
OUR LADY AND ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE, KNOCK



PTA WELCOME BOOKLET





Welcome

Welcome to Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock. This booklet provides you with information about our Parent Teacher Association which forms an important part of College life. All families automatically become members of the PTA when their child joins the College.

Our PTA History

The PTA was founded in June 2010, with the objective of creating an Association which would bring together different sections of the school community with the common goal of providing 'Excellence through Care'. It is now an integral part of the College community. All parents and members of the school community are encouraged to get involved.

The Committee 2022-2023

The Committee meets on the second Tuesday of every month. It is made up of 23 members with approximately two to three new members joining each year. The present Committee comprises of 19 parents and 4 members of staff. The parents on the Committee represent students in all year groups from Year 8 to Year 14. We aim to make the PTA as representative of the school community as possible and welcome all new members. The College has a large catchment area and we are keen to recruit members from all year groups and all areas, especially North Down and the Ards Peninsula. **Please contact us if you are interested in joining or coming along to our next event.** It is a place to meet new friends, acquaint yourself with our College community, while also contributing to College life.

The Office Bearers for 2022-2023 are:

Chair	Mrs Bernie Sweeney
Secretary	Mrs Helen Robinson
Minutes Secretary	Ms Maria Mullaly
Treasurer	Mrs Karen Gribbon
Public Relations Officer	Mrs Claire Campbell



Back Row (L-R): John Turkington, Paddy Tinnelly, Tom Cotter, Sandra Hughes, Helen Robinson (Secretary), Lianne Bidauville, Ciara McGuirk, Bronagh Kelly, Anna Strzelecka-McConville, Máire Campbell-Quinn, Mrs Fox (Teacher); **Front Row (L-R):** Charmaine Hunt, Catherine Scully, Emma Conway, Claire Campbell (PRO), Karen Gribbon (Treasurer), Miss McLaughlin (Principal & Hon. President, PTA), Bernie Sweeney (Chair), Maria Mullally (Minutes Secretary), Michelle Napier, Mrs Knight (Senior Teacher), Conor Mackle. (Missing from photo: Ms Moley (Teacher) David Coyles).

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Our Annual General Meeting takes place towards the end of the academic year and provides an opportunity for parents to learn more about the work of the PTA. All parents are notified of the meeting three weeks prior and encouraged to attend. Committee members are elected at this meeting for the following year.

**This year's meeting will take place on 13th June 2023
and all interested parents are welcome to attend.**

Pupil Involvement



The PTA promotes Student Voice and encourages pupils to participate in PTA events. There is an annual College 'Focus of the Week' to update the student body on the work of the PTA. Pupils act as a conduit between the PTA and parents, informing them about events. Our students play an important role in ensuring the success of events by promoting and selling tickets, especially for PTA Prize Draws.

As this is a partnership, the PTA encourages students through the Student Council to identify where funding from the PTA would be beneficial, such as outdoor seating for the Courtyard.

What Does the PTA do?



The PTA is about much more than simply fundraising. The Association exists to provide closer links between home and school and is an excellent way to bring parents, staff and friends together socially in support of the College, working towards a common goal. Key recurring activities include:

1. Year 8 **Mass of Welcome**: the PTA provides refreshments for parents and pupils.
2. Social Events such as informal dinner dances, the **Ladies' Lunch**, Quiz Nights and the **5K Fun Run**
3. The annual Spring Draw which raises funds that go directly to classroom projects and relies on donations from the College community and wider business area.
4. More momentous events in recent years have included the Titanic Ball, held in March 2016 to celebrate 30 years of the College. This was a huge success with £20,000 raised towards school projects including a mental health and resilience programme for the students.
5. Our most recent event was OLSPCK Does Strictly. Held in November 2022, this was a tremendous success with over £50,000 raised solely for the purchase of a new College minibus. The event showcased the remarkable partnership between the PTA, College staff and the wider community, with half of the competing dancers drawn from school staff.
6. Uniform Recycling Initiative: This has been a great success, based on donations of unwanted items which are sold discreetly through reception or in a pop up shop. It is motivated by wanting to ease the financial burden on parents whilst showing social responsibility and helping the environment.



Fundraising and How We Spend the Money We Raise

Since its establishment, the PTA has raised in excess of £100,000! PTA funds are spent on extras that are not provided by the school budget. We endeavour to spend our funds in ways that will benefit children across all areas of the school and curriculum.

Over the last few years the PTA has funded a myriad of projects including:

- Three picnic benches and outdoor seating for the main Courtyard;
- A Bookbuzz Reading Programme for Year 8 students;
- A fully equipped Ceramics Trolley for the Art Department;
- Instruments for the Music Department;
- Laugh In the Face of Exams: An ongoing programme designed to help students manage anxiety around exams.
- Trophies for a new College Chess Tournament and the annual OLSPELL Spelling Competition;
- A contribution to the cost of the U15 soccer team representing NI at the Alan McKinstry Cup;
- New whiteboards for several classrooms;
- Defibrillators for various locations around the College;
- A subscription for Maths Watch, as well as a Maths Test Package;
- A Year 14 History Conference led by Dr Russell Rees;
- A contribution towards the cost of a Year 13 study trip for four pupils to Auschwitz Concentration Camp;
- 30 Motorola Moto G4 Play Smartphones with 10 VR headsets to be used across the curriculum;
- Student Photography competition;
- A College Team to enter the UK Youth Rocketry challenge;
- A lunchtime Board Games Club;
- Onatti Theatre Company productions to promote the learning of languages through drama and music;
- A Pastoral Programme for parents to support their children 'Growing Up in the Digital World ';
- Activities for STEAM week;
- A contribution towards costs of the College Bar Mock Trial Team representing NI in the UK Finals;
- Counselling provision for students;
- Pedal exercisers to aid concentration during Study (requested by the Student Council);
- Calculators for the Maths department;
- Banners for school matches;
- Funding for Flight School (in conjunction with local primary schools);
- A small gift for Leavers.



Input into College Policies and Procedures

Every three years the PTA reviews the School Improvement Plan and provides feedback to inform planning for the next School Improvement Plan. The PTA has also considered and suggested improvements to College Policies such as the Anti-Bullying Policy. As the PTA is a representative body of parents, the Principal, at times, may request parent opinion on school procedures e.g. the recent decision to give Year 11 students study leave during completion of Units for their GCSE examinations.

How We Get Information to You

Information regarding forthcoming PTA events is communicated to parents using the news section of the College website, the Call Parents Text Facility and via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

- Facebook: [PTA - Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock | Belfast | Facebook](#)
- Instagram: @olspck_pta
- Twitter: @OLSPCK PTA

Details of PTA News and plans are included in the regular College e-Bulletin to parents and in the bi-annual College magazine, Communiqué, and we keep the College community informed as to the amount of funds raised and how it has been used.

How You Can Get Involved with the PTA

There are many ways you can help and support your child through the PTA. Come out and support our events. Offering to help before events is always welcome. We usually have two events per year to fundraise and develop links across the College community. **If you would like to be more involved, you can volunteer to be a Committee Member.** You can also help us by letting us know if you have any contacts or skills we could use in a Careers context or any ideas for fundraising. We are always extremely grateful to receive donations of prizes for ballots at events. We hope you now know a little more about the PTA. On behalf of all the pupils, we would like to thank you for your very valuable support which enriches their learning experience and helps to make their time in school so enjoyable.

Finally...

Welcome to our College community. We hope you enjoy the next seven years! Look out for details of upcoming PTA events posted on the College website and social media channels and do come out and support our fundraising efforts. You will receive the warmest welcome!

Contact Details:

Email: knockpta@gmail.com