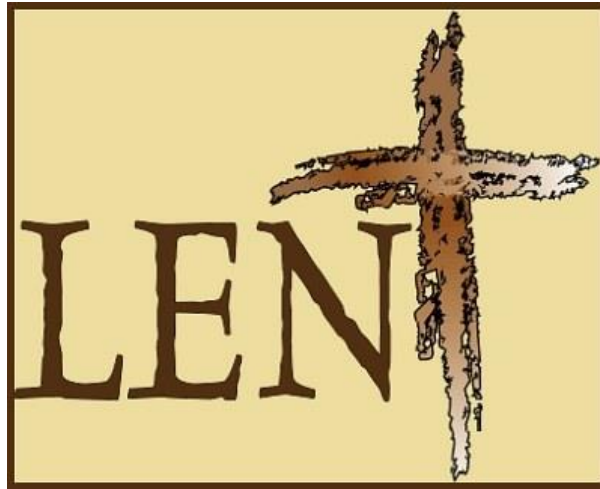


Our Lady's February 2026

## A message from Miss Cahill



Dear Parents,

I hope you had a lovely half term break.

As we return to school we are now within the season of Lent. The season where we prepare for Christ's ultimate sacrifice to save us from sin on Good Friday and his Resurrection and the joy of salvation of Easter Sunday.

Although this half term is short one it is filled with very special events for our school.

- Year 6 Confirmation Thursday 26th February
- Whole School Lenten retreat day - Thursday 5th March
- Year 3 First Reconciliation Tuesday 10th March - 6pm
- World book day - celebrating on Thursday 12th March
- Year 6 Thank you Mass - Friday 13th March
- Parents Evening - Tuesday 17th March and Thursday 19th March
- In school Holy Week celebrations - Week beginning 25th March

### **Parents Evening**

Parents evening appointments will 'go live' for booking from Wednesday 25th February and will remain open until Friday 13th March.

Please book one appointment per child to see your child's class teacher. If you require any additional appointments please contact the school office or Mrs Flaherty who will be able to help you.

During these appointments your child's teacher will update you on the academic progress of your child so far this year with a focus on RE, English Writing & Reading and Maths.

### **Miss Hughes**

Miss Hughes is having a baby and will be starting her maternity leave at the end of this term. We wish Miss Hughes and her partner well and pray for the safe arrival of their new baby.

Miss Clarke will be joining us from Easter and will be the class teacher for Reception while Miss Hughes is on maternity leave. Many of you will remember and know Miss Clarke as she has worked at Our Lady's previously. I'm sure you will join me in wishing Miss Hughes well and welcoming back Miss Clarke.

### **Parent Conduct**

Recent weeks have seen two incidents in which parents directed verbally abusive language toward members of our staff. This behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Our team deserves to work in an environment of mutual respect, and we ask all parents and carers to support this by communicating in a calm and constructive manner at all times.

While we understand that emotions can run high at times, such conduct is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Our staff work hard to support every child and family, and they have the right to feel safe and respected in their workplace.

### **In this Newsletter:**

- School uniform 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.**

## Parking

Since my last newsletter we have experienced continued issues regarding parental access to the car park. May I remind all parents that this is a staff car park and therefore private. Only parents with permission from the headteacher are permitted to use the staff car park. If you have not had a meeting with me about this - you don't have granted permission.

That being said it is expected that all parents who use this car park and have agreed access treat staff with respect and courtesy when doing so.

All other schools in our MAC do not allow any parents to use their staff car park - if the problems persist we will be forced to review our access and consider whether we continue to allow this.

**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**

## 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 - Rearranged date:

- Year 4 - Completed
- Year 5 - Rearranged date:
- Year 6 - completed

### A word from Pope Leo....



**'I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbour. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.'**

Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV for Lent 2026, 13.02.2026

In his message for Lent, Pope Leo XIV asks us to fast from words that offend. This is a wonderful instruction that can make our world a kinder and more respectful world to live in. Sometimes our children and parents can use inappropriate language towards others - maybe

we can be mindful of the Pope's message and encouragement this Lent and use words of respect to communicate our feelings.

## 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 **34 fines** issued for holidays in term time.

## Attendance



Attendance Period: 02/09/2025 to 13/2/2026

- Reception - 90.34%
- Year 1 - 91.61%
- Year 2 - 92.40%
- Year 3 - 93.16%
- Year 4 - 92.87%
- Year 5 - 91.05%
- Year 6 - 92.21%

**None of our year groups are at, or close to, the targeted 96% attendance.**

Whole school - **91.94%**

Our whole school target is 96%

We have recently issued letters to families informing you of your child's attendance and making you aware if your child's attendance is becoming an issue.

In school we currently have **19 children that have below 80% attendance** - this is classed as persistent absentee and even if these children attend every day for the rest of the year they will remain in that category as they have had in excess of 18 days absence this year.

**We have a total of 58 children who are currently below 90% attendance.**

We have a total of 130 children who are below our school target of 96% attendance at this stage of the year.

**Put quite simply this is not good enough!**

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!

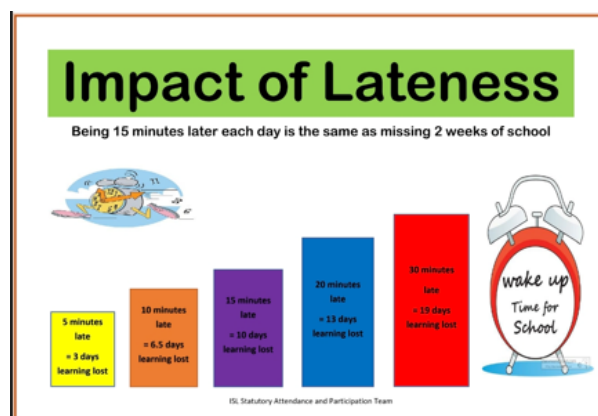
A child with 90% attendance at this stage of the year has missed approx 10 days of education already. If they remain in school everyday for the rest of the academic year their end of year attendance will be around 95% but any more time off will result in this lower attendance.

The children who are already at 80% attendance cannot now get out of being categorised as a persistent absentee.

Birmingham local authority ask us to follow very specific guidelines and procedures for attendance and this is what we are doing.

Please see the impact of late arrival to school. Please ensure your child is here between 8.35 and 8.45am so they are ready to start their learning with the rest of their class.

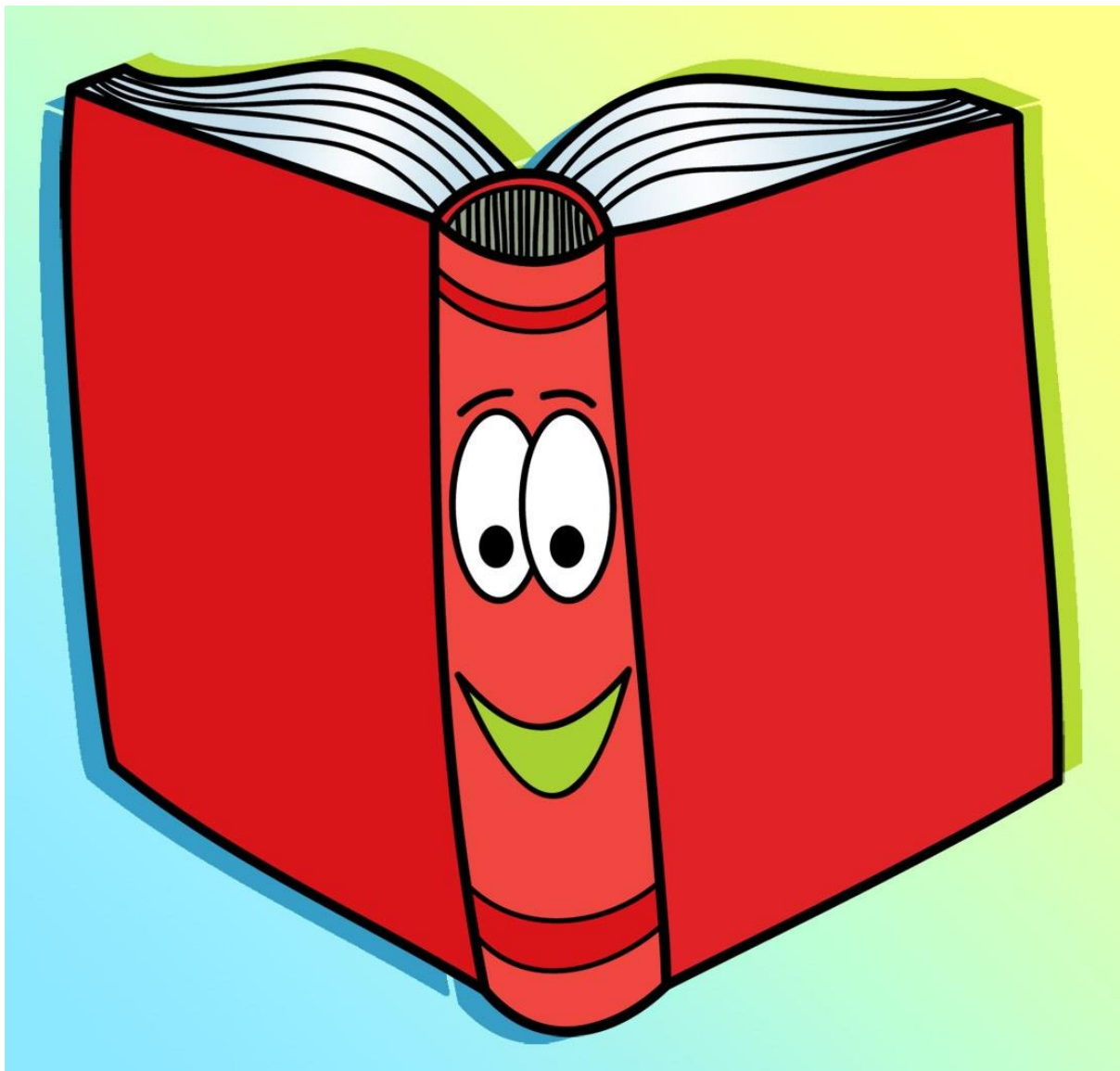
Being 15 mins late every day is the same as missing 2 weeks of school!



*1 - Please see the impact of late arrival to school. Please ensure your child is here between 8.35 and 8.45am so they are ready to start their learning with the rest of their class.*

*Being 15 mins late every day is the same as missing 2 weeks of school!*

## World Book day



We will be celebrating World Book day on Thursday 12th March. More information will follow about this.

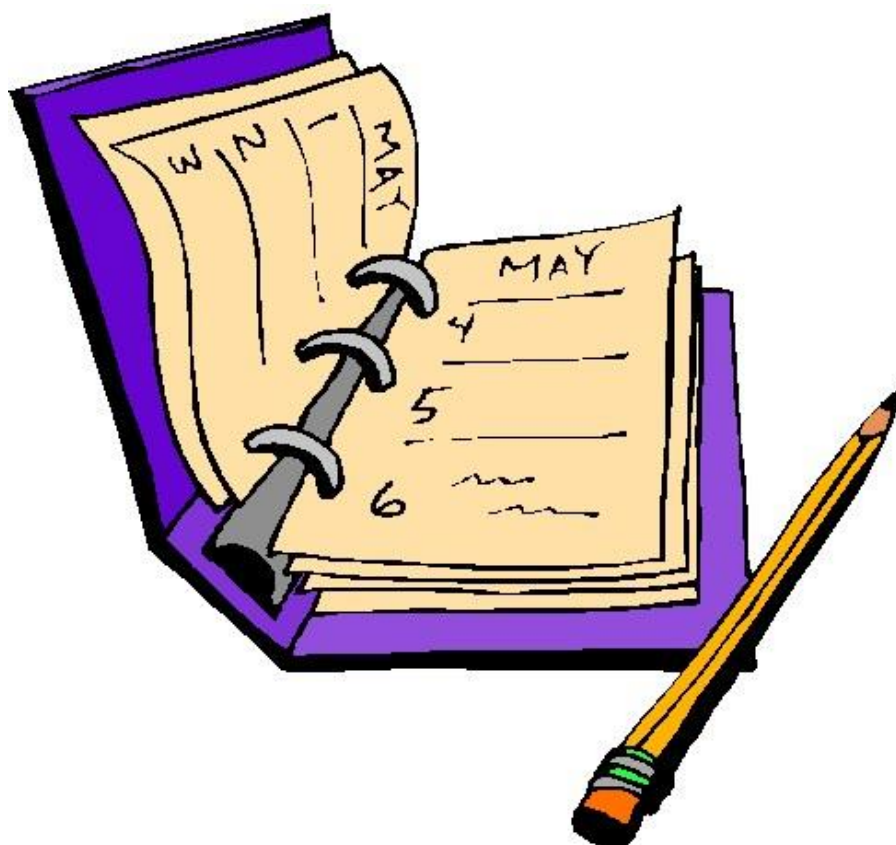
Next Thursday 5th March we have a whole school retreat for the season of Lent. The children will still enjoy a World book day themed lunch from our kitchen next week.

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



**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

Wed 4th March - Year 6 Online Safety Workshop for parents and pupils @ 2pm

Tues 10th March - Year 3 1st Reconciliation in Church @ 6pm

Wed 11th March - Year 5 Online Safety Workshop for parents and pupils @ 2pm

Thurs 12th March - World Book Day

Tues 17th March - **Parents Evening**

Wed 18th March - Year 2 Inspire Workshop

Wed 18th March - Year 4 Healthy Sleep Workshop @ 2pm

Thurs 19th March - **Parents Evening**

Wed 25th March - Year 4 Online Safety Workshop for parents and pupils @ 2pm

Fri 27th March - **NO MASS in school**

Fri 27th March - **School Closing for Easter Holidays (2 weeks)**

Mon 13th April - **School re-opens for pupils and staff**

## **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>.