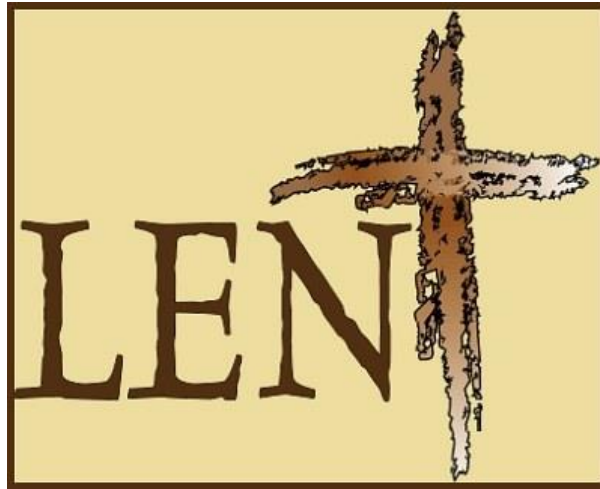


Our Lady's March 2026

## A message from Miss Cahill



Dear Parents,

As we are within the fourth week of Lent - I hope this season is bringing you peace as we prepare for the celebration of Easter.

As I shared in the February newsletter this is a short half term but is packed with wonderful events.

- 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**

Thank you all for attending Parents evening this week - I hope you all had a good opportunity to discuss your child's academic progress with your child's teacher.

Thank you, also, to those parents who have completed the Online Catholic Life questionnaire. This has received an overwhelming positive response. We are proud of the Catholic Education we provide here at Our Lady's and we are pleased that you as parents also value and support this.

### **Gates**

A reminder that our gates are closed at 8.45am and 3.25pm following school drop off and collection. If the gates are closed and you are still on site you will be required to exit via the main school entrance.

### **Breakfast club**

I recently shared via email that after Easter we are part of the DFE free 30 min breakfast club provision which all children are entitled to access. Further information and booking links and within this newsletter.

### **Easter Break**

We break up for Easter on **Friday 27th March**. There will be an option, as usual, for an early collection to mark the end of term. You can collect your child at **1.30pm** or at **3.15pm** as normal. The gates will be open from **1.25 - 1.40pm** for facilitate this early collection.

Easter weekend and the Sacred Triduum is central to our faith and the most important celebration of the church's year - even more so than Christmas. Please try to attend mass over this very important weekend.

- Holy Mass Maundy Thursday 7pm
- Good Friday Service 3pm
- Holy Saturday Easter Vigil 8pm (check local churches for exact times)
- Easter Sunday Mass Mass 9.30am

### **School Association events - Summer Term 2026**

- Thursday 16th April - Easter Hair Day - £1 per child (This can be a hair style or Easter Bonnet / headwear)
- Thursday 23rd April - St George's Day - wear red / white £1 per child
- Monday 18th May - Go Wild day - celebration day following Year 6 SATs - more information will follow from school association
- 5p challenge - each class will be collecting 5ps during the Summer half term - these will be lined up and measured on Friday 22nd May and the winning class declared.
- Friday 10th July - Summer Fair 2pm - 4.30pm - more information will follow
- Wednesday 15th July - Leavers Disco - Key stage 2 3.15pm - 4.30pm
- Talent shows are also being planned - watch this space!

### **In this Newsletter:**

- 30 min Free Breakfast club

- Healthy Lunchbox
- Blue Sky
- Diary dates
- Attendance
- And of course.....a few words from Pope Leo :-)

Thank you all for your continued support.

*Best wishes,*

*Miss Cahill*

## Free Breakfast Club



Our wrap-around care that we offer at Our Lady's is facing a difficult time with constant rising costs and falling numbers. We are in a position where, unfortunately, we would have to raise the cost for our breakfast club provision from April 2026.

To try and support our parents with these costs, we are pleased to let you know that our school, from April, will be part of the National Free Breakfast Club Scheme.

As a result, all children are able to access **30 minutes of free breakfast provision from 8.15am to 8.45am** each morning.

Children who currently attend our paid Breakfast Club will automatically have a place within this new scheme.

Breakfast Club Fees for the summer term will be adjusted to reflect the free 30-minute session and these have already been shared with you.

If your child does not currently attend the Breakfast Club, but you would like them to access the free breakfast club session (8.15 - 8.45am), you will need to book a place using the form linked below. This form will be sent out weekly, and a booking must be made each week for your child to attend. Unfortunately, children who are not booked in will not be able to join the session. This system helps us ensure we have the correct staffing ratios and enough food for all attending pupils. All the forms for the Summer 1 half-term are linked below in this email and are open for bookings.

Access to the Breakfast Club will be **via the hall doors located within the car park**. Please note that **the car park will not be open for parent use during this time**, so we ask that you walk your child to the hall doors for drop-off. This ensures the safety of all.

As part of the national scheme, children will be offered toast during the free breakfast session.

### **Free Breakfast Club Booking forms Summer 1 8.15-8.45am**

Week beginning 13<sup>1</sup>th<sup>2</sup> April<sup>3 4</sup>

Week beginning 20<sup>5</sup>th<sup>6</sup> April<sup>7 8</sup>

Week Beginning 27<sup>9</sup>th<sup>10</sup> April<sup>11 12</sup>

Week beginning 4<sup>13</sup>th<sup>14</sup> May<sup>15</sup>

Week beginning 11<sup>16</sup>th<sup>17</sup> May<sup>18</sup>

Week beginning 18<sup>19</sup>th<sup>20</sup> May<sup>21 22</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://forms.office.com/e/EL0QBvhVcT>

<sup>2</sup><https://forms.office.com/e/EL0QBvhVcT>

<sup>3</sup><https://forms.office.com/e/EL0QBvhVcT>

<sup>4</sup><https://forms.office.com/e/EL0QBvhVcT>

<sup>5</sup><https://forms.office.com/e/u99iMM044L>

<sup>6</sup><https://forms.office.com/e/u99iMM044L>

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<sup>19</sup><https://forms.office.com/e/kub3uXs1T3>

Thank you for your support as we introduce this new provision. We hope it will be a helpful and positive addition to your child's school day.

## Healthy Lunchbox

### Healthy Lunchboxes at Our Lady's

To help support our pupils' wellbeing and encourage healthy eating habits, we kindly ask parents and carers to follow our lunchbox guidance. A balanced meal helps children stay focused, energised, and ready to learn throughout the school day.

#### Please avoid including the following items:

- **Fried crisps** Instead, consider healthier alternatives such as *baked* or *air-popped* options, **vegetable crisps**, rice cakes, or wholegrain crackers.
- **Chocolate bars or sweets**
- **Sandwiches with sweet fillings** such as chocolate spread or jam.

#### Healthy lunchbox ideas include:

- Fresh fruit or chopped veggie sticks
- Wholemeal sandwiches or wraps with savoury fillings (e.g., cheese, ham, tuna, hummus, or egg)
- Yogurt (low-sugar options preferred)
- Water/ low sugar juice or squash as the main drink

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<sup>20</sup><https://forms.office.com/e/kub3uXs1T3>

<sup>21</sup><https://forms.office.com/e/kub3uXs1T3>

<sup>22</sup><https://forms.office.com/e/kub3uXs1T3>

## 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.

## 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](https://bsky.app/profile/ourladystilecross.bsky.social)

A word from Pope Leo....

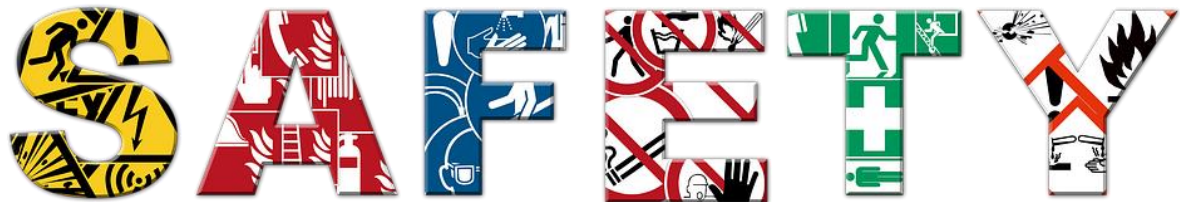


**Let us strive to make our communities places where the cry of those who suffer finds welcome, and listening opens paths towards liberation, making us ready and eager to contribute to building a civilization of love.**

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

In his message for Lent, Pope Leo XIV asks us to see with our heart and consider how we can help others during this season of Lent.

## 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 19/03/2026

- Reception - 90.35%
- Year 1 - 91.75%
- Year 2 - 92.95%
- Year 3 - 93.46%
- Year 4 - 93.72%
- Year 5 - 91.41%
- Year 6 - 92.85%

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

Whole school - 92.35%

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!

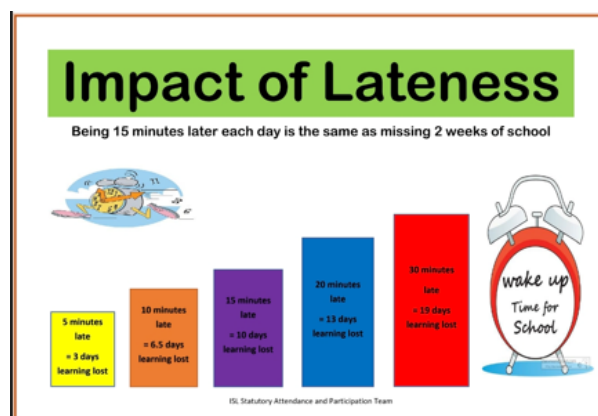
A child with 90% attendance at this stage of the year has missed approx 10 days of education already. If they remain in school everyday for the rest of the academic year their end of year attendance will be around 95% but any more time off will result in this lower attendance.

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.

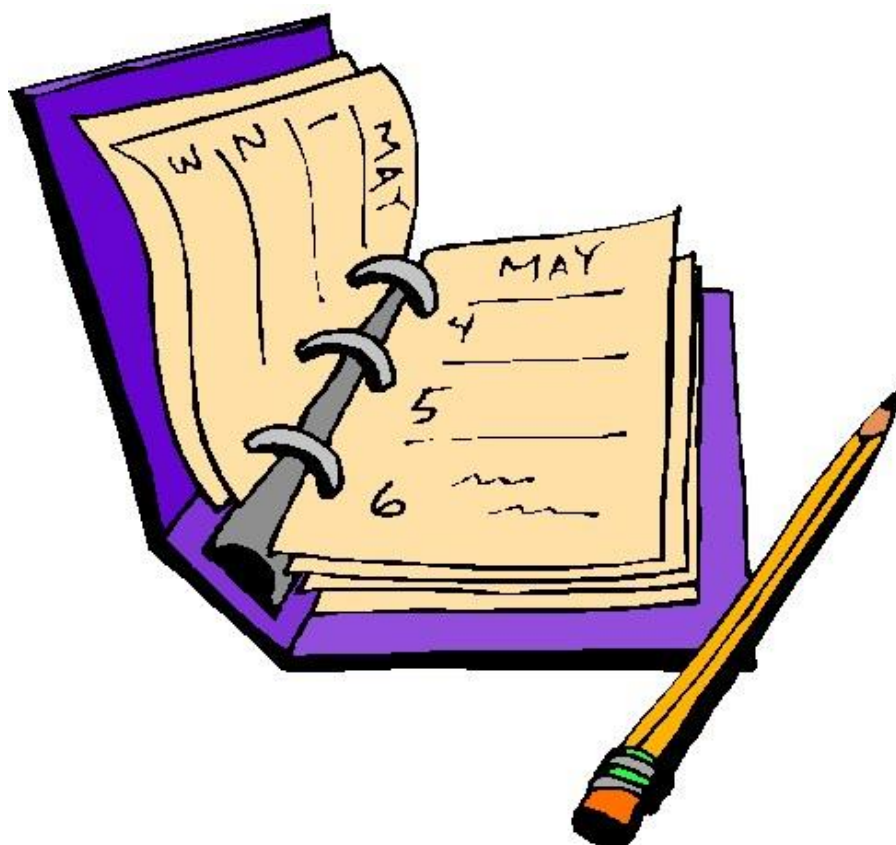
Being 15 mins late every day is the same as missing 2 weeks of school!



*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!*

## Diary Dates



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) Early collection option 1.30pm or 3.15pm.**

Mon 13th April - **School re-opens for pupils and staff 8.35am**

Thurs 16th April - Easter Hair Day £1 per child

Tues 21st April - Year 2 / Year 3 Trip to Birmingham Think Tank

Thurs 23rd April - St George's Day - wear red and white £1 per child

Fri 24th April - Choir visit to the Irish Centre

Thurs 30th April - Good Shepherd Mass @ St Chad's

**Mon 4th May - May Day Bank Holiday - school closed**

**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>.