



ST. BERNADETTE'S

CATHOLIC PRIMARY VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

A MEMBER OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

14th September 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you and your families all had a lovely summer. With the new academic year underway it is lovely to have all the children back and see them happy with their friends and working hard. I would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to the community of St. Bernadette's to all of our new pupils and their families who are joining us for the first time this year.

Please find below a table with the term dates for this academic year.

ADVENT TERM DATES for Academic Year 2026–2027	
Friday 23rd October 2026	At home time, academy closes for half-term
Monday 2nd November 2026	Academy opens for all pupils
Friday 18th December 2026	At home time, academy closes for Christmas holidays
LENT TERM DATES for Academic Year 2026–2027	
Tuesday 5th January 2027	Academy opens for all pupils
Thursday 11th February 2027	At home time, academy closes for half-term
Friday 12th February 2027	Training Day – academy closed to all pupils
Monday 22nd February 2027	Academy opens for all pupils
Thursday 25th March 2027	At home time, academy closes for Easter holidays
PENTECOST TERM DATES for Academic Year 2026–2027	
Wednesday 14th April 2027	Academy opens for all pupils
Monday 3rd May 2027	May Day Bank Holiday – academy closed
Friday 28th May 2027	At home time, academy closes for half-term
Monday 7th June 2027	Academy opens for all pupils
Wednesday 21st July 2027	At home time, academy closes for Summer holidays

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ST. BERNADETTE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

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Dates of other key events for this academic year

Please find below a table showing dates for some of the key events this academic year. Further information relating to each event will be released nearer to the time.

DIARY DATES of Key Events during the ADVENT TERM		
Monday 19th October 2026	Parents' Evening	3.30–7.00 p.m.
Friday 4th December 2026	Christmas Fair	3.10 p.m.
Tuesday 8th December 2026	Christmas Concert (Classes 7–12)	1.45 p.m.
Wednesday 9th December 2026	Christmas Concert (Classes 7–12)	1.45 p.m.
Thursday 10th December 2026	Christmas Concert (Classes 7–12)	1.45 p.m.
DIARY DATES of Key Events during the LENT TERM		
Monday 22nd March 2027	Parents' Evening	3.30–7.00 p.m.
DIARY DATES of Key Events during the PENTECOST TERM		
Friday 25th June 2027	Strawberry Tea	12.30 p.m.
Friday 2nd July 2027	Sports Day (Classes 1–6)	9.00 a.m.
	Sports Day (Classes 7–12)	1.00 p.m.
Friday 9th July 2027	Reserve Date for Sports Day (if bad weather causes a postponement on the first date)	

Safeguarding

Safeguarding your children is our highest priority. Please be aware that the following staff hold key safeguarding roles:

Miss L. Smith – Designated Safeguarding Lead
Mr. M. Strong – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
Mr. A. Strong – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
Mrs. B. James – Early Help Lead

To discuss or report any safeguarding concerns, please speak with Miss Smith in the first instance, or one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. If none of these staff are available, you may also report concerns to any other member of staff, as all staff have received safeguarding training, and they will then report this information to the Designated Safeguarding Leads. We assure you that all matters will be dealt with sensitively, however, depending on the information provided, it may be necessary for us to share this information with other Safeguarding Agencies.

Please see our website for further information related to Safeguarding, including links to helpful resources for parents and pupils.

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Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Mrs. C. Sawczuk is the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Leader. If there are any matters you wish to discuss, please contact Mrs. Sawczuk. Again, further information can be found on our website.

Some changes to how the school office will operate

As most of you will be aware from last year, the Trust implemented cuts to staffing at the academy and the number of hours some staff can work. One of the areas that parents will notice the biggest difference is in the front office which has been reduced from three members of staff to two, even though the office workload remains exactly the same.

As a result, we have decided that there are certain functions which the office will no longer carry out: the majority of these changes affect internal processes within the school, but a very small number of changes will affect parents, as listed below:

How the office operated before the cuts to its staff	How the office will operate now
Previously, if children on packed lunches did not bring their packed lunch to school, the office would contact parents to let them know so that they could bring the packed lunch into school ready for lunchtime.	Now, if children on packed lunches do not bring their packed lunch to school, the office will not have time to contact parents. Parents are welcome to drop the packed lunch into school if they realise, otherwise your child will be provided with a hot school lunch and payment will be required through the Arbor App.
Previously, if children forgot their PE kit on the day of their PE or Games lesson, the office would contact parents to let them know so that they could bring the PE kit into school.	Now, if children forget their PE kit no phone call will be made. Again, parents are welcome to drop the PE kit into school if they realise it has been left at home, otherwise the child will not be able to take part in the PE/Games lesson.
Previously, when a child was absent from school, parents could report this in a number of different ways, including the Arbor App, by telephone, or through an online form on our website.	Now, we are asking all parents to report a child's absence through the Arbor App ONLY. A reminder that absences must be reported by 9.00 a.m. on each day of your child's absence.

Late arrivals and poor attendance at school

It is important that all children arrive on time for school each day. The school day commences at 8.40 a.m. at which time the school gates close. Any child who arrives after this is regarded as a late arrival and will have to sign in at the academy office.

Late arrivals should be for exceptional circumstances only and confined to one-off events. All schools are required by the Department for Education and Ofsted to tackle late arrivals at school and poor attendance, particularly where this becomes what the government terms as 'persistent absence' from school where attendance falls to 90% or lower.

As well as having a detrimental effect on your child's education, both late arrivals and poor attendance at school create significant additional administration work for our office staff whose workload is already much increased from last year, as mentioned previously.

Late arrivals

Our approach to tackling 'late arrivals' will be as follows:

Within each school term:

- ❖ After the first instance of a late arrival, Mrs. Southwick will speak to parents to encourage them to avoid any further late arrivals, as we realise that one-off events can happen unexpectedly and may be unavoidable.
- ❖ However, after the second instance of a late arrival, Mrs. Southwick will issue a message via the Arbor App confirming that this is the second instance of a late arrival within the school term and warning that a third instance will result in a letter inviting parents to a formal meeting with a senior leader at the school.
- ❖ After the third instance of a late arrival, parents will be contacted to arrange a meeting with a senior leader of the school to discuss the reasons for the late arrivals with the aim of avoiding any further occurrences.

Where the need arises, we will strive to work with our families to help maximise children's learning time, and we operate these procedures with the very best interests of your children and their education and wellbeing at heart.

Poor attendance

With regards to a child's attendance record at school, the Trust has set a minimum target of 95% attendance for all pupils. From this year, the Government are also setting each school a challenging attendance target to achieve and to which they will be held to account, and specifically schools must rigorously tackle persistent absenteeism, where an individual pupil's attendance falls to 90% or below.

Our Trust has asked all of its schools to issue a separate letter regarding attendance, so this will follow in the coming days.

Parent Governor Vacancies

Our academy's Local Governing Body has two Parent Governor vacancies which we are seeking to fill, and a letter will be issued shortly with details about this.

Please give serious consideration as to whether this is a role you might be willing to undertake and register your interest if so when the letter is released.

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Foundation Governor Appeal

The academy is also very keen to appoint new Foundation Governors. A poster is attached to the end of this letter with further information and has been placed on our website.

Again, please give serious consideration to this post and if you think this is a role you could undertake, or simply want to find out more, please get in touch with me – I would be delighted to hear from you.

Uniform

Thank you to all of the parents who have fully adhered to the academy's uniform policy. Your children have come back to school looking very smart. A reminder that children should be wearing the main academy uniform this term, and not the summer uniform. Please see the charts on our website for the precise requirements for children at different age phases of the academy.

- In addition to the main clothing items, please remember that all pupils must have a pair of plain black plimsolls for indoor use only – this is a compulsory part of the uniform.
- A pair of plain, smart black school shoes for outdoor use is also compulsory – trainers will not be accepted.
- Please ensure that all items of uniform, including footwear, are clearly labelled. With large numbers of pupils wearing identical items, labelling is essential to enable staff to return mislaid items of uniform back to their owners.

PE Kit

At the start of the summer break, I wrote to parents to explain that, as a result of government legislation which now requires that all primary schools only have three compulsory branded items, there are now 3 options for parents to choose from for the PE Kit. These options were described in detail in the letter sent to parents earlier this summer, and a clear visual guide for each option is shown on our website: go to **Parents**, then **School Uniform** and see the section on **PE Kit** where there is a pdf visual guide for each of the three options.

For children to be able to participate in PE or Games at the academy, one of the three kit options must be used.

Jewellery

Children are not allowed to wear jewellery on site for reasons of health and safety. All children take part in sport, including contact sports, and classrooms, corridors, and the playground are busy places, all of which creates the potential for accidents if jewellery is worn. It is for this reason that we have a policy of no jewellery and this must be adhered to for the safety of all.

If, however, a child has had their ears pierced recently and needs to keep the earrings in for just a little longer, parents must cover their child's ears with plasters each day until the earrings can be removed at the earliest opportunity.

Water Bottles

We encourage all pupils to bring a bottle of water to school each day. Drinking water throughout the day not only keeps children hydrated but also assists with their concentration and learning. Please ensure that bottles are transparent and contain water only. Other types of drink will not be accepted, unless there is an exceptional reason provided by the parent and evidence may be requested by the academy. Please contact the Academy Office should you need to discuss this matter.

Wraparound Care

The academy operates a **full Wraparound Care service** both **before** and **after school** from Nursery through to Year 6. A letter was released on Friday with all the details of this term's After-School Care sessions and our After-School Clubs.

Where families require Wraparound Care for your children, I would strongly encourage you to make use of our school's provision. It is an excellent service with a wide variety of activities and led by a caring and dedicated team of staff, but in order to maintain this service we do rely entirely on our families making use of it. Please book using the Arbor App.

Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club is open each day from 7.30 a.m. It is available to all year groups, including nursery, and provides a variety of breakfast options and up to one hour's childcare before the commencement of the school day for a cost of £3.00 per day. Booking is required in advance. Your child will also take part in Wake and Shake for that day, a fun session of physical activity, which research shows has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

After-School Care and After-School Clubs

After-School Care (three consecutive sessions from 3–4 p.m. (£4.00) 4–5 p.m. (£5.00 which includes a light tea) and 5–5.45 p.m. (£3.00) to be booked in advance as you require) and **After-School Clubs** (3–4 p.m. to be booked in advance for the whole term) take place each day after school.

A separate letter has been issued detailing all the sessions on offer this term and the age groups that are able to attend them. Please see the letter for the cost of each club for this term. There is a pupil limit to each session, and places will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Our Wraparound Care provides some wonderful extensions of the curriculum and a chance for your children to make some new friends along the way. Please note that prices for all sessions are reduced to half price for registered Pupil Premium children.

Site Rules

A reminder to all parents of the following rules which help to keep our site a safe place for all:

- No **dogs** are allowed on the academy site at any time
- **Smoking** and **vaping** are not allowed on the site at any time
- **Bicycles** and **scooters**, including **motorised e-scooters**, must not be ridden anywhere on site; we also ask that anyone who uses a motorised e-scooter takes extra care on Anne's Crescent close to the school gates when children and parents are entering and leaving the site due to the large number of people in that area.

The academy is grateful for your support and cooperation in helping to keep everyone safe.

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One way system

For the benefit of parents new to the academy, we ask all parents in vehicles to maintain a voluntary one-way system around Anne's Crescent both in a morning and at home time. Cars should enter from the Queensway side of Anne's Crescent, and exit the crescent at the other side. This system significantly aids traffic flow, and we are grateful to parents for your ongoing cooperation with this.

Dropping Off and Collecting Children

A reminder that only parents of children in Classes 1–6 should accompany their children on site in a morning, and in the same way come on to the site at home time to collect their children.

Parents of children in Classes 7–12 are asked to take their children only as far as the school gates in a morning, and to wait on Anne's Crescent at home time. This is to help ease congestion on site and we thank you for your cooperation.

Parking on Anne's Crescent

We realise that most parents park safely and legally on Anne's Crescent, but this is a polite reminder, **please do not obstruct the driveways of residents and please do not park on the yellow zig-zag lines outside the school gates** – these are placed there by the council to make it safer for your children to cross the road.

Council Wardens periodically patrol and check that rules are being adhered to and will implement a fine payable to the council if cars are parked illegally. We understand that Anne's Crescent becomes congested but please remain considerate to our local residents.

On-site Parking

On-site parking at the front of the academy is for disabled drivers only. No other cars are allowed on-site in a morning. The front vehicular gates are closed at 8.30 a.m. to allow pedestrians to cross the driveway safely.

At home time, parents of children in **Classes 1–6 only** are encouraged to park on the playground to help ease congestion on Anne's Crescent. Gates are opened at 2.40 p.m. and closed at 2.55 p.m. In the interest of safety, we kindly ask that parents switch off their car engines when parked and to remain stationary until the gates are reopened at 3.10 p.m. when all pedestrians have left the site.

School Photos

School photographs (individual portraits and sibling groups) will take place this Wednesday, 16th September. Class photographs are scheduled to take place towards the end of the school year and we will remind parents of this nearer to the time.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. M. Strong,
Headteacher

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CALLING FOUNDATION GOVERNORS

**Have you ever thought of becoming a
foundation governor in one of our schools?**

We are looking for people like you!



Catholic schools were founded by the Church to

- Assist in its mission of making Christ known to all people
- Assist parents, who are the primary educators of their children, in the education and religious formation of their children
- Be at the service of the local Church - the diocese, the parish and the Christian home
- Be 'a service to society'

Since September 2018, all maintained Catholic schools in the Diocese of Nottingham have become academies.

Each one belongs to one of three Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts (or CMATs).

The CMATs rely on local governors, attached to each of their academies, to support the designated school to thrive.

As practising Catholics, foundation governors help to ensure that the Catholic identity of the school is preserved, that the Bishop's vision for education is followed and that standards remain high.



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