

Our Lady's Grove Parents Council Newsletter

December 2020

Dear fellow parents,

It has been a year of change and different perspectives, not least in how our kids are schooled and educated. As well as our kids' experience of school life, there have been marked changes in how we as parents interact with the school, and a host of new guidelines to keep on top of.



In this edition of our newsletter we'll let you know what has, and is, happening in the school, the answers to some questions we've received from parents on COVID and what you need to do to ensure our school remains open, and what need to know.

In particular we welcome our new first

years and their parents, and at least we can be glad they have had a first year experience. That is largely thanks to your and your kids efforts .

As a Parents Council we need the input and contribution from you, the parents. We need as much engagement as possible from parents, and this newsletter forms a part of that. We encourage you also to reach out to us and keep an open dialogue and conversation amongst parents.



We are very lucky to have an open and communicative management team within the school who always have an open ear for the parents. We should leverage that to ensure the secondary experience for our kids is everything we and they want.

Help us keep in touch

If you are reading our newsletter directly from the school website, you must not be on our distribution list. Why not sign up to receive updates directly from us to your inbox. Please reach out to us via the address opposite with the title 'Please add me to your mailing list' to allow us to contact you more easily

If you'd like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you.

Parents@olgrove.ie

As we bcc our addressees, our mails may end up in your spam. Please add us to your allowable contacts



Special points of interest:

- > Parents and student responsibilities during COVID
- > Development at rear of school and hockey pitch
- > New school video
- > Keeping in touch with the school
- > Your voluntary contribution

School Development — inside and out!



There have been huge developments to the rear of the school in the last year. Not only with the hockey pitch, but also general redevelopment of the landscape. This has created a much needed outdoor space for the girls to gather and relax during breaks. As well as outside, there was a huge facelift internally:

- ◆ new floors installed in ground and middle floor classrooms
- ◆ brighter halls with new paint, graphics, trophy displays and pictures added around the whole school

The next step in the school's building development will be addition of the outdoor modular building for common room and changing rooms in 2021, plus the refurbishment of internal bathrooms.

And all of this done in the middle of a lockdown! You can see the results yourself from the new school promotional video now up on the school website: [School video](#) (Youtube link)

This is what your voluntary contribution drives

It is important for us as parents to see what our voluntary contributes drives, and the above is a glimpse into how the school puts every cent to its maximum use. We greatly encourage, where and when you can, that parents partake in the voluntary contributions.

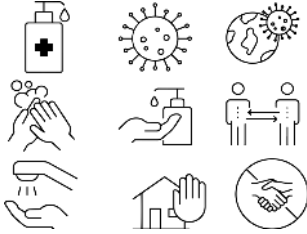
As a voluntary school, we receive less government funding than ETBs and Community Schools. The voluntary contribution subsidises this shortfall in government funding and is the only means by which the school can upgrade and refurbish facilities.

Through the Parents Council, we've seen the effort first hand that goes into ensuring value for your money. In the past the Council dug in to assemble new tables and chairs for the school. Rarely have I visited the school in the early hours of the morning, and Colm or Sonya aren't co-ordinating some sort of ongoing maintenance, either getting their own hands dirty or pointing the relevant tradesperson in the right direction.



In early December (since the photos) there have been added a number of outdoor benches and tables

All things COVID



COVID over information is a big problem these days, so we'll try keep the below as brief as possible!

But in saying that, there are some key messages for that we really need to be aware of.....

⇒ **IF IN DOUBT, KEEP THEM OUT:** if any symptoms of COVID, please do not send children to school. Doing so puts at risk the ongoing functioning of the school and has the potential to cause massive disruption to the school

⇒ Keep the school informed: any absences should be explained, even if not COVID related, as a courtesy to the school and this is also a recommendation from the Department of the Education

Parents' Questions



There's a lot of information out there—where do will I find the most up to date information for Our Lady's Grove?

The school website (www.olgrove.ie) is the first place that will be updated in relation to any news from the school.



How is the school maintaining cleaning and ventilation standard?

The school purchased a fogger machine early on COVID, which can disinfect a full room in a matter of minutes. Students are also responsible for cleaning their desks after every class. Ventilation is a key factor in keeping COVID at bay, and policy is to leave windows open. This will result in colder rooms, so under armour thermals, jackets and woollen tights can worn at all times now to keep warm.



Lockers not being in use are resulting in very heavy school bags—what are the school doing in this regard and will lockers be available, particularly to exam year students?

The school has lockers in base rooms, rather than in halls, and that structure does not allow the use of lockers while adhering to social distancing requirements. We do not want to allow classes to mix, so the 'sharing' of lockers across rooms for exam year students is also not possible due to greater risk of having students moving outside their core groups / classes in that scenario.

The school encourages the use of the iPads and not bringing books into school. Navigating through COVID there is no requirement to bring physical books if the same materials are available electronically. Some students are taking photos etc of pages need that day and using those instead of the physical books.



What do I if my child is symptomatic or sick?

"If in doubt, keep them out"

If your child will be absent, please ring the school and let them know the reasons, even if not COVID related.

Upon return to school, your child should check in at reception and provide a note of absence explaining the absence.

Full details on the school's COVID Policy can be found on [here](#) — we would suggest this is saved as a bookmark for easy access

Uniform Swap



In August we held a uniform swap, which was gladly received by a number of parents. We plan to hold another one in early January so keep an eye for notice of that

We have a large selection of uniforms for reuse.

Good for the environment, and good for the pocket.....



Next uniform swap in **January**

Donate a uniform or pick up another

Meet the team

We are a council of 8 members. If you are interested in getting involved in anyway or simply want to raise something to the council, reach out to anyone below or email us at parents@olgrove.ie

New members are greatly needed, particularly from 1st and 2nd year students. Please reach out.

Mark Ryan (Chair) - 6th year parent
Tara Byrne - 5th year parent
Deirdre Dowd - 6th year parent
Safe Eltom—5th/3rd year parent

Ann O'Kelly—6th/4th year parent
Grainne O'Neill—3rd year parent
Fadi Badin—4th year parent

School Communications



The school strives to put to use the digital tools available in this day and age, but we as parents can find this a struggle to keep up, particularly alongside the change from primary schools. Rarely will news be communicated via letters, but rather updates are sent via Twitter and emails.

The website (www.olgrove.ie) is the primary conduit of communication from the school, but this is setup to be self serve. We would greatly encourage parents to check in regularly to the website, or even better if you are part of the Twitterati make sure you are following the @olgrove Twitter account.

Top Tip: Get in the know with the school calendar

But, if like yours truly, you haven't got a handle on how these hashtag handles work, or simply don't have the inclination to get involved with social media, your best bet is with to the school calendar. With a few easy steps you can add the full school calendar to your phone calendar, and any updates will be flow through automatically. Log onto the school website www.olgrove.ie and in the bottom left you'll see the calendar icon, and instructions for the mobile of your choice.

OUR LADY'S GROVE SECONDARY SCHOOL Parent Info Sheet

Sign up to your Parents Council email list here. Click the link, or simply email us asking to be added to our mailing list

Parents@jesusandmarycollege.ie



A very warm welcome to you, the parents, from your Parents Council.


At Our Lady's Grove you will find a great teaching staff, management team and friendly parents to help you, as well the children, in the transition to secondary school.

One of the biggest changes for parents from primary to secondary school is the change in school communications. Gone are the days of letters and flyers arriving home in school bags! So here's a few tips to help you along the way.....

The school will send out tweets on a regular basis to keep parents and students up to date on activities. Make sure you follow us at:

[@olgrove](https://twitter.com/olgrove)

Our music, science and sport groups also have their own twitter handles that you can follow.

The website is a one stop shop for all the latest info and newsletters. Make sure you check in regularly, and make it your first stop for any information you need www.olgrove.ie

Log onto the website and under the calendar section, you will find instructions to **add the school calendar** to your personal calendar, on your PC, Android or iPhone



Please take this info sheet with you as a reference going forward.

Your OLG Parents Council

FAMILY WELLBEING COURSE



Starting Tuesday 19th January, 2021 at 7pm (Online)

Full course 6 weeks €100

Mary Pierce HDip UCC (QQI Level 8)

Interpersonal Communications Cert. UCC (QQI Level 7)

Therapeutic Play Skills (QQI Level 6)

Parent & Relationship Mentor

UCC accredited IARM affiliated

I have moved my Family Wellbeing course online
Same course in the comfort of your own home

The last few months have been challenging in all aspects of our lives but none more so than parenting. Join me in looking at starting a fresh new year! I will support you to find new ways of creating family wellbeing in the home. We all need self-care and compassion but sometimes we miss giving it to ourselves. Parenting self is the first step in creating a safe environment for our children. It mirrors for our children how to show self-compassion and so supports them to build self-esteem and resilience. The course is experiential, educational with a large slice of fun!

Areas covered:

- Parenting Self – what does it mean?
- Family Relationships and feelings
- All Children are Geniuses!
- The Behavioural Development of Children
Helping your child to become Response-able
- Children's Challenging Behaviours
- Adults Challenging Behaviours

Please contact mpierce427@gmail.com or 087 6848573 to reserve a place

Mary Pierce
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IARM ~~affiliated~~
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