

Latest School News

Sunday's Gospel

Taken from the Gospel for Sunday 8th January 2023 - The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17)

Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade him. 'It is I who need baptism from you,' he said, 'and yet you come to me!' But Jesus replied, 'Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands.' At this, John gave in to him. As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice spoke from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.'



Our Catholic Faith

On Sunday we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This feast can cause some misunderstanding if we begin in the wrong place. If we think that the primary reality of baptism is 'the washing away of original sin' then we will have to do mental contortions to explain why Jesus was baptised at all. If, however, we start in the right place and see Jesus's life a normative for our own then we can begin to understand far more about the feast and about the sacrament of baptism.

The gospel readings On Sunday speak of Jesus being revealed for who he really is - the beloved Son of the Father. In his baptism the divine trinity is revealed at work in the life of Jesus - he is the Father's beloved Son who is filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the primary reality of baptism - revealing who we really are. Jesus is shown as he is in his very nature, our baptism makes us like him. It does take away original sin because it recreates us as the Father's sons and daughters. What Jesus is by nature we are made by grace.

So this feast is not a puzzle to be solved but a wonderful celebration of the power of the holy Trinity. Jesus's baptism shows the Trinity at work in our world, in the font that work in continued as are adopted as God's beloved children.

Weekend Mass Times at Our Lady of the Wayside Church

Saturday evening Vigil Mass for Sunday 5.30pm
Sunday Mass: 10am

During 10am Mass there is a children Liturgy of the Word celebration.

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A Blessing for your Home

'Chalking the door' is a way to celebrate and literally mark the occasion of the Epiphany and God's blessing of our lives and our home. In Mass on Thursday, Fr Andrew blessed the chalk in readiness for this new year. During Thursday's assembly, we blessed our school writing in chalk the following sign above the doorway leading into school.

20 + C + M + B + 23

May all who come to our school this year rejoice to find Christ living among us; and may we seek and serve, in everyone we meet. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The letters C M B represent the three Wise Men, Casper, Melchior and Balthazar.

Please feel free to collect a piece of blessed chalk and a prayer card if you wish to bless your home for this forthcoming year. Chalk and prayer cards are available from the school office until the end of next week.

Breaktime - Healthy Snacks

As a 'Healthy School' we are trying to encourage children to only bring a healthy snack to eat at morning breaktime. This could be a piece of fruit or a healthy snackbar. Could we please ask for children not to bring crisps, sweets or chocolate for their morning snack. Thank you.

Cold Weather and School Closure

If the decision is taken to close school, a scrolling banner message will appear on our website homepage. We will also send an email via Marvellous Me, ParentPay and we will Tweet. We will make this decision as early as possible and no later than 7:15am.

We will not close school once children have arrived, however, if during the school day weather conditions deteriorate significantly, we may ask parents to collect their child/children early but only when it is safe and feasible for the parent.

Reception School Place - September 2022

The closing date for submitting your child's application is **15 January 2023**. Offers will be made: 17 April 2023.

If you have not yet applied and you live in Solihull, you must submit your application through the parent portal at www.solihull.gov.uk/pp Applications submitted after the closing date will not be processed until after the offers have been made in April. Applying late is likely to affect the outcome to your application. If you live outside of Solihull, you should contact your home council to apply.

Nut Allergy

Our Lady of the Wayside is a nut free school.

Please can we remind parents to avoid sending any products containing nuts into school in lunchboxes. This is to reduce the risk to those children and adults who may suffer an anaphylactic reaction if exposed to nuts. Thank you for your support.

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Road Safety

As we begin this new term, can we please remind all parents of the dangers of the roads surrounding our school. Our local roads are incredibly busy and the traffic is often moving at great speed. Over the years we have had a number of 'near misses'.

We strongly recommend you keep your children close to you and please follow the directions of the patrol crossing officer. The Stratford Road has become particularly busy over recent months and we would recommend you cross at the designated pedestrian crossing points. Thank you.

School Attendance Update

Last term, the Department for Education issued revised guidance on school attendance; '*Working together to improve school attendance*'. We have reviewed and updated our attendance policy and procedures in light of this revised guidance. Our revised attendance policy will be published on our school website next week. As it is a rather long document, we have produced an 'Our Lady of the Wayside Attendance Factsheet' written in the form of question and answers. This aims to answer the questions parents normally ask. We have included a copy of our factsheet in this week's newsletter.

Marvellous Me App

We hope you are finding our new Marvellous Me app beneficial. We are using this app for reminders, to share information about your child's learning and to share achievements such as House Points. If you haven't signed up to Marvellous Me yet please don't worry, it's not too late! Please contact the school office who will be able to provide you with your parent code.

Mr Taylor's New Year Message

I hope you had a lovely Christmas holiday and wish you all a very happy New Year. On behalf of all the staff, I would like to thank you for all the many cards and gifts that we received during the Christmas period. The staff and myself were most touched by your kind words and generosity. May the coming year be a good one for you all, filled with the peace and joy that Christ alone brings. There are many exciting events planned for this coming term and it promises to be as busy as ever. We are in the process of updating the school calendar on our website, so please do check this in the coming days. Working in partnership with parents is a key ingredient in the success of any school and we really value your continued support.

In the coming months children in Year 3 and Year 6 will receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion (Year 3) and Confirmation (Year 6), please keep these children and their families in your prayers during this period of preparation.

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Attendance

It is essential that children regularly attend school, poor attendance has a serious and long lasting impact on your child. To promote and encourage good attendance we publish weekly attendance figures.

Reception	Red Group 98.5%	Blue Group 91.4%
Year 1	Class 1C 94.2%	Class 1Y 92.3%
Year 2	Class 2F 93.8%	Class 2CS 93.3%
Year 3	Class 3M 88.1%	Class 3TS 87.1%
Year 4	Class 4C 96.4%	Class 4L 91.7%
Year 5	Class 5E 93.0%	Class 5V 95.0%
Year 6	Class 6O 85.2%	Class 6P 90.6%

Overall attendance for this week is 94.3%.
Well done this week to Red Group with an attendance figure of 98.5%

Music Instrumental Lessons

The majority of our whole class instrumental lessons begin this term. We are really proud of the range of instrumental opportunities available to all pupils. The cost of these lessons are covered by school.

Year 1: Glockenspiel (Spring Term)
Year 2: Glockenspiel (Spring Term)
Year 3: Djembe (Summer Term)
Year 4: Brass instruments (all year)
Year 5: Ukulele (Spring Term)
Year 6: Samba/Steel Pans (Spring Term)

200 Club Draw

Congratulations to Mrs Lloyd (school staff) and the Slater family who won last term's 200 Club. Our next draw takes place at the end of this half-term.



Brain Teaser

Last newsletter brainteaser:

Robert and David were preparing to have a water balloon fight. "No Fair" cried Robert, "You have 3 times as many as I do!" David said "Fine!" and gave Robert 10 more balloons. "Still not fair!" argued Robert, "You still have twice as many as I do." How many more balloons must David give Robert for them to have the same number?

Answer: David must give Robert another 20 water balloons, giving them each 60. Robert started with 30 water balloons and David with 90.

This week's brainteaser: How can you take 2 from 5 and leave 4?

Communication with School Social Media Reminder

Social media can be incredibly beneficial and class/year WhatsApp groups can be an important source of reminders for parents. As we know, social media can also cause a lot of upset and distress when used inappropriately; distress to staff, to other parents and to pupils themselves. As a school, we respectfully ask, and expect, all parents to contact school directly if they have a worry, or a concern, and not to post, share or make comments about the school, school staff, other parents or other pupils. The school has well established systems and procedures for listening to, and responding to queries or concerns. **Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated.**

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School Association Update

Thank you for your feedback regarding our 2022 Christmas Fair, your comments were really helpful and will assist us in planning our next Christmas Fair. We can confirm that our Christmas fundraising activities raised an amazing £5407.66. This includes money raised from the Christmas Fair, raffle ticket sales, Christmas boutique and an after school chocolate sale.

The School Association are currently supporting with the:

- Purchase and installation of a new scooter and bike shelter (installed December 2022)
- Purchase of a book vending machine
- Purchase of ukuleles instruments for Year 5
- Purchase of steel pan instruments for Year 6
- Supporting school with IT equipment
- Supporting with Year 1's outdoor area.

On sincere thanks for your all support and generosity with all of our Christmas fundraising activities.

Charity Donations

We can now confirm the charity donations received at the end of last term:

- School Jumper Day in support of OLW's St Vincent de Paul Society - £242.70
- Donations in support of Jack Johnson's family - £1000.38

Thank you for your kindness and generosity.

Academic Year 2023-2024 Dates

We have received a few requests asking for details of INSET dates for next academic year. We unable to confirm all our INSET dates at this time, but we can confirm that Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th September will be INSET days and pupils will return to school on Wednesday 6th September 2023.

Y6 Confirmation Introduction and Mass of Enrolment

Year 6 parents - We have arranged workshops on **Saturday 21st January** for Y6 children preparing to be Confirmed later this year. Please drop children at 2:00pm and collect at 5:15pm. Pupils may wish to bring their own snack and drink. They **do not** have to wear school uniform. Following their workshops, children and their families will gather together for their Confirmation Mass of Enrolment. Mass starts at 5:30pm. Please pray for our young people who are being Confirmed this year.

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Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Primary School

Attendance Factsheet with Questions and Answers

Why is it so important for my child to regularly attend school?

We want your child to thrive in Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School every day. We build strong and enduring relationships because we believe this is the foundation pupils need to fully engage in our community, to feel a sense of belonging and to become the people of God they are called to be.

Every child has a right to access education, and everyone is responsible for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality. Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School are committed to providing the highest quality of education to our pupils and we recognise the clear link between attendance and the attainment of our pupils.

Under **section 444 (1)** of the **Education Act 1996** (EA 1996), a parent commits an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school where the child is registered. We therefore enforce the use of statutory action to encourage and promote attendance, this is done to ensure that all pupils can benefit from their legal right to receive an education

There are 190 school days each year, this means that there are 175 non-school days a year.

Attendance %	Rating	Days absent	Description
100%	Perfect Attendance	0	This is the best chance of success for your child
97%	Good Attendance	5	
Below 95%	Improvement Required	95% = 9 days	Less chance of your child succeeding as it is harder for them to make progress .
90% or below	Persistent Absent Attendance is causing concern.	30 or more	Your child is likely to have significant gaps in their learning. They are unlikely to achieve as well as they could.

*Persistent Absence is defined as: 10% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

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** Severe Absence is defined as: 50% or more of sessions missed (based on each pupil's possible sessions). Absences may be authorised or unauthorised.

What happens if my child's is persistently absent (attendance of 90% or below)?

Our Lady of the Wayside School's Attendance Champion will review attendance data of all pupils each half-term (six times a year). Where a pupil has attendance at, or below, 90%, they are classified as being persistently absent. Where a pupil is persistently absent, the Attendance Champion will consider the level of intervention required; Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3. In making this decision, the Attendance Champion will consider:

- Was the absence authorised or unauthorised.
- The reason for the absence e.g. holiday absence, illness etc.
- Pupil's absence data over time, including previous academic years.
- The pattern or trend of absence e.g. is the poor attendance figure due to a block of absence or regular absence over a prolonged period of time.

Level 1 Intervention: pupil's attendance is at or below 90%

- Parents will receive a Level 1 attendance letter informing them that their child has been classified as being persistently absent.
- If a pupil absence includes unauthorised absence, the Attendance Champion will inform parents that future unauthorised absence may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.
- The Attendance Champion will monitor the attendance of Level 1 pupils on a weekly basis.
- Where attendance is improving, and the pupil's attendance is above 90%, an improvement letter will be issued to parents and the pupil will no longer be classified as requiring Level 1 attendance intervention.
- If attendance begins to cause additional concerns, the Attendance Champion will move the pupil to Level 2.

Level 2 Intervention: pupil's attendance is at or below 90% and is causing some concern.

- Parents will receive a Level 2 attendance letter informing them that their child has been classified as being persistently absent from education and their absence is causing some concern.
- Parents will be asked to contact school to arrange a meeting to discuss their child's attendance and how school can support the pupil and the family.
- The meeting will be chaired by the Attendance Champion. Where possible, the class teacher and the school's commissioned Education Welfare Officer will also be present.
- If a pupil absence includes unauthorised absence, the Attendance Champion will inform parents that future unauthorised absence may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.
- The Attendance Champion will monitor the attendance of Level 2 pupils on a weekly basis.
- Where attendance is improving, and the pupil's attendance is above 90%, an improvement letter will be issued to parents and the pupil will no longer be classified as Level 2.
- Where attendance is causing additional concerns, the Attendance Champion will move the pupil to Level 3.

Level 3: pupil's attendance is at or below 90% and is causing serious concern.

- Parents will receive a Level 3 attendance letter informing parents that their child has been classified as being persistently absent from school and their child's attendance is a cause of serious concern.

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- Parents will be asked to contact school to arrange a meeting to discuss their child's attendance and how school can support the pupil and the family. This will be formalised into an 'Attendance Support Plan' (ASP).
- Level 3 attendance meetings, and the accompanying ASP, will be overseen and managed by a senior member of staff supported by the Attendance Champion. Present in the meeting will be the Attendance Champion, our commissioned Education Welfare Officer and the class teacher.
- If a pupil absence includes unauthorised absence, the Attendance Champion will inform parents that future unauthorised absence may result in the issuing of a fixed penalty notice
- The Attendance Champion will monitor the attendance of Level 3 pupils on a daily basis.
- Where attendance is improving, and the pupil's attendance is above 90%, an improvement letter will be issued to parents and the pupil will no longer be classified as Level 3.

What is the purpose of an Attendance Support Plan?

An Attendance Support Plan will be created to support pupils who are classified as Level 3 attendance and it's purpose is to formalise support. An Attendance Support Plan will include:

- Impact of poor attendance on the pupil
- Current attendance barriers/difficulties
- Support and strategies to improve attendance
- Parent and pupil voice
- Attendance targets

What is the role of an Education Welfare Support Officer?

Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic School has commissioned the services of an Education Welfare Support Officer to:

- Assist school in the monitoring and analysis of pupil attendance.
- Share and advise school on attendance best practice.
- Support families who child's attendance is causing concern.
- Assist school in safe and well home visits.
- Advise parents on their legal responsibility to ensure their child regularly attends school.
- Support school with attendance policy and procedures.

Can I request a leave of absence for my child?

Yes, parents are able to request a leave of absence by completing an Our Lady of the Wayside Leave of Absence Request Form. These are available from the school office and from our school website. We ask, wherever possible, for parents to provide a minimum of two weeks notice.

Absence for purposes of leave during term time can only be authorised by the Headteacher within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations (2006). "*Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional.*" Under the Regulations, retrospective authorisation for leave in exceptional circumstances is not permitted. Headteacher's can also determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

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The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are: *'rare; significant; unavoidable and short'*. Holidays during term time will not usually be considered as exceptional circumstances. The following guiding principles apply:

- Term-times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off a year including weekends and school holidays.
- The decision to authorise a pupil's absence is wholly at the Headteacher's discretion based on their assessment and merits of each individual request.
- If an event cannot be reasonably scheduled outside of term-time, then it would be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances'. It is acceptable for the Headteacher to take a pupil's record of attendance into account when making absence-related decisions.
- We will take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if this prevents them from being able to take family holidays during scheduled holiday time.
- We have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities.

Can I request a leave of absence for my child for a religious festival or a religious rite?

Yes, the following might be considered as exceptional circumstance:

- Religious festivals: the school should authorise any absence where the parent/carer's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival. For example: There are two key festivals in Islam, Eid-ul-Fitr (celebration that takes place at the end of Ramadan, the period of fasting) and Eid-ul-Adha (festival of sacrifice). The dates of these key events are set according to the Islamic calendar. Muslim families usually need to take one or two days to celebrate these important festivals. Absences may be recorded as R.
- Religious rites e.g. Bar Mitzvah, Holy Communion. The Headteacher will consider each request for leave of absence individually to determine the number of days approved.
- Close family wedding if dates cannot be during school holidays.
- Illness or death of an immediate family member; the Headteacher will consider time needed for the length of journey when child needs to travel abroad.
- Child, parent/carer requiring medical treatment overseas or elsewhere in the UK due to language barrier or requiring specialist treatment elsewhere.
- Cultural celebrations such as Chinese New Year or Diwali. Cultural celebrations give children a feeling of belonging and make them feel part of their culture. This sense of identity is like a natural buoy for a child's emotional health.
- Children attending their annual exam in their home country. There are exams which are compulsory in some EU countries. They are normally during holidays but can occasionally be requested during term time.

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- Child, parent/ carer's visa have been revoked and they need to return to their birth country whilst pursuing the renewal of a visa.

Can I request an authorised leave of absence for my child for an educational event?

Depending on the context and the circumstances, this absence may be assessed as your child being educated off-site and authorisation will be given by the Headteacher. Parents will be required to complete a Leave of Absence Request Form and to provide as much information as possible. School will contact parents in circumstances where this is deemed as a pupil being educated off-site.

My child's leave of absence request has not been authorised by the Headteacher. Can I still take them out of school?

This is a decision for you as their parent. If you decide to go ahead with the leave of absence, your child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Each parent can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Solihull Local Authority for their child's non-attendance. The penalty is £60 and this rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. There is no right of appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice. If this is not paid, the Local Authority can proceed to prosecution or withdraw the notice. The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice.

My child is ill, will this absence be authorised?

It can be really tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they appear unwell. The NHS has produced some really helpful guidance to assist parents - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

If your child is ill, their absence will normally be authorised. Where there are concerns regarding your child's attendance, school may request additional medical evidence before authorising the absence. If medical evidence is not provided, this may result in this absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Does lateness affect my child's attendance?

The school gates are open from 8:30am and the school day starts at 8:55am. All pupils should be in their classroom at this time.

The first (morning) registration session starts at 8:55am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by 9:05am. The register closes at 9:05am. Pupils who arrive in school after 9:05am, after the close of registration, will be registered with a U code – present but arrived at school after the close of registration. U codes impact on your child's overall attendance and can result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

When will school share my child's attendance figure?

In addition to persistent absent letters, approximately every six weeks you will be informed of your child's attendance figure via their Pupil Report Card. There is an opportunity to discuss your child's attendance during Pupil Review Meetings.

Parents are able to request a copy of their child's attendance register at any time via the school office.