



Our Lady Catholic Primary School

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PRAYER FOR THE START OF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR



God of wisdom and might,

*We praise you for the wonder of our being,
For mind, body and spirit.*

Be with our children as they begin a new school year.

Bless them and their teachers and staff.

Give the strength and grace as their bodies grow;

Wisdom and knowledge to their minds as they search for understanding;

And peace and zeal to their hearts.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Friday 6th September, 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you all had a peaceful and restful summer. It was lovely to welcome all the children back to school on Tuesday morning after the long summer holidays that have just passed. Looking at the school community together again throughout this first week of the new academic year is always so inspiring for us all to see. The staff team have been so impressed with the children's attitude since their return and, in our assembly earlier on in the week, it was made very clear to the children that we will all need to work together and try our very best every day! Every child can do amazing things and it is our job to help make this potential a reality. Our overall goal is simple – to ensure that each and every child develops their full potential to become the very best that they can be. I look forward to working together with our wonderfully supportive school community to ensure that this becomes a reality this year!

As key educators in your children's lives, I feel that it is important that you feel you have a voice and that, as a school, we are approachable and allocate time to listen to your concerns, worries or thoughts about any aspect of school life. We will be holding half-termly coffee mornings, in which parents and carers can chat to both myself, members of the senior leadership team and our Family Support Worker in order to keep the communication channels firmly open.

Our very first coffee morning of the autumn term will take place from **8.50am** on **Thursday 24th October** in the school hall. It would be a lovely way to welcome many of our new families into our school community and to get to know each other in a more informal way. We look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

Beginning of Term Mass:



Our mass to celebrate the start of the new school year will take place on **Friday 13th September** at **9.15am**. The mass will take place in the school hall and it would be wonderful to see as many of you as possible there to celebrate the start of this new term with us.

Our School Community:



Over the course of this first week back, we have been delighted to welcome all of our Nursery and Reception children into school. We are eagerly looking forward to helping all of our new children (and families) settle into life at Our Lady's as quickly as possible. I am sure you will join me in helping to make all of our new families feel very welcome and part of the school community. Parents and carers are warmly invited to join us for our special Welcome Service for our Nursery and Reception families, which will take place in the school hall at **9.15am** on **Friday 27th September**. We look forward to seeing you there!

Home-School Agreement 2024/25:



At Our Lady Catholic Primary School, it is our aim to work in partnership with our parents and carers to ensure that every child is supported with their learning and is encouraged to achieve their full potential - both inside and outside of the classroom.

At the start of this new academic year, I would like you to carefully read our Home School Agreement for 2024/25 (which is attached).

The aim of the agreement is to provide us all with an agreed framework through which your child can fulfil their full potential while at our school. The agreement, which will help to further strengthen our home school links, highlights the importance of the school, the parents and the children working together to achieve the very best outcomes.

I would like you to read through the Home School Agreement with your child and ask that all children and parents sign the agreement, along with a school signature, so that we are all working in partnership to improve standards within an environment of trust.

I would be grateful if you can sign the relevant sections and return to the school office by **Monday 16th September** at the latest. A copy of the Home-School Agreement can be also downloaded from our school website.

Class Code of Conduct and Behaviour Contracts:



During the course of this first week back at school, the children have been working with the staff to create a class code of conduct. They have also signed a class behaviour contract, which states that each child agrees to follow the rules and guidelines set out in the class code. These will be displayed prominently in each classroom.

Curriculum Information:



Curriculum overviews of the topics that your child will be studying will be handed out to parents next week and will also be available on the school website. Throughout the summer, we have continued to work hard to make further improvements to our school curriculum to make sure that your children receive a high-quality education that puts them on a path to future success.

As always, there will also be an opportunity for you to meet your child's class teacher to find out about the forthcoming year. In order to enable parents with more than one child at the school to attend all relevant meetings, we have planned for these to take place on different days. The meetings will take place at the following times:

Year 6	Tuesday 10 th September	3.00pm – 3.15pm
Year 5	Wednesday 11 th September	3.00pm – 3.15pm
Year 4	Thursday 12 th September	3.00pm – 3.15pm
Year 3	Friday 13 th September	3.00pm – 3.15pm
Year 2	Tuesday 17 th September	3.00pm – 3.15pm
Year 1	Wednesday 18 th September	3.00pm – 3.15pm

Secondary Transfer Meeting:



We have arranged a Secondary Transfer information meeting on **Tuesday 24th September** at **9.00am** in the school hall. The meeting will be attended by Mr. Declan Linnane, the Headteacher from Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School. The procedures for secondary school admission will be explained in this meeting, so it is very important that you attend if you have a child in Year 6.

Prior to this, on **Tuesday 17th September**, we are delighted to welcome the Headteacher of the John Henry Newman School, Mr. David Carrasco-Morley, to Our Lady's. Mr. Carrasco-Morley will be meeting with our Year 6 children and talking to them about life at secondary school. Even though it is relatively early in the academic year, we feel that this will strongly help to ensure for a smooth transition for our pupils from Year 6 to Year 7 next September.

Social Media:



I just wanted to remind parents and careers that our school 'X' account (the artist formerly known as 'Twitter') and our Facebook page provides daily updates of any key news and events that may be happening. We also share a 'Thought for the Day' each morning to start your day with encouragement, inspiration, wisdom and ponderings from people of all walks of life. To follow us on 'X', please use **@OurLadySchWGC** or follow the link on the school website. To follow us on Facebook, search '**Our Lady Catholic Primary School**'.

Attendance:

At Our Lady Catholic Primary school, we think it is very important that all our pupils benefit from 190 days learning to ensure that he or she makes progress and achieves his or her very best. We ask you to support the school by ensuring your child achieves excellent attendance and punctuality.

- We ***strongly advise parents not to request holidays during term time***. If you have an exceptional reason you may apply in advance, however, permission may not be given and the school's decision is final.
- We ***expect pupils to arrive at school on time between 8.40am and 8.50am***. Late arrivals disrupt the education of others and cause embarrassment to your child/children. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked late in the register and ***minutes late recorded as unauthorised absence***.
- ***Medical and dental appointments*** should be made in the holidays or after school unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- ***If you or your child is having difficulties*** that impact on his or her attendance, please make an appointment with a member of staff to discuss how we can help.

Absences of more than eight days in the whole academic year, will drop your child's attendance to below the expected National Average of 96%. Of course, there are exceptional reasons why children are absent from school. However occasional days are detrimental to your child's progress. Please ensure that you call the school by **8.30am** if your child is going to be absent from school so that we can note this in the register. **If not, please expect to receive a phone call from our office team, throughout the morning.**

Please note, the Education Welfare Service may issue parents with a Formal Warning, an Education Penalty Notice (EPN) or decide to prosecute if your child is persistently absent with 10 or more half days of unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term. If you are issued with an EPN, you risk receiving a fine from Hertfordshire County Council of £160 if paid within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

Fines are also issued for unauthorised term time leave to each parent for each absent child. Failure to pay the notice can also result in a parent being prosecuted for their child's non-attendance at school for the period in the notice. A copy of our attendance policy is available to read on our school website and Hertfordshire Council's 'Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence' is available to read in the on Hertfordshire Council's Website: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence.aspx#:~:text=The%20pupil%20must%20have%20at,could%20stop%20any%20more%20absences>.

Uniform:

Just a reminder that our school uniform can be purchased from 'Smarty Schoolwear' - either in store (in Hatfield) or on-line on the following website: <https://www.smartyschoolwear.co.uk/>

Please ensure that your child's school uniform consists of the following:

- Navy sweatshirt or cardigan with school logo on.
- Sky blue polo shirt with school logo on.
- Grey trousers/skirt/or pinafore dress.
- Light blue and white checked dress (summer)
- Tights should be navy or grey.
- Black school shoes; no trainers, boots, high heels, sandals.

Ideally there should be no jewellery worn at school. If jewellery is worn, please take note of the following guidelines:

- Small plain studs, one in each ear.
- Small watches (at your own risk).
- No logos or shapes in boys' hair.
- All girls with hair below the shoulders must be tied back.
- Hair bands; light blue or navy scrunchies or elastic bands.
- No make-up or nail varnish.



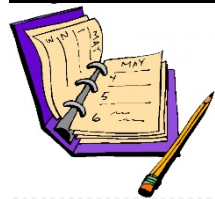
PE Kits:

We ask children to arrive at school in their PE kits on the days that they have PE. PE kits should be as follows:

- White T-shirt with our school logo.
- Navy shorts (navy jogging trousers for the colder months).
- Black plimsolls/trainers.

Thank you for your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

Key Dates for the Calendar:



A list of key dates for the autumn term has been included in this letter for your reference. Further information about the school will also be uploaded onto our school website and in our newsletters throughout the term. I have also attached a copy of our term dates for the academic year ahead for your reference. I hope you find these useful.

Please note that the first day back after the Christmas holidays will be **Tuesday 7th January, 2025.**

I, and all the staff at Our Lady Catholic Primary School, are very much looking forward to the year ahead, working in partnership with you and your children as we continue to build on the successes of the past year. We clearly have a wonderful community at our school and, as last year demonstrated, when we all work together as one community, inspire and foster a love of learning and endeavour to follow our gospel values, we see our children flourish academically, spiritually and morally.

I look forward to seeing you all each morning on the school gate.

Kind regards,

Richard Curry
Headteacher