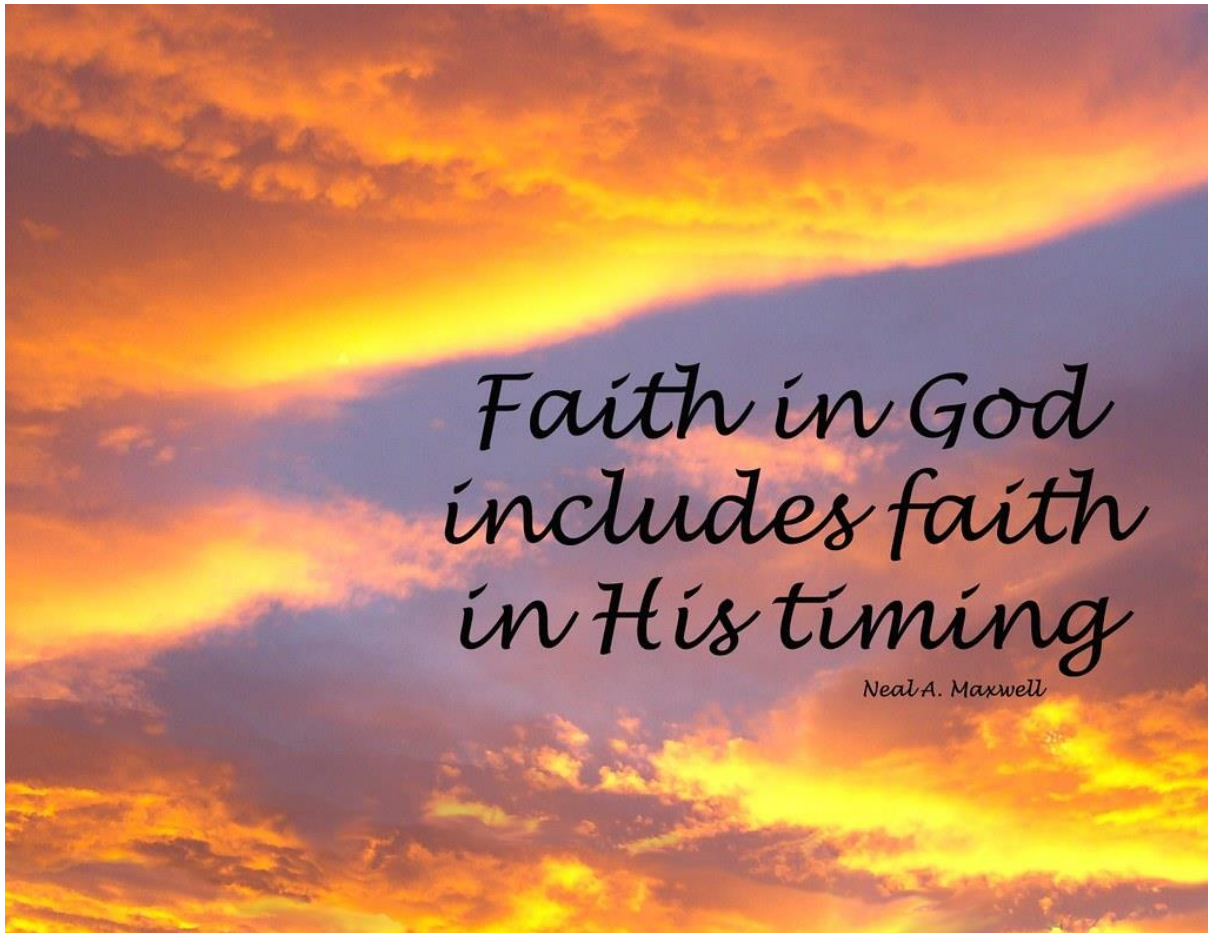


Our Lady's January 2026

A message from Miss Cahill



Dear Parents,

Happy New year!

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and New Year break - I'm sure this is now a distant memory with the excitement of the snow last week.

Thank you all again, for your support, during the difficult weather conditions last week.

Although Christmas is over and we have started a new year we now consider how we can begin the work of Christmas - to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to bring peace and to make music in our hearts. The crib can remain a focal point of our school and home until 2nd February when the season of Christmas in the church concludes with the Presentation of the Lord.

School Association

The school association worked very hard during the Autumn term to facilitate wonderful Christmas activities for the children. We pass on our thanks to them for all their hard work and support of school.

I'm waiting to hear the final amount raised from the Christmas Fair and all the other events so I'll let you know when we get this.

In this Newsletter:

- School uniform reminders
- Communication reminders
- Parking reminders
- Health and Safety
- Blue Sky
- Inspire workshop dates
- Diary dates
- Attendance
- And of course.....a few words from Pope Leo :-)

Thank you all for your continued support.

Best wishes,

Miss Cahill

School Uniform



Our school uniform is listed on page 15 of the children's school planner for your convenience.

- White or sky blue polo shirt or white collared shirt
- Navy school jumper or cardigan
- Dark grey (Not black) trousers, skirt or pinafore dress
- Plain black school shoes
- Plain grey / black / white socks or tights.
- White, black, navy or blue hair accessories

There has been an increase in children wearing trainers to school including black trainers that are being disguised as school shoes - these are not school uniform and the children will be asked to put on PE pumps if they come into school in trainers. During the winter months if children wish to travel to school in trainers and then put on their school shoes when they arrive we can facilitate this. Please ensure your child has the correct shoes for school.

There has also been a few different coloured jumpers / cardigans e.g. black and grey. Please note our school jumper and cardigan should be Navy and other colours are not school uniform.

Our school uniform does not have to include the logo and therefore is widely accessible at supermarkets as well as other vendors at a reasonable cost. Please support us by providing the right school uniform for your child.

If you are struggling to provide uniform/ shoes for your child we do have some items available in school and therefore can support you to ensure your child has the correct uniform. Please contact Mrs Flaherty if you require some support with uniform or shoes.

Communication



Within our school we operate an open door policy and parents/carers are encouraged to make enquiries on any matter, small or large, in person, by email, letter or telephone. Often these enquiries can be dealt with on the spot, although it is sometimes necessary to arrange an appointment to talk the matter through in more detail.

Your child's teacher or the school office will be able to answer most of your questions, and will normally be your first point of contact.

However, the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher are willing to meet with parent/carers to discuss any subject they wish to raise. Please telephone or call in to the school office to make an appointment.

We operate a range of communication strategies to ensure clear, open dialogue between parents and school. Information about forthcoming events, newsletters, educational visits, and diary dates are sent home electronically. Newsletters are also posted onto the school website. Details and reminders of upcoming events are also shared.

The school also uses a standard email system for all communication with parents.

Parents and carers are directed to use the main school office email
enquiry@ourlady's.bham.sch.uk¹ if they do wish to communicate via email.

Parents should be aware that they should not be sending individual staff including the headteacher direct emails. These will not be replied to and staff individual email addresses are for admin purposes only and not parent communication.

Parents should be aware that if the communication is urgent or a child protection and safety issue they contact the school by telephone.

If you need to update your contact details, please contact the school office,

Parking

A reminder that only parents with permission from the headteacher is permitted to use the staff car park. If you have not had a meeting with me about this - you don't have granted permission.

The electric gates are now fixed and working so when these are closed only cars with permission will be admitted. If you 'follow' a car in and don't have permission to be in the car park you will be asked to leave.

Please also continue to be considerate of our neighbours when parking around school for collection and drop off. Please do not block driveways, damage grass areas or park in a way that could be considered a hazard.

Blue Sky

Our new social media platform is 'BlueSky'. This is a very similar platform to X (Twitter).
<https://bsky.app/>

The app is free to download and register for an account.

Some of you expressed an interest for us to have an Instagram / Facebook presence - however we are unable to join this with our current email handles.

Please do have a look at the new BlueSky page for Our Lady's - there will be lots of updates so you can follow what we are up to daily :-)
@ourladystilecross.bsky.social

¹<mailto:enquiry@ourlady's.bham.sch.uk>

Inspire Workshops



Our Inspire workshops are in full swing and I know that Year 1 and year 6 parents have recently attended to work with their children.

A reminder that these opportunities are provided so that you can work with your child rather than a social event with other parents.

Inspire Workshop Future Dates:

- Reception - 4th March 2026
- Year 1 - completed
- Year 2 - 18th March 2026
- Year 3 - 14th January 2026

- Year 4 - 4th February 2026
- Year 5 - 11th February 2026
- Year 6 - completed

"Be weavers of hope, not war." Pope Leo - Epiphany address 2026



In his Epiphany Angelus 2026, Pope Leo XIV reflected on the journey of the Magi and the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. He reminded the faithful to share generously, give everything to Jesus, and replace war with peace. Pope Leo emphasized that true hope is grounded in reality, and that Christ calls us to a life of communion, generosity, and justice.

Health and Safety



Earrings must be removed or covered with a plaster for PE lessons. This is to prevent injury during physical activity. Earrings should be small stud earrings only to comply with our school rules.

In the same way long hair should be always tied back for school and must be tied back for PE lessons or swimming.

Thank you for your understanding.

A reminder that any form of trainers are not correct school uniform shoes. Please ensure your child has school shoes to wear for school.

Holiday requests / Leave in Term Time



Unfortunately, holidays in term time will not be authorised and could result in a referral to the Local Authority where further action may be taken. Children have missed a lot of learning during the pandemic, please only take holidays during the school breaks.

There is updated guidance effective from 19th August 2024 that will have been sent to you - do have a look at the detail (summarised below):

- Increase in fine - From £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days. From £120 to £160 after this 21 days.
- If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at £80.
- Further unauthorised absences within a 3 year period may result in further more serious sanctions eg prosecution.

Thank you, we really appreciate your support in helping your children receive the best learning opportunities that they can.

2025/2026 there have been **30 fines** issued for holidays in term time.

We are on week 17 of the new school year and we are already aware of 10 families taking holidays in term time this term. Holidays in term time are unauthorised and therefore

fines from the council may also follow. Education for our young people is so important - we do understand that holidays are cheaper but please do not take them out of school. Each day missed from education can have a significant impact on the children's progress and attainment.

Attendance



Attendance Period: 02/09/2025 to 8/1/2026

- Reception - 90.99%
- Year 1 - 91.94%
- Year 2 - 92.23%
- Year 3 - 93.70%
- Year 4 - 92.76%
- Year 5 - 91.90%
- Year 6 - 91.91%

None of our year groups are at the targeted 96% attendance.

Whole school - **92.20% Declining!**

Our whole school target is 96%

We already have over 40 children in school whose attendance is below 90%!

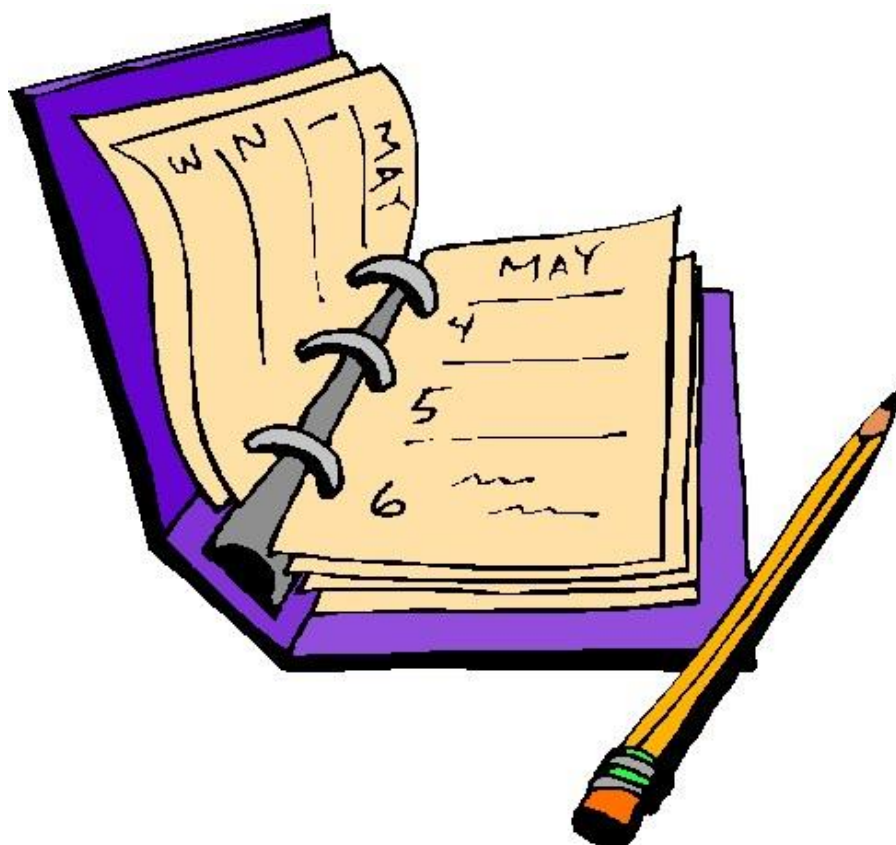
96% is equivalent to missing 8 days of education across the year - it is vital that your children are here so that they can learn! Every day matters!

Nut Free



A reminder that we are a **nut-free school** as we have children and staff with severe nut allergies. Please check ingredients of snacks and lunch items before you send them into school.

Diary Dates



Wed 14th Jan - Year 3 Inspire Workshop

Thurs 22nd Jan - Year 6 Parent Confirmation meeting @ 2.45pm in school

Wed 28th Jan - Year 6 visit to St Chad's

Wed 4th Feb - Year 4 Inspire Workshop

Wed 11th Feb - Year 5 Inspire Workshop

Mon 16th Feb - Fri 20th Feb February Half Term

Mon 23rd Feb - Teacher Training Day - school closed to pupils

Tues 24th Feb - School re-open to pupils/staff

Thurs 26th Feb - Year 6 Confirmation 6.30pm Our Lady Help of Christians

School Year 2025 to 2026

Autumn Term 2025

Term starts: Monday 1 September 2025

Half-term: Monday 27 October 2025 to Friday 31 October 2025

Term ends: Friday 19 December 2025

Spring Term 2026

Term starts: Monday 5 January 2026

Half-term: Monday 16 February 2026 to Friday 20 February 2026

Term ends: Friday 27 March 2026

Summer Term 2026

Term starts: Monday 13 April 2026

Half-term: Monday 25 May 2026 to Friday 29 May 2026

Term ends: Monday 20 July 2026

Inset Days 2025/26

- Monday 1st September
- Friday 24th October
- Monday 5th January
- Monday 23rd February
- Monday 1st June
- Monday 20th July

child off school?



Yes

Until...

Chickenpox	at least 5 days from the onset of the rash and until all blisters have crusted over
Diarrhoea and Vomiting	48 hours after their last episode
Cold and Flu-like illness (including COVID-19)	they no longer have a high temperature and feel well enough to attend. Follow the national guidance if they've tested positive for COVID-19.
Impetigo	their sores have crusted and healed, or 48 hours after they started antibiotics
Measles	4 days after the rash first appeared
Mumps	5 days after the swelling started
Scabies	they've had their first treatment
Scarlet Fever	24 hours after they started taking antibiotics
Whooping Cough	48 hours after they started taking antibiotics

No

but make sure you let their school or nursery know about...

Hand, foot and mouth	Glandular fever
Head lice	Tonsillitis
Threadworms	Slapped cheek



SCAN ME

Advice and guidance

To find out more, search for **health protection in schools** or scan the QR code or visit <https://qrco.de/minfec>.