



Our Lady of Compassion Catholic School

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To Live As Jesus Taught Us.

School Newsletter – 9

Date: Friday 9th January 2026

Dear Parents, Carers and Children, Happy New Year and welcome back after the Christmas break! I hope you all enjoyed a joyful and restful holiday with family and friends. As we begin this new term, we look forward to the opportunities and blessings that 2026 will bring for our school community. We started the year in a truly special way with our Epiphany Mass and pilgrimage, reflecting on the journey of the Magi and the light that guided them. It was wonderful to see everyone come together in faith and celebration. Our lantern-making activity was a beautiful reminder that Jesus is the guiding light for us all, illuminating our paths as we step into this new year with hope and purpose.

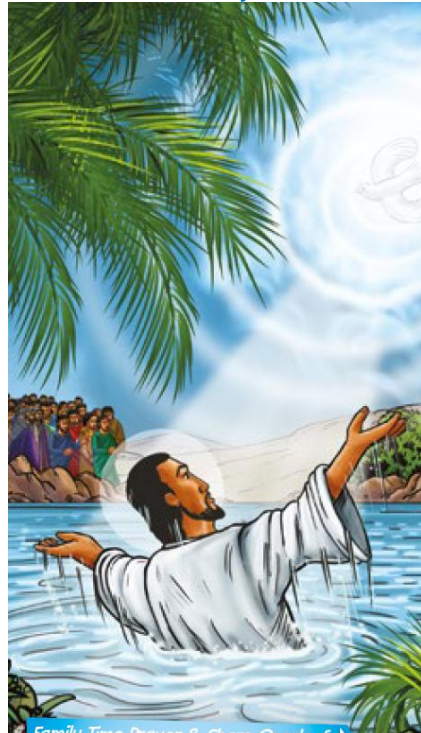


In January, Pope Leo has asked for our prayers “for prayer with the Word of God.” He encourages us to allow Scripture to nourish our lives, offering hope and strength in our communities, and inspiring us to build a more fraternal and missionary Church. With this intention in mind, let us commit to opening our hearts and Bibles, drawing on God’s Word as our spiritual compass this term.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our shared mission. Let us make this term a time of growth, kindness, and achievement for every member of our school family.

Warm regards,
Mr N Emery (Headteacher)

Wednesday Word



January is traditionally the month of beginnings – a time for making a new start. In Church this Sunday we celebrate a special feast – The Baptism of the Lord. In this Sunday’s Gospel, John the Baptist did not see the need to baptise Jesus, because Jesus was sinless. But Jesus insisted because he wanted to stand alongside the community - to help them make a new start and give them an example to follow. Jesus, God’s beloved Son, came for everyone: to draw us all into his family so that we can become more like him and joyfully share in God’s own life.

Swimming

Class 6D have now completed their swimming sessions. Class 5/6F will start their swimming sessions next Tuesday, 13th January. Please ensure that the Microsoft Form that has been sent out has been completed and submitted and that the children bring their swimming kit with them on Tuesday.

SUMMARY

- Wednesday Word
- Swimming
- Earrings
- Dates for 25/26
- Nursery Admissions 2025/26
- Youth Group at Olton Friary
- OPAL
- FOLC AGM
- Y6 Confirmation
- FS2 Applications 2026/27
- Online Safety
- Food Promotion Day
- Epiphany Mass
- Olton Friary Link
- Young Voices

Earrings

As a reminder, earrings are not to be worn to school. We ask that all earrings are removed before your child arrives at school, and that parents who are considering getting their child’s ears pierced, delay this to the start of the summer holidays to give enough time for the ears to heal and the earrings to be removed prior to a new school year. We thank you for your continued support.

Dates for 2025/26

Further dates will be added throughout the term

13.1.26 – Swimming to begin for Class 5/6F
15.1.26 – Closing date for FS2 (Reception) applications
18.1.26 – Christian Unity Week
21.1.26 – Peace Day
22.1.26 – FOLC AGM – School Hall – 5pm
23.1.26 – FS1 (Nursery) Offer for September 2026
27.1.26 – Holocaust Memorial Day
30.1.26 – Year 6 Reconciliation
2.2.26 – Candlemas
2.2.26 – Children’s Mental Health Week – Dress to impress Day
5.2.26 – Social Media Assembly for Parents – 2.30pm
6.2.26 – Year 6 Confirmation @ Olton Friary – 7pm
8.2.26 – Racial Justice Day
10.2.26 – Safer Internet Day – theme “Together for a better internet?”
13.2.26 – We Love School Day
13.2.26 – Last day of half-term
18.3.26 – Ash Wednesday – Start of Lent
22.2.26 – First Sunday of Lent
23.2.26 – School Closed – INSET Day
24.2.26 – School reopens after half-term
24.2.26 – Random Act of Kindness Day
27.2.26 – St. David’s Day – children to wear a splash of yellow to school
1.3.26 – Secondary School Offer Day
1.3.26 – Women’s History Month
5.3.26 – World Book Day
6.3.26 – World Women’s Day
7.3.25 – Sacrament of Reconciliation – Y3
11.3.26 – Parents’ Evening
11.3.26 – FS1 Mother’s Day Assembly 9.30am
11.3.26 – FS2 Mother’s Day Assembly 10.30am
12.3.26 – Parents’ Evening
13.3.26 – INSET Day – School Closed to Pupils
15.3.26 – Mothering Sunday
17.3.26 – St. Patrick’s Day
17.3.26 – FS Stay and Pray – 2.30pm
18.3.26 – KS1 Stay and Pray – 2.30pm

Dates for 2025/26 continued

19.3.26 – UKS2 Stay and Pray – 2.30pm
20.3.26 – LKS2 Stay and Pray – 2.30pm
20.3.26 – International Day of Happiness
20.3.26 – FOLC Disco
26.3.26 – FS1 and FS2 Easter Bonnet Parade – 9.30am
26.3.26 – KS1 (Y1 and Y2) Easter Bonnet Parade – 10.30am
27.3.26 – LKS2 (Y3 and Y4) to lead Stations of the Cross – 9.30am
27.3.26 – Last day of term – 2pm finish for Easter Holidays

Nursery Admission 2025/26



If you are interested in places for 2025/26 for your child to begin with us in Nursery, please contact the school office.

Youth Group at Olton Friary

Our children are blessed with the opportunity of attending a Youth Group at the Friary which takes place every Friday evening from 6.30pm – 8.30pm. This is very popular and a great opportunity for young people to participate in exciting activities, meet other young people and make new friends.

FOLC AGM

On Thursday 22nd January the FOLC will be holding their annual AGM in the school hall at 5pm. This is a great opportunity to meet with members of the committee to hear about all the wonderful works of the FOLC in supporting OLC. It is also an opportunity for anyone interested in putting themselves forward to be part of the committee or become a ‘helping hand’. Please do put this date in your diary and come along to meet with the wonderful team of volunteers.

Supporting Our New OPAL Initiative

We are excited to announce that after the Christmas holidays, we will be introducing OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) to enhance play opportunities for our pupils. To make this initiative a success, we are looking for donations of items that will spark creativity and fun outdoors. If you have any of the following at home and no longer need them, we would love to give them a new purpose:

- Old pots and pans
- Fancy dress costumes
- Small household items suitable for imaginative play

Your contributions will help us create a rich and engaging outdoor environment for all children. Please bring any items to the school office. Thank you for your support in making OPAL a reality!

Year 6 Confirmation Parents Meeting



As part of our ongoing preparation for your child’s Confirmation, we would like to invite Year 6 parents to a virtual meeting on 13th January at 5pm where we will share important updates and next steps in their journey. During the meeting, we will outline the upcoming schedule, discuss key requirements, and answer any questions you may have. Your support is vital in helping the children deepen their understanding and commitment during this special time. Please make every effort to join us, as this will ensure you have all the information needed to guide your child through this meaningful sacrament. Thank you for your continued partnership in their faith journey.

Olton Friary Link

To hear all about the wonderful events that take place at the Olton Friary please follow this link below that will lead you to their notice page on their website:

<https://www.oltolfriary.org.uk/weekly-notices/>

FS2 (Reception) Applications 2026/27

The application process for Reception placements for next year is now open. To apply for a place, please contact your Local Authority. Please note that the closing date for admissions is 15th January 2026.

Online Safety #Wake Up Wednesday

For further information, please visit the National Online Safety website.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI TOYS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

TOYS THAT LISTEN AND LEARN
When a toy uses AI, it collects data such as voice recordings, interactions, and background sounds. This information is sent to remote servers, where it is analysed to improve responses. Your child's voice becomes training data, which may be stored indefinitely or shared with third parties.

WEAK SECURITY PROTECTIONS
Some AI toys have poor password protection or open network connections. Others may have microphones or cameras that stay on, even when the toy appears to be off. This can lead to recordings being made without your knowledge, including conversations unrelated to play.

ARTIFICIAL VOICES, REAL INFLUENCE
For very young children, an AI companion may become one of the first voices they interact with regularly. Just that voice shows humour, empathy, or authority can shape how a child learns to communicate, and to ask questions about it. Curiosity is healthy, blind trust is not.

RESEARCH BEFORE YOU BUY
Look for toys that work offline or store data locally. Check for a free or demo version so you can test use it before. Read privacy policies to understand what data is collected, where it goes, and whether it's shared with others.

MEET OUR EXPERT
Clara Henking is Executive Director of Kompass Education. She advises governments, school trusts, and global organisations on AI governance and safeguarding, helping schools and families understand how technology shapes learning, wellbeing, and the digital future of children.

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE

Advice for Parents & Educators

START WITH A CONVERSATION
Talk to young people. Explain that some toys learn from what they say and do. Help them understand that even friendly technology should have boundaries, and to ask questions about it. Curiosity is healthy, blind trust is not.

SET LIMITS ON USE
Turn off Wi-Fi or Bluetooth when the toy is not in use. Check for updates regularly, as they can change privacy or safety settings. Tired, connected toys like any smart device, they should be monitored, updated, and switched off when not in use.

MODEL DIGITAL AWARENESS
Children learn from adults. If they see you checking privacy settings, reading terms, and talking openly about online safety, they are more likely to do the same. Show them how to question technology in a healthy way.

REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS
Find out where the data is stored and who has access to it. Some companies sell or share data with advertisers. If the toy connects through an app, check what it requests access to and limit these permissions whenever possible.

BALANCE AI WITH REAL PLAY
AI toys can be fun and creative, but they are not a replacement for real human interaction. Encourage time away from technology with activities that foster emotional and social development. Use AI toys to support learning, not define it.

Food Promotion Day

If your child would like a school dinner on the 15th January please book on ParentPay. As part of the Promotion Day children will be able to sample the menu below:

FOOD FESTIVAL

LUCKY PLATE

Census Day
January 15th 2026

Chicken Nuggets served with Jacket Wedges.

Vegetable Fingers served with Jacket wedges.

Peas & Sweetcorn.

Ice-Cream

Jacket Potatoes, Pasta & Sandwiches will also be available

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All children who are entitled to Free School Meals or Universal Free School Meals (FS2, Year 1 and Year 2) will already have these as the option for the day. However, we ask you book their choices by Sunday 11th January.

Blessing of Chalk at Epiphany Mass



On Tuesday, we celebrated the Feast of the Epiphany, where we blessed chalk to mark our school with the traditional inscription 20+C+M+B+26. This simple act reminds us to invite Christ's presence into our homes and hearts throughout the year. A heartfelt thank you to Father Austin for leading us in this beautiful tradition! May the Lord bless all who dwell within your home with peace, joy, and love in 2026!



Young Voices Concert



What an Incredible Night at Young Voices 2026! Our choir absolutely shone at the Young Voices concert on Thursday evening! Joining thousands of other young singers, they filled the arena with energy, harmony, and pure joy. The atmosphere was electric, and our students sang their hearts out - every note was a celebration of teamwork and passion. From the first song to the final encore, they gave it everything, and we could not be prouder of their hard work and dedication. A huge thank you to everyone who supported us along the way - parents, staff, and of course, our amazing choir members. You made this an unforgettable experience!