



September 16th 2021

Dear Parents/ Guardians,

It has been a busy few weeks in Our Lady's as both students and teachers get back into the new school day routines. We were delighted with the exceptionally high Leaving Certificate results for the Class of 2021 and wish them the best as they embark upon the next stages of their lifelong learning.

### **Catch up/ Recovery Curriculum**

In Our Lady's we are very aware of the impact the school closures have had on student learning and wellbeing. As soon as our students returned to school we focused on a catch up recovery curriculum so that our students have a solid foundation for the year ahead. We aimed to identify and meet the gaps in learning so that our students are ready for the new curriculum in the coming year. It has been a great success and well done to everyone for their hard work.

### **Extra Curricular Programme**

We also recognise that student wellbeing has been impacted and we quickly got our extensive extra curricular programme up and running to foster a sense of student connectedness to the school.

There is overwhelming evidence that students learn more effectively, including in their academic subjects, if they are happy in their school work, believe in themselves, feel a sense of belonging in school and feel school is supporting them. It is important therefore that students enjoy the many aspects of school life outside the classroom.

Please check in with your daughter to ensure that she has availed of the many opportunities to get involved with some of the varied programme on offer. As well as hockey, badminton, basketball, camogie, football, dance, yoga, running club and a range of sports, we have a range of non-sporting options: debating, MUN, choir, publication, charity, Latin, Spanish debating and more. Maths club has also commenced and this provides an opportunity for students to have some maths fun, get extension activities or get some assistance where needed. We hope to see lots of our students availing of these activities.



Please see the extra curricular timetable on our website: [https://olschool.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Extra-Curricular-Timetable-21\\_22-Term-1-1.pdf](https://olschool.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Extra-Curricular-Timetable-21_22-Term-1-1.pdf)

We also recognise that friendships may have changed due to prolonged periods at home without socialising so we are currently holding **Friendship Week** where students are encouraged through a large number of extra curricular and co curricular activities to extend the hand of friendship to others. Activities include Buddy walks, Friendship postcards, craft classes making friendship bracelets and SPHE class reviewing how to be a good friend.

### **After School Study**

After school study for 3rd, 5th and 6th Year students has also started and we encourage any student who needs a steady study routine to use this facility. 3rd, 5th and 6th Year students have already availed of external agencies delivering Study Skills Programmes and hopefully this will assist them in understanding how to study effectively. 1st and 2nd Years will have their sessions in the coming weeks.

### **Assessments and Academic Tracking**

Your daughter will have two summative assessment windows this year. The whole school will have house exams starting on the week of November 29th (except for TYs who will have their exams 15th - 17th December).

3rd and 6th Years will sit their Mock examinations starting on February 7th.

1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Years will sit end of year house exams in May.

All data gathered from the examinations will be tracked and interventions provided for students that are not progressing academically in the manner that they should be. This will also include data from minor assessments conducted by subject departments throughout the year. There is an academic team in place who will oversee this process and will work with an intervention team to identify and assist students.

Each 6th Year student has been appointed an academic mentor who will be a valuable resource to them throughout this academic year as they focus on ensuring the student reaches her academic potential this year.



### **Student Leadership**

The 6th Year Council started off the year as excellent role models assisting with the 1st Year Induction Programme and helping settle the 1st Year into the school. Our 5th Year Lighthouse Programme has also commenced where 5th Year leaders mentor 2nd Year students. Likewise each 6th Year councillor has a team of four 1st Year buddy students. Student Council elections take place soon and the student voice grows more confident with each passing year and plays an important role in school life. The Le Chéile Council, Cultural Committee, St Vincent De Paul, the Green Committee and the Coiste Gaeilge are just some of our other leadership groups which are also setting back up.

Our TYs are off to a fast start with workshops, the introduction to Gaisce and hikes commencing next week. They are also busy with their academic programme which includes a continuous focus on catch up and consolidating skills in preparation for the Senior Cycle. We have also introduced a PDST Maths Competency Assessment in 4th Year to review progress and assist the move into LC maths.

Our 2nd Year Digital Champions are visiting all 1st Year classrooms to remind them about positive online etiquette and to warn them about pitfalls that can easily occur online. We know that this is an area that all students need guidance on.

### **CLASS Support Scheme**

The Department of Education has launched a new Covid Learning and Support Scheme (CLASS) to provide additional supports to schools to mitigate any negative impacts from the school closures and online learning periods. We will be working with our various teams to identify the needs and implement the supports available. Please click in to the link on the app notification so that we can gauge any additional impacts that the period of Covid 19 has brought in order to address these where possible.

I wish you and your family the very best in the coming term.

Yours sincerely

Marguerite Gorby  
Principal