

Our Lady's May 2026

A message from Miss Cahill



Dear Parents,

How are we already at May half term! What a wonderful half term this has been in school. We have had lots of wonderful moments of joy in the middle the wonderful learning that happens every day at Our Lady's.

It seems a long time since we sent out a newsletter - that's because most of April incorporated the Easter break. We are still in Eastertide until we celebrate Pentecost this weekend so Happy Easter!

School Association

Thank you to the school association for organising the Easter Bonnet parades, Go Wild day and the 5p challenge this half term. They will let us know the total raised in due course.

Lots of children have expressed interest in the Talent show and the school association will provide further information about this.

SATS

Year 6 have now completed their SATs tests - they have worked very hard towards these examinations to show the best they can be. We are very proud of your hard work and resilience. Thank you to Mrs Roberts, Mrs Duffy, Ms Green and all the staff who helped and supported them.

Breakfast club

I recently shared via email the booking links for the free Breakfast club available to all children every day from 8.15 - 8.45am. Please do register your child for these so that we can cater accordingly for food and drinks.

May Half term

We break up for May half term this Friday 22nd May at the normal time of 3.15pm. A reminder that Monday 1st June is an INSET day so we will see the children back on Tuesday 2nd June from 8.35am. Wishing you all a wonderful break.

Faith Events

We have enjoyed our weekly mass in school and in recent weeks it has been lovely to welcome back Br Andrew from his retreat and work in Thailand - we can't wait to hear more about his adventures. Year 2 led a beautiful mass for the Ascension of the Lord which was so well supported - thank you! On Friday we had our beautiful May procession in honour of our school's Patron Our Lady. The cooler weather didn't dismay us - we prayed and sang and processed in her name. Each child received a small Our Lady to help them to remind and help them to pray. Thank you to the parents and families who joined us for this.

In this Newsletter:

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

Thank you all for your continued support. Have a wonderful half term break.

Best wishes,

Miss Cahill

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

Attendance - New Ofsted Framework



Good attendance is one of the most important factors in a child's success at school. Under the Ofsted 2025 framework, attendance remains a key indicator of a school's effectiveness, reflecting not only pupils' engagement with learning but also the strength of the partnership between home and school.

Children who attend regularly are more likely to achieve well academically, build strong friendships, and develop positive routines that support lifelong learning.

At present, our school attendance is below the national average, which places us in the 'needs attention' category. This is not where we want to be, and improving attendance is a shared responsibility between school and families.

We understand that children will sometimes be unwell. However, if a child is slightly under the weather but able to manage the school day, we encourage parents to send them in. Once in school, we will always monitor them and do everything we can to ensure they are comfortable and supported - we will only send them home if we feel it is absolutely necessary.

Often, children perk up once they are in a familiar routine with their friends. There have been occasions where parents are told by the child that they were more 'unwell' in school than they actually appeared. Our staff are considerate and kind and will always respond if they can see that a child is unwell and needs to go home. To further support with this we have purchased additional thermometers so that we can check children's temp and report this information to home as needed.

A significant factor affecting our current attendance is children being kept at home longer than necessary after minor illnesses, or being absent when it is not essential.

In addition, term-time holidays have a noticeable impact. While we appreciate the importance of family time, absence during term time means children miss valuable learning that cannot easily be replaced.

Every day in school truly counts.

Even a few days missed can make it harder for children to keep up with their work and can affect their confidence. Small gaps quickly add up over time.

We ask all parents and carers to support us by:

- Ensuring children attend school every day unless they are genuinely too unwell.
- Encouraging routines that promote punctuality and readiness for learning.
- Avoiding booking holidays during term time.
- Keeping absences to an absolute minimum.

By working together, we can improve our attendance, meet national expectations, and most importantly, give every child the best possible chance to thrive.

Thank you for your continued support.

A word from Pope Leo....



God will ask us if we have cultivated and cared for the world that he created for the benefit of all and for future generations, and if we have taken care of our brothers and sisters - what will be our answer, my dear friends?

POPE LEO XIV

What would you answer be to Pope Francis?

Our children are concerned about our world and especially the litter in our local area. Together we can make a difference. Please put your own litter in the bin and support each other and Pope Leo in our mission to care for and protect our world.

Attendance



Attendance Period: 02/09/2025 to 15/05/2026

- Reception - 90.81%
- Year 1 - 91.77%
- Year 2 - 94.30%
- Year 3 - 93.20%
- Year 4 - 94.24%
- Year 5 - 91.46%
- Year 6 - 93.38%

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

Whole school -

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.

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!

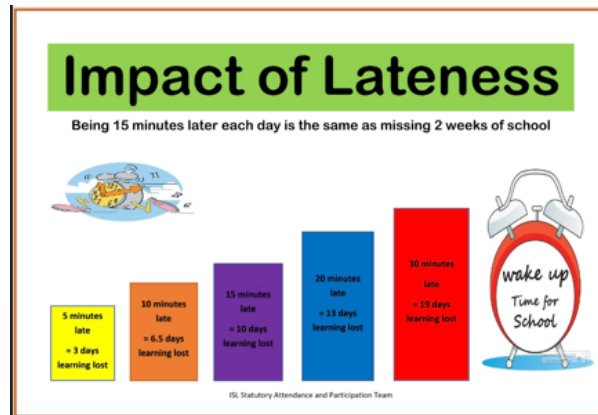
A child with 90% attendance at this stage of the year has missed approx 15 days of education already.

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!



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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.

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)

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.

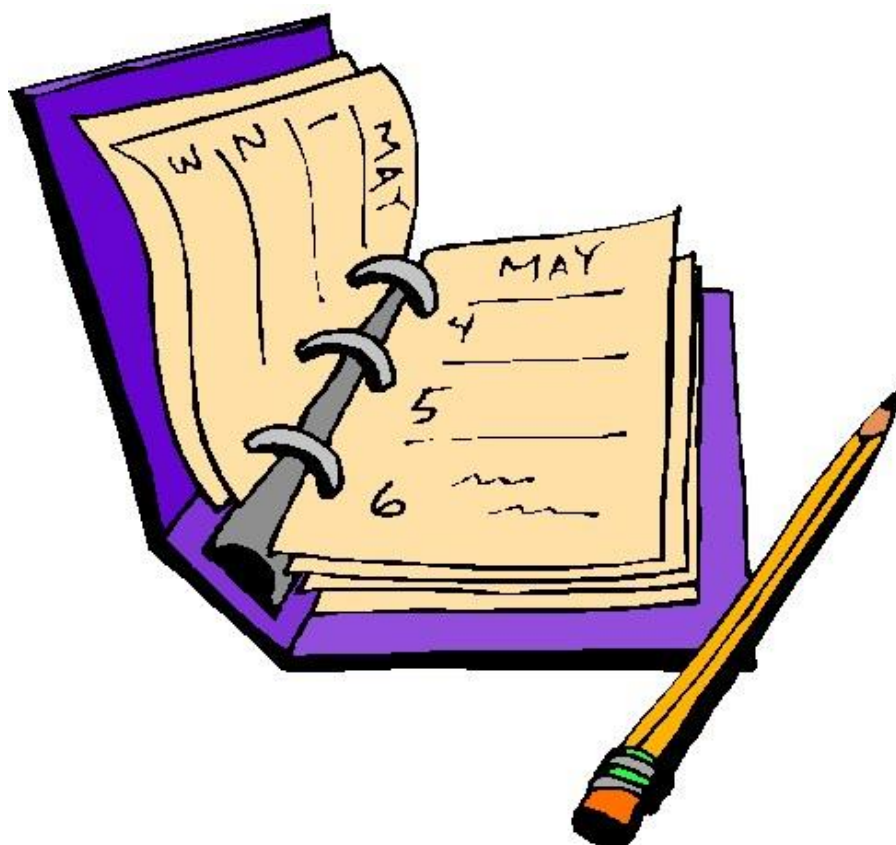
Thank you for your understanding.

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

Walls outside of school

A number of children are standing on, climbing on the walls outside school - especially those by the St Giles gate entrance. This is a concern - parents please discourage your child from doing this. If you arrive at school before the gates are open remember we have access to our free breakfast club from 8.15am.

Diary Dates



25th May - 29th May Half Term holiday

Mon 1st June - Inset Day school closed to pupils

Tues 9th June - Yr4 and Yr6 trip to Conkers

Wed 10th June - Induction meeting for New EYFS cohort @ 4.45pm

Thurs 18th June - Sports Day @ Shirestone playfields - weather permitting

Tues 23rd June - Sports Day back up date

Thurs 25th June - Yr6 Visit to Oscott College

Tues 30th June - Yr3 Bikeability (KS2 playground)

Yr6 Transition day 1 @ JHNCC

Home visits for new EYFS pupils

Wed 1st July - Yr3 Bikeability

Yr6 Transition day 2 @ JHNCC

Home visits for new EYFS pupils

- Thurs 2nd July - Yr3 Bikeability
Breadmaking + Yr2 parents (Aspens)
- Tues 7th July - New EYFS Stay and Play sessions
- Fri 10th July - Summer Fayre
- Tues 14th July - New EYFS Orientation Session
Choir Trip to Symphony Hall
- Wed 15th July - KS2 Disco 3.30pm - 4.30pm
- Fri 17th July - Last day of the Summer Term**

School Year 2025 to 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 remaining:

- Monday 1st June
- Monday 20th July

School Year 2026 to 2027

Autumn Term 2026

Term starts: Tuesday 1 September 2026

Half-term: Monday 26 October 2026 to Friday 30 October 2026

Term ends: Friday 18 December 2026

Spring Term 2027

Term starts: Monday 4 January 2027

Half-term: Monday 15 February 2027 to Friday 19 February 2027

Term ends: Thursday 25 March 2027

Summer Term 2027

Term starts: Monday 12 April 2027

Half-term: Monday 31 May 2027 to Friday 4 June 2027

Term ends: Wednesday 21 July 2027

INSET days 2026-27

Tuesday 1st September 2026

Monday 2nd November 2026

Monday 4th January 2027

Friday 12th February 2027

Friday 28th May 2027

Monday 12th July 2027

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>.