



**Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School
Mourne Road
Drimnagh
Dublin 12
D12 HT22**

Phone: 01-4554691/01-4550279

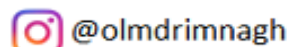
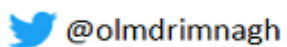
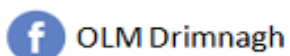
Mobile/WhatsApp: 086-142 3367

Email: admin@olmdrimnagh.com

Website: www.olmdrimnagh.com

School information app: The logo for the 'tyro' app, featuring a stylized blue and yellow 'y' shape followed by the word 'tyro' in a bold, dark blue sans-serif font.

Social Media:



A message from the Principal and Deputy Principal

Welcome to Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School. Since it first opened its doors as a co-educational Secondary School in 1973, OLM has become a familiar part of our community, providing our students with education and opportunities so that they are prepared for the challenges that life will present them with.

Our school is a CEIST school and has 5 core values:

1. Promoting Spiritual and Human Development.
2. Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning.
3. Showing Respect for Every Person.
4. Creating Community.
5. Being Just and Responsible.

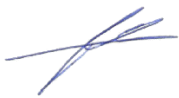
At OLM Drimnagh we try to ensure that we follow all these values. Our Code of Behaviour is based around the 3Rs of 'Be Ready, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible'. We expect that every member of our community is treated with respect; Staff, Students and Parents and that everyone shares responsibility for our school community. We believe in Social Justice, so that everyone is treated equally and fairly.

We have a whole-school approach to Teaching & Learning in four areas. They are a Common Lesson Structure, Assessment for Learning (AFL), Differentiation and Cooperative Teaching. Teachers share Learning Outcomes with Students at the beginning of a lesson and then check understanding of the Learning Outcomes at the end of a lesson. We have a Cooperative Teaching Model in some lessons where teachers work together to help students and we are very proud to say that we will keep working to improve ourselves in this area.

We have a wide range of ways to promote our Spiritual and Human Development, for example through our School Ethos, Career Guidance, part-time counsellors through the Schools Completion Programme, S.P.H.E. Programme, Friends for Life Programme, and Lifeskills to name but a few.

Our motto is 'Shaping a Brighter Future for Our Young People'. OLM is a DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) School. This allows us to have a range of supports in place such as our Parents' Room and active Parents' Council. We have an excellent range of programmes in place such as Junior Certificate School Programme, Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Established. We are also involved with the Business in the Community, ClklIn and Trinity Access Programme (TA21), as well as many other links in our local community.

We hope that your son/daughter enjoys their stay with us and that they feel that they achieve the very best that they can academically, socially, and morally. We look forward to working with you over the coming years.



Pádhraic Gibbons - Principal



Nuala Brady – Deputy Principal

Who's who in OLM Drimnagh

Principal:	Mr. Pádhraic Gibbons
Deputy Principal:	Ms. Nuala Brady
Home School Teacher:	Ms. Claire Flanagan
School Completion Coordinator:	Ms. Paula Moore
Guidance Team:	Ms. Roberta Danzi, Ms. Nuala Brady & Ms. Alex Murray
Head of Additional Educational Needs:	Ms. Alison Smith & Ms. Shannon Burke
Head of Administration:	Ms. Jennifer Taaffe
Caretaker:	Mr. Anthony Downey
Designated Liaison Person and Relevant Person for Child Protection:	Mr. Pádhraic Gibbons
Deputy Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection:	Ms. Nuala Brady

Class Teacher and Year Head:

Each class has a class teacher. This teacher meets the class every morning to check the roll and to help students organise their day. This teacher takes special care of the class, helping the students in areas where they will need help. Each year group has a Year Head who meets with the class teacher regularly to discuss how the class and students are getting on.

General Information about the School

1. Organisation of the school

Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School is a Voluntary Secondary School under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education in Secondary Education).

The school is directed by a Board of Management, which serves for a three-year term. The Board of management's duties and legal authority are set out in the Education Act 1998 and the Articles of Management for Voluntary Secondary Schools. The Board is made up of 8 members:

- 4 nominations from the trustees, including the Chairperson.
- 2 teacher reps, voted on every three years by teaching staff.
- 2 parent reps, voted on every three years by parents.

The Board meets periodically over the year and ensures that the school is functioning correctly. The principal acts as Secretary to the Board of Management and has no voting rights on any issue which may arise at Board level.

The day to day running of the school is managed by the Principal and Deputy Principal who have oversight of the school.

They are assisted by Assistant Principals who are given middle management roles and responsibilities. The Assistant Principals will be made known to parents at the beginning of each academic year.

Programmes such as Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied and JCSP are managed by the Programmes Coordinator.

Class Teachers play a very important role in supporting your child's needs daily and will meet with them during Pastoral Care.

Subject Teachers are parents' first point of contact should they be concerned about academic progress in a particular subject.

Special Needs Assistants are vital in working with those students they may be assigned to. To be granted SNA access, it is important to note that only those students listed by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) are entitled to SNA access.

Ancillary staff are essential in any school. In OLM we have a School Office Manager, a Book Rental Scheme Coordinator, Attendance Officer, Caretaker, Admin staff and Cleaning Staff.

Students are the lifeblood of any school. Without them, there is no school. Over the past number of years, we have increased the students voice with various committees and councils. We encourage all students to become involved in their school community as it is they who are the future of the school.

The Parents' council is made up of parents of the students and it is another way parents show their support to their children and to the school. The council meets regularly to discuss school and educational issues relating to the students. All parents are welcome to come along.

2. School Programmes

As with all secondary schools, we provide Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle and the school experience in lasts 6 years. The main areas we focus on are Retention, Attainment and Transition. Our aim is to keep students in school to complete senior cycle, to achieve the best that they can and to progress onwards after their time here. OLM has gone from an average of 30% progression to 3rd level (2013-2017) to 49.3% (2018-2023) and overall progression rate to 3rd level, Colleges of Further Education, Apprenticeships, or the world of work since 2018 is now 96.3%, up from 65% in the previous 4 years. In 2021, 3rd level progression increased to 60%. This is down to the hard work of everyone in our community: Board of Management, staff, students, and parents and to the value of the educational programmes in OLM.

Junior Cycle provides students with opportunities to achieve in three different areas. Most students will complete the Junior Certificate, completing Classroom Based Assessments in all subjects which count as a percentage of their Junior Certificate. Students complete state examinations in several subjects in 3rd Year which leads to a State Examinations Certificate. The school also provides a Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). This notes CBA results and Other Areas of Learning (OAL). The OAL is important because it allows students and parents to see what has been achieved over three years in every subject rather than simply being exam results focussed. Finally, the school enrolls all students in the Junior Certificate Schools' Programme (JCSP). This allows students to record their own progress in all subjects over three years. Your child will therefore receive three certificates of achievement at Junior Cycle: The State Exams Junior Cert, the school based JCPA and the JCSP profile of achievement. This allows students and parent to see where their strengths lie and make well rounded choices for which course to undertake at Senior Cycle.

For some students, the Junior Certificate may not be accessible due to specific learning difficulties. OLM offers the Level 2 or Level 1 Learning Programme (L2LP/L1LP). Students complete the majority of the L2LP /L1LP during everyday lessons with their class group. Teachers adjust their expectations of students' ability and record evidence so that these students can achieve at Junior Cycle and progress to Senior Cycle.

Transition Year is compulsory. It was set up in 2015 to address the high number of students who were leaving school having completed Senior Cycle at a young age. This limited their opportunities to progress to college, apprenticeships, or work. Research showed that sitting a Leaving Cert at a young age caused extra anxiety and stress on students. As with all new programmes, it took some time to become embedded, but we now have an excellent TY programme in place. Young people mature in age, experience and socially to better face the challenges of senior cycle and of life. The introduction and development of TY is one of the main reasons that students have achieved so highly over the past few years.

Senior Cycle is a two-year course designed for students to complete Leaving Certificate. OLM offers two programmes of study. The Leaving Cert Established is more academic, is examined after two years and gives the Leaving Cert. Students can use this to progress immediately to 3rd level if they achieve enough points. The Leaving Cert Applied is more vocational and students are assessed in four sessions over two years with some exams after two years. Students have the exact same opportunity to progress as LCE, including to 3rd level, the only difference being they must first complete a Post Leaving Certificate for one year. Both Leaving Cert courses are equally valuable and are treated as such in OLM.

3. The school day

Following extensive consultation with relevant stakeholders, as well as other DEIS schools in the locality, the school moved to one-hour lessons in 2022. This is highly recommended by the inspectorate as the framework for junior cycle becomes embedded. We are excited about how this made a positive impact on our Teaching & Learning, with less movement throughout the day and giving students more time to engage in their own learning process. As a bonus for students, it also means having less books to carry to and from school daily as there are only 6 lessons per day (4 on Wednesday).

Pastoral Care is an essential part of students' timetable, and all students are expected to be present before Pastoral Care begins at 8.32am. The role of Class Teacher during Pastoral Care is to link in with your child daily and being present as the one good adult for check and connect purposes. All students receive 28 hours tuition time outside of Pastoral Care, as per Department of Education & Skills requirements. Please note the school day below:

1. **Start Time: 8:32am every Monday to Friday.** There is a breakfast club from 7:45am-8:15am daily. Students can sign up for this in August.
2. **Finish Times: 3:30pm every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. 12:50pm every Wednesday.**
3. **Break Time: 10:40am-10:50am.**
4. **Lunch Time: 12:50pm – 1:30pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Wednesday is a half day.**

4. Journals & Lockers

School Journals are very important in the life of every student, the cost is included in student fees. They are used to record homework, communication between home and the school and contain important information about the school, including the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies. We have 200 new lockers which students can rent on an annual basis. The cost of the locker rental is €20 per year. Students are advised to purchase a combination lock. Lockers can be used before school, at lunchtime and at the end of the school day. If students wish to request a locker, please leave your name at the front office.

5. Breakfast and Lunch Club

Students are invited to attend our Breakfast Club which takes place each morning from 7.45 to 8.15am in the kitchen. Students can enjoy a healthy breakfast, with a very popular "special breakfast" on Fridays. We also run a lunch time club for students who stay in school for lunch four days per week (Wednesday is a half-day). A healthy lunch is provided. Students can bring their own lunch if they wish. Students staying in for lunch remain on school grounds for the duration of lunch, which is supervised by school staff. Both clubs are run by our School Completion Programme and there is no cost of food provided to students. Students must bring a healthy snack to eat at break time.

6. Health

If your child has any health problems that may hinder learning e.g. learning disability, a kidney problem, hearing/visual difficulties, eating disorder, etc, please inform the class teacher or year head. This will enable teachers to look after your child in the best possible way.

7. Family

If there is any change in your family that might affect your child, please let the school know if you think it would be helpful to your child.

8. Guidance Counsellor

There is a guidance department in OLM which helps students to choose subjects and careers. The school can offer only limited in-house counselling support. We have a volunteer counsellor who is present in the school once a week and a part-time guidance counsellor who may be able to advise on external counselling supports. There is a list of counselling services available in the student journal.

9. Home School Community Liaison Teacher

Our HSCL Teacher represents the school through the Home School Community Liaison Scheme. This teacher is here to help build a positive relationship between the school and the home. She visits the homes of students, bringing information and support to the family around the student's education. She also works with parents in the school setting, meeting them on a one-to-one basis in her office and in the Parents Room where courses/classes and information mornings are organised for parents' groups.

10. Teachers of students with learning disabilities

These teachers work with children who experience difficulty in a specific area of learning. They also work closely with the families enabling parents/guardians to help their children cope better in school.

11. Encouraging Students

Throughout the school year awards are given to students in many areas of achievement i.e., academic, sport, attendance etc in recognition for their effort and hard work throughout the year. We recognise all students do not progress at the same pace and reward improvements as well as excellence.

12. Student Wellbeing

OLM prides itself on student wellbeing. Through our range of educational and pastoral programmes, Guidance Counsellor, and links with external agencies, we support student wellbeing as best we can. We organise a wellbeing week as well as wellbeing check and connect days once per half-term. Throughout the year we offer universal (whole-class, year, or school) supports with workshops on Internet Safety, Coco's Law, Managing Exam Stress (Jigsaw- 3rd Year and 6th Year), Study Skills- Student Enrichment- All Year groups, Let's Talk, Sure Why Not- Jigsaw- Junior and Senior Groups. And SCP Workshops linked to results of surveys on Friendships, Respect, and Bullying.

In 2023 we had a whole-school Guidance Inspection which found that *"The student support team placed a high priority on student wellbeing and provided high quality support to students...a strong focus on providing appropriate counselling support to promote wellbeing and good mental health. The school had received a 'Jigsaw One Good School' Gold school award for mental health."*

We are excited to announce a new initiative for September 2024. All students will have access to a wellbeing app, which will allow us as a school to monitor overall student wellbeing. This will allow us to gather data about student wellbeing and inform new actions and targets for us to further improve the area of wellbeing.

13. School Books & Expenses for Senior Cycle

At OLM we are very conscious of the cost of books on parents. To help you with the cost of schoolbooks we run a book rental scheme from TY-6th Year. Books rented out must be returned at end of school year or paid for if lost. Students are required to have all the necessary books, copies, stationary, etc. for each class.

The following is an indication of expenses that you are required to pay. Payments can be made via the Tyro App:

5th & 6th Year €250

4th Year €300

Family reductions of €30 for 2nd child, €45 for 3rd and €90 for 4th also apply.

This charge will cover the following:

- Book Rental Fee
- Administration charge
- Course Charge (TY/LCA)
- School insurance (this is obligatory)
- Higher Options Tickets
- School Journal
- Assessment fee
- Licensing fees for trustees and the Joint Managerial Board.
- Junior & Leaving Cert Exam Papers

**** Please note that if there are genuine difficulties with payment of the Book Rental Scheme you can arrange with the school to set up a payment plan, online direct debit plan or a pre-savings plan.**

IBAN: IE49 BOFI 9002 8740 7286 96

BIC: BOFIE2D

Reference: Student's Name and year – e.g., "Joe Bloggs 1st Yr."

14. School Books & Expenses for Junior Cycle

At OLM we are part of the Junior Schoolbooks Scheme. This means that students will be provided with all books and workbooks they need from 1st-3rd Year. Students will also be given a stationary bundle, including copybooks, an equipped pencil case, calculator, and maths set. All Books must be returned at end of each school year or paid for if lost. One set of stationary will be given to each student at the start of each year in Junior Cycle.

The following is an indication of expenses that you are required to pay. Payments can be made via the Tyro App:
1st-3rd Year €150

Family reductions of €30 for 2nd child, €45 for 3rd and €90 for 4th also apply.

This charge will cover the following:

- Administration charge
- Mock exam papers
- School insurance
- Subscription to Tyro & Wellbeing App
- Assessment fee
- Licensing fees for trustees and the Joint Managerial Board.

**** Please note that if there are genuine difficulties with payment of the Book Rental Scheme you can arrange with the school to set up a payment plan, online direct debit plan or a pre-savings plan.**

IBAN: IE49 BOFI 9002 8740 7286 96

BIC: BOFIE2D

Reference: Student's Name and year – e.g., "Joe Bloggs 1st Yr."

15. State Examinations

Department of Education Junior Certificate examinations fees approximately €109.00 (Junior Cert.) to be paid in 3rd Year and €116.00 (Leaving Cert.) to be paid in 6th Year.

Communication with the school

Who and how to contact?

Contact details for the school are available on the first page of this booklet and on our website, www.olmdrimnagh.com Any contact with Teachers, Class Teachers, Year Heads, Home School Teacher should be made through the school office and not by contacting individuals. The school also places regular updates on our social media platforms, in particular our Instagram page, but also Facebook and twitter. We are introducing our school information app 'Tyro' in 2024-2025. All parents must download the Tyro app to receive the most up to date information on their child's in-school activities.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

Parents are welcome to the school to meet teachers, **by appointment only**. This will ensure that you will see the teacher you want and will avoid delay. **All visitors to the school must go to the main office on arrival.** Parent/Teacher meetings will be held for each year group throughout the school year. You will have an opportunity to meet all your child's teachers to discuss his/her progress. The school journal is an important mode of communication and should be checked by parents daily.

Attendance & Punctuality

Under the law every child aged between 6 and 16 must receive an education. The school attendance register is taken each day. Teachers take a class roll at the beginning of each class. If your child is not in school you will receive a text message to inform you. Our 'Be on Time' Strategy is designed to ensure that students are in school on time, so that minimum disruption is caused to teaching and learning.

Students who accumulate three lates in one week will be required to complete a lunchtime reflection the following week. If a student fails to complete the lunchtime reflection, they will be in breach of the Code of Behaviour, Level 4 and will incur a one-day suspension.

Should a student continue to fail to complete lunchtime reflections, a meeting will be required between the year head, the student and the parent.

Absence from school/Request to leave school

Parents can now submit their child's absence through the school Tyro app. When a student is out of school for any reason a note must be given to the class teachers using the school journal when he/she returns. These notes should be signed by a parent or guardian and should state why the student was absent. If a student is absent for more than three days, please contact the school by letter or telephone. It is recommended that Wednesday afternoon, which is free, should be used for appointments with dentists, doctors etc. Time should not be taken out of class where possible. If you know in advance that your child will be absent, please inform us using the journal.

When a child is absent from school and no message or medical cert has been received from home the school will make contact in the following manner:

- Daily text from attendance officer.
- Phone call after 3 days unexplained absence by your child's Class Teacher.
- Phone call after 5 days unexplained absence by your child's Year Head.
- Contact from the HSCL and the School Completion Programme Coordinator.
- 10-day letter from school generated automatically after 10 unexplained absences.
- 15-day letter from school generated automatically after 15 unexplained absences.
- 20-day letter from school generated automatically after 20 unexplained absences.

Please note that all schools are expected to complete a referral to Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) when a student has reached the threshold of 20 unexplained absences or where those absences may have uncertainty as to the reasons given. This is a legal requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000.

School rules and policies

Our website contains the most up to date policies that are relevant to you and your child (ren). The policies are revised and updated as required and ratified by the Board of Management in September of each school year. They are also available upon request to the school office by emailing admin@olmdrimnagh.com

School policies:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Additional Education Needs Policy
- Admissions Policy and Admissions notice
- Anti-bullying policy
- Book Rental Scheme Policy (Senior Cycle)
- Child Protection procedure
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Code of Behaviour
- Complaints Procedures against Teaching Staff
- Fundraising Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Health and Safety Policy Statement
- Junior Cycle Book Scheme and Stationery Provision Policy
- OLM Distance Learning Policy
- Parent Teacher Meeting Policy and Procedures
- School Tour Policy

All policies listed above are available to parents upon request. There are several other policies in the school which relate to staff and are not available to parents. These would include the Dignity at Work Policy/Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy which all staff employed in any organisation are entitled to. Just as you expect your child to be safe and happy in school, the Board of Management also has a duty of care to protect its staff's wellbeing and thanks parents for their continued support and courtesy in dealing with staff. Abuse of staff in any form is unacceptable and the school will follow its own procedures in reporting abuse as necessary.

Child Protection

This is the most important job a school has, to ensure that Child Welfare and Child Protection laws and guidelines are adhered to. Under the Children First Act 2015, all teachers are mandated persons. They are obliged to report any concerns or disclosures to the DLP or DDLP. The legal requirements of the DLP and DDLP are to engage with the Child and Family Agency, Tusla, either by directly reporting concerns or by seeking advice from Tusla first. If need be, the DLP is also legally obliged to report serious Child Protection and Welfare issues to an Garda Síochána. People sometimes think that the school has responsibility to investigate reports in-house or to monitor a situation. It does not. That is the law. If you have any Child Welfare or Child Protection concerns, you should make an appointment to see the Principal as DLP and if unavailable the Deputy Principal as DDLP. Our Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment and a copy of our Child Protection Procedures are available on request.

Code of Behaviour

All students are expected to obey the rules of the school. Our Code of Behaviour is based around the 3 Rs of 'Be Ready', 'Be Respectful' and 'Be Responsible'. Good behaviour is rewarded with merits. Poor behaviour has consequences, the level of which depends on the breach of the Code of Behaviour. Our Code of Behaviour is reviewed each year and is available upon request.

School Statement on Bullying

The community in Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School wants to ensure that all in the community can live, work, and play in an environment which is totally free from bullying. Students are encouraged and do report incidents of bullying. The school takes its obligations in relation to bullying seriously. The anti-bullying policy is available on request and the school follows the procedure as per the Department of Education and Skills' anti-

bullying guidelines 2013. Please familiarise yourself with the steps so as you understand who to contact in case of any alleged bullying.

School Uniform

All students are required to wear the school uniform. Boys are required to wear navy trousers and girls wear navy skirt or trousers. Both wear navy v neck jumpers with school crest, blue shirt, navy tie, plain black shoes, or runners with no logos.

The Crested School Jacket, Plain Navy or Black jackets are accepted. No jackets with large logos or any other colour jacket are acceptable.

Jewellery is limited to one ring and one pair of stud earrings.

Students who are not dressed in appropriate school uniform will be sent home to change following contact being made with parents/guardians.

Please see below for what is acceptable:



School uniforms can be purchased from several different outlets:

- The School Warehouse, www.schoolwarehouse.ie - 087 6476000 - Parents are encouraged to order online, please visit website for more information.
- School crests can be purchased directly from school office at a cost of €5.00.

P.E. Uniform

Physical Education is a subject taken by all students. Students wear their PE gear for the duration of their PE Day. Students participating in PE classes must wear the following:

- Plain black or navy sweatshirt/hoodie with school crest.
- Plain black or navy t-shirt.
- Plain navy or black tracksuit, or leggings that are appropriate.
- Runners or sports shoes.

Students may not wear vest tops, inappropriate leggings or shorts.

Students who are not dressed in appropriate PE uniform will be sent home to change following contact being made with parents/guardians.

Non-uniform days

Students may wear their own clothes on non-uniform days. Remember that they are in school and that they are children. Clothes worn must be appropriate for a school setting.

Students who are dressed inappropriately for a school setting will be sent home to change following contact being made with parents/guardians.

School Statement on the inappropriate use of social media

As per the Acceptable Use Policy, any social media accounts, pages or groups that use the school's name or images are strictly prohibited. The school will do its best to investigate any incidences of cyberbullying, i.e., when students in the school post something about another student or students in the school. This is difficult, as images or posts are often deleted before any investigation starts. Under The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act, 2020, it is a criminal offence to distribute, publish or threaten to publish or distribute an intimate image of another person without their consent. If this happens to your child, you should report immediately to an Garda Síochána. It is also illegal to possess such images as this is classed as Child Pornography. We strongly urge parents to monitor their children's phones and social media accounts, especially in relation to Snapchat. We also advise parents to attend our internet safety information session in August.

School Statement on the use of Drugs

The school does not accept the possession, use or supply of drugs in the school, on school trips or in non-school time by any member of the school community. The only exception is for legitimate medicinal use and the school must be informed by a parent/guardian. The school will respond to each case as deemed appropriate as per the Code of Behaviour and if necessary, liaise with an Garda Síochána.

School statement on the use of Electronic Equipment

The use of mobile/smart phones and all other electronic devices (except when authorised by teachers in a controlled environment such as using laptops or Chromebook, or where a student has reasonable accommodation for use of a digital device) is strictly forbidden.

There are no exceptions to this rule change and there is no discussion to be had. If a parent wants to contact a student for any reason, they must use the correct channels of communication, i.e. through the school office.

Students caught with any device will be sent home immediately for the remainder of the day.

School Statement on a nut-safe zone

The Board of Management has a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to keep students, staff and members of the wider school community safe at school. A growing number of members of our school community have identified chronic allergies, including some with severe allergies to certain foods (in particular nuts). The school is therefore a nut-safe zone. We ask that all staff, students, and parents adopt a common-sense approach to keeping nuts and food containing nut products out of our school community insofar as is possible. This is hugely important as it could save someone's life.

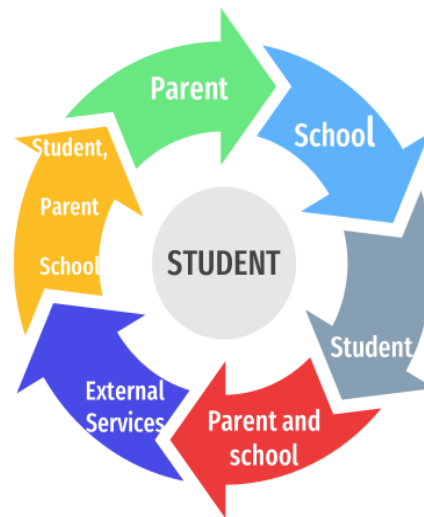
School Statement on abuse of staff

The Board of Management has a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to keep staff safe at work. Communication, either by phone, or in person between staff and parents/guardian are essential in the day-to-day running of our school. While the vast majority of parents and guardians meet with us in an atmosphere of mutual respect, there has been an unfortunate increase in the number of incidents where staff have been abused, either on the phone or in person. This is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Staff are here to provide a safe environment in which your children can be educated. They also have the right to feel safe in their workplace. Should a member of staff be abused during a phone call or a meeting, they will end the conversation. Should the abuse be of significant concern, the school and the individual member of staff reserve the right to make a complaint to an Garda Síochána. Please respect all members of staff and treat them in a manner that you would expect to be treated.

**Information on Additional Education Needs, the role of parents and
the role of the school.**

This information is to give an overview of what the school can offer and in what circumstances. Our full AEN Policy is available on our website www.olmdrimnagh.com

How the AEN circle works in schools



Role of parents

The Irish Constitution states that parents have primary responsibility for educating their child. While the school works in partnership with parents in order to provide which ever supports it can, the school is limited by law and by resources in what it can and cannot provide. Below is some information as to how the system works.

For the school to best support your child, it is essential that the school is given a copy of all reports by relevant services (for e.g. HSE, CAMHS, NEPS) are given to the school by you, **the parent**. It is not the school's responsibility to find or access these reports and the school does not have the authority to access them from the HSE or other services. If you wish for your child to receive supports, they may be entitled to, the parent must supply the school with all relevant reports.

Partnership and communication with the school

In OLM Drimnagh, we pride ourselves in our excellent AEN Department. The work that they do in terms of testing students, ensuring all supports are in place from submitted reports, making applications for additional supports and Reasonable Accommodation for State Exams cannot be underestimated. For this system to work, however, it must be in partnership with parents.

Parents are obliged to, on occasion, attend meetings, to provide input on the creation of Student Support Plans, and to discuss supports, reports, etc. Parents are also expected to sign and return necessary application forms in a timely fashion.

There has been an unfortunate increase in the number of parents who did not engage with the AEN Department in relation to applications or not showing up for appointments. These are essential to ensure students receive the supports they may be entitled to. By not engaging or not showing up for meetings/appointments, parents are letting their own child and others on waiting lists down. This cannot continue.

The Board has approved that there will be a limit on attempts to engage with parents who do not reciprocate. Should a parent fail to show up for appointments three times, with no communication or explanation as to why, the AEN Department will move on to the next student and their family. If an appointment has been made with an educational psychologist for assessment and the parent does not engage, the student will be moved back to the bottom of the priority list. The Board will write directly to those parents who do not engage with the school.

As a school, we respectfully ask that parents engage with our AEN Department, keep appointments, and treat our staff with the same respect you would expect to be treated with yourself. They do wonderful work with students and the school simply could not function without the wonderful AEN staff.

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

Some students may already have a NEPS report, which outlines supports that students could receive in school for a learning disability. Please ensure the school is given a copy of these reports.

Students may arrive to school with no NEPS report, who may need one. Please note that there is an extreme shortage of NEPS assessments available to schools. We do our best to accommodate these, but you will appreciate that we have to prioritise based on all students' needs.

Some medical or psychological professionals write letters to schools demanding the school gets a NEPS assessment for a student. This is not how the system works and they have no authority to make such demands. The only service which can accommodate assessments is NEPS and they grant very few assessments. A request or demand from any other service cannot influence the school's priority list.

Parents are welcome to have their child privately assessed and ensure the school receives a copy of the report after it has been completed. The school can then arrange supports for the student in question. If an application needs to be made to the DES for additional supports, the school will work with parents to do this. Please note, the school does not fund private assessments, as it is not given any financial support by the DES to do so.

SNA access

SNA access in secondary school is very different from that provided in primary schools. The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) scheme is designed to assist children with special educational needs **who also have additional and significant care needs**. **Circular 0030/2014** provides details of the primary care needs for which SNA support will be provided and details the types of secondary care associated tasks which SNAs may often perform, but only once they have been allocated to students to provide for primary care needs. The school is allocated a number of SNAs by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). The NCSE decides which students have SNA access. Only the NCSE has this authority. No written psychological report or letter from services or doctors will grant a student SNA access. The school can apply for an exceptional review of its allocation of SNAs, but it does not mean that the student will be granted access. That decision rests with the NCSE.

Language exemptions (except for Irish)

There is no provision for language exemptions in the DES. No psychological report can change that. In OLM, all students must choose a language (French/Spanish). Given the size of the school and the number of teaching staff allocated to us, the school cannot, under any circumstances, set up an additional 'language exemption' class on the timetable. All students study a language at Junior and Senior Cycle and teachers differentiate to ensure that students can access the curriculum.

Irish exemptions

Only students who meet the criteria under **Circular 0055/2022** can be granted an Irish exemption. The criteria:

- A student moving from a different country without previous experience of learning the Irish language who is not less than 12 years of age on the day of their enrolment or who is enrolling following the completion of the full course of primary education recognised by another state.

- An exemption from the study of Irish **may be granted** to a student:
 1. who presents with significant literacy difficulties that are persistent.
 2. who, presents with a standardised score on a discrete test at/below the 10th percentile.
 3. who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs.
 4. whose school has substantial written evidence that these needs persist.
 5. whose school has substantial written evidence that these individualised Student Support Plans have been implemented over not less than two school years.
 6. who has been given every reasonable opportunity to participate in the learning of Irish in mainstream classes for as long as possible.
- A student in a recognised special class or who was previously enrolled in a recognised special school or class or who has a recommendation and has been deemed eligible for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school, that student is automatically entitled to an exemption from the study of Irish without an application.

Steps required for a valid application for an exemption from the study of Irish.

1. A **parent/guardian must make an application in writing to the school** for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish.
2. **The school will contact the parent/guardian** to discuss the application and confirm the sub-paragraph on which the application is based (as outlined in section 2.2 above)
3. **Only criteria contained in the Circular can be considered** as grounds for an exemption from the study of Irish and no other exceptional circumstances can be considered.
4. Where a **decision is reached by the Department of Education** that an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted a signed Certificate of Exemption will be issued to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student and a copy will be held by the school in the student's file.

N.B. If a parent/guardian does not confirm the sub-paragraph under which the application is based then the application is null, and void and no further processing of the application will take place.

School Calendar 2024-2025

1. School closures

Dates	Reason for closure
Monday 30 th September 2024	Day over 166 school days
Monday 28 th October – Friday 1 st November 2024	October midterm break (Halloween)
Monday 4 th November 2024	Senior Cycle for Teachers in-service training
Friday 29 th November & Monday 2 nd December 2024	Day over 166 school days
Monday 23 rd December 2024 – Friday 3 rd January 2025	Christmas holidays
Monday 6 th January 2025	DES Cluster Day for Teachers in-service training
Monday 3 rd February	Bank holiday
Monday 17 th – Friday 21 st February 2025*	February midterm break*
Monday 17 th & Tuesday 18 th March 2025	Day over 166 school days and Bank holiday
Monday 14 th April – Friday 25 th April 2025*	Easter holidays*
Monday 5 th May and Tuesday 6 th May 2025	Bank holiday and Day over 166 school days

* Where contingency arrangements are required a school authority may reduce the length of the February mid-term break or the Easter break [Circular 0016/2014]

2. Parent Teacher Meetings: Students finish class @ 3.15pm

Year Group	Date of Meeting	Time
2 nd	Thursday 10 th October 2024	4.15 – 6.45pm
3 rd	Monday 11 th November 2024	4.15 – 6.45pm
4 th /TY	Thursday 5 th December 2024	4.15 – 6.45pm
6 th	Monday 13 th January 2025	4.15 – 6.45pm
5 th	Tuesday 25 th February 2025	4.15 – 6.45pm
1 st	Tuesday 8 th April 2025	4.15 – 6.45pm

3. Timetable collapse for parents to meet with teachers (8.40am – 3.30pm) *

* Parents will be given an appointment time closer to the date.

Date of timetable collapse	Year groups	Objective of timetable collapse
Thursday 13 th March 2025	All year groups	Parents/guardians and students by appointment to discuss students' progress.

4. Staff Meetings: Students finish class @ 2.10pm

Date of meeting	Time
Monday 21 st October 2024	2.30 – 4.30pm
Thursday 23 rd January 2025	2.30 – 4.30pm
Thursday 8 th May 2025	2.30 – 4.30pm

5. Subject Department Meetings: Students finish class @ 3.15pm

Date of meeting	Time
Tuesday 17 th September 2024	3.30 – 4.30pm
Thursday 28 th November 2024	3.30 – 4.30pm
Thursday 9 th January 2025	3.30 – 4.30pm
Tuesday 4 th March 2025	3.30 – 4.30pm
Tuesday 1 st April 2025	3.30 – 4.30pm
Thursday 1 st May 2025	3.30 – 4.30pm

6. Other calendar events

Date	Details	Time/Note
Thurs 22/08/24	6th Year LCE & LCA Induction- All 6 th Year students and parents/guardians meet in the PE Hall. 6 th Year Students Collect Books.	10:50-12:50.
Fri 23/08/24	5th Year LCE & LCA Induction- All 5 th Year students and their parents/guardians meet in the PE Hall. 5 th Year Students- Collect Books. LCE& LCA State Examinations Results Day.	10:50-12:50.
Mon 26/08/24	TY Induction- TY students and their parents/guardians meet in the PE Hall. TY Students- Collect Books.	10:50-12:50.
Tue 27/08/24	3 rd Year Induction- All 3 rd Year students/guardians and their parents meet in the PE Hall. 3 rd Year Students- Collect Books.	10:50-12:50.
Wed 28/08/24	2 nd Year Induction- All 2 nd Year students/guardians and their parents meet in the PE Hall. 2 nd Year Students- Collect Books.	10:50-12:50.
Thurs 29/08/24	1 st Year Induction- All 1 st Year students and their parents/guardians meet in the PE Hall. 1 st Year Students- Collect Books.	10:50-12:50.
Fri 30/08/24	First Full School Day. All students complete Internet Safety Workshop.	
Mon 2/09/24	Continuation of Internet Safety Workshop.	
Thurs 05/09/24	Open Day. Online school for current students in OLM except for those helping with the Open Day.	
Mon 9/09/24-Tues 10/09/24	TY Overnight Trip.	
Wed 11/09/24	Opening of the School Year Prayer Service in the PE Hall. Parents/Guardians are invited to attend.	8:40am 1 st Year. 9:40am 2 nd Year. 10:50am 3 rd Year. 11:50am TY, 5 th and 6 th
Tue 24/09/24	6 th Year Study Skills with Student Enrichment -PE Hall. 3 rd Year Study Skills with Student Enrichment-PE Hall.	
Wed 25/09/24	1 st Year Trip WorldSkills Ireland. 6 th Year Trip WorldSkills Ireland.	9.00am-12.00 noon @ RDS.
Thurs 26/09/24	2 nd Year School Trip- WorldSkills Ireland. 5 th Year School Trip- WorldSkills Ireland. 3 rd Year School Trip- WorldSkills Ireland.	9.00am-12.00 @ RDS. 9:00am-12:00 @RDS. 12:30pm-3:30pm @ RDS.
Fri 27/09/24	TY School Trip- WorldSkills Ireland. 6 th Year Higher Options Trip.	9.00am-12.00pm @ RDS.
Tuesday 1/10/24-Fri 4/10/24	Active Week. OLM Mile Challenge- Friday 4/10/24. Parents are invited to get involved in one race.	Activities led by the PE Department.
Fri 18/10/24	LCA 1 & LCA 2 Bonding Day.	Time TBC.
Fri 25/10/24	Wellbeing Day- Check and Connect. 1 st Year Awards - Parents are invited to attend. 2 nd Year Awards - Parents are invited to attend.	Non-uniform Day. 10:50-11:50 in the PE Hall. 11:50-12:50 in the PE Hall.
Tue 05/11/24	Stand Up week Shout Out Workshop.	TBC
Fri 08/11/24	Stand up Celebration Day- Colour Run and other activities.	
Mon 11/11/24	Science Week.	
Wed 13/11/24	Remembrance Service. Students and parents/guardians' option to attend.	11:30am-12:50pm.
Mon 18/11/24	College Awareness Week.	
Wed 11/12/24	JCSP Christmas Celebration- Parents/Guardians are invited.	
Fri 13/12/24	Wellbeing Day-Check and Connect. Christmas Celebrations- Choir.	Non-uniform Day.

Mon 16/12-Fri 20/12	Christmas Exams.	
Tues 7/01/25	School Reopens.	
Mon 20/01/25	Catholic Schools Week. Range of activities organized by the RE Department.	
Tue 21/01/25	TY CAT4 Tests	
Thurs 23 Fri 24/01	Incoming 1 st Year CAT4 Tests	
Wed 05/02- Fri 14	Mock Examinations. TY Work Experience Block.	
Fri 31/01/25	Celebration of CEIST Day.	Led by RE Team.
Fri 14/02/25	Wellbeing Day-Check and Connect	Non-uniform Day
Fri 28/02/2025	3 rd Year – TY Taster Day. TY-5 th Year Taster Day	
Tue 4/03/25	Parents/Guardians Information Meeting- Incoming 1 st Year. Parents/Guardians Information meeting for 3 rd – 4 th Year. Parents/Guardians Information Meeting for 4 th – 5 th Year.	5-6pm. 6-7pm. 7-8pm.
Mon 10/03/25	Seachtain na Gaeilge. Activities led by the Irish Department.	
Fri 21/3/25	1 st Year Awards- Year Head, Class Teachers and assigned SNAs. 2 nd Year Awards-Year Head, Class Teachers and assigned SNAs. Parents/Guardians are invited to attend.	10:50am-11:50am 11:50am-12:50pm
Wed 2/04/25	World Autism Awareness Day	
Mon 7/04/25	Jigsaw One Good School Week Activities organized by the Wellbeing Team	
Fri 11/04/25	Wellbeing Day-Check and Connect	Non-uniform Day
Friday 2/05/25	School Trip Day (All Year Groups).	
Friday 9/05/25	Sports Day (If raining, 12/5/25).	
Wed 14/5/25	TY Showcase.	
Thurs 15/05/25	Awards Evening-All Year Groups & TY.	Parents are invited.
Fri 16/05/25	1 st Year Awards-8:40am-9:40am. 2 nd Year Awards 9:40am-10:40am. 3 rd Year Awards 10:50am-11:50am. 5 th Year Awards 11:50am-12:50pm.	Parents are invited.
Wed 21/05/25	6 th Year Graduation Awards. Parents/Guardians are invited. All other students finish class at 10:40am.	11.00-12.50 with refreshments.
Fri 23/05/2025	Wellbeing Day-Check and Connect.	Non-uniform Day.
Mon 26/05-Fri 30	Summer House Exams TY (Core Subject Exams).	
Wed 4/06/25	State Examinations begin.	

