

OMAGH HIGH SCHOOL - INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

School Uniform

Our uniform is designed to be neat, functional and relatively inexpensive. It is essential that **full school uniform** is worn at all times. No hoodies are permitted and only black coats should be worn. A list of the correct school uniform is enclosed with end of term reports or included in the new Year 8 Induction Booklet. The Education Authority information on applying for uniform allowance is also enclosed. **All uniform items must be clearly labelled with the pupil's name.**

School Funds

In common with all secondary schools, it is necessary to seek financial support from parents in order to maintain the educational experience of our pupils. Unfortunately, the funding which we receive does not cover many essential items such as reprographics, computers, software, music, sport and educational visits. I would therefore ask all parents/guardians to support the school fund by paying the annual contribution of **£30.00 per pupil. (Maximum of £50.00 per family)** This is considerably less than the amount requested or demanded by other schools. The school fund works exceptionally well when **all** parents support it and we can make the funds go an exceptionally 'long way' so please support this vital aspect of our school's work. Please note the School Fund is spent for the benefit of our pupils including paying for field trips, house prizes, hire of buses/running costs of our minibus for a wide range of trips, supporting extra-curricular activities, affiliation fees, etc. Following a successful and very busy year our General Fund is again depleted. Please be assured that this fund supports pupils. Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated. We are able to claim gift aid on school fund contributions by asking parents to make cheques payable to the "Friends of Omagh High School". This group of parents and friends are a registered charity and can claim gift aid on our behalf. This adds value to your contribution if you are a U.K. tax payer and turns £30.00 into approximately £37.50 at no extra expense to you. Please complete the gift aid declaration form and return it with the contribution.

Pupils Allowed off Site

All pupils from Year 8 to Year 11 must remain in school for lunch. Lunch will be provided in the canteen and the value of a free meal ticket will be **£2.80**. Please note that the value of unspent free school meal allowances does not carry forward from day to day. Any unspent money is lost.

I would also remind parents that, should they feel they qualify for free school meals details on how to apply can be found on the flyer enclosed. It is vital that all parents who feel they may be eligible, apply for Free School Meals. A considerable amount of funding for schools is based on the percentage of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals/Uniform and many other schools receive considerably more funding than Omagh High School because of this. We must access all the funding we are entitled to and you can help in this important way by submitting the application forms. Please note that due to our biometric scanning device for payment in the school canteen, no one can tell if a pupil is accessing free school meals. Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated. It is worth noting that school dinners cost in the region of £500.00+ per pupil per year. If you have any queries regarding Free School Meals, please do not hesitate to contact the school office (application forms are still available if online is inaccessible).

Only Years 12, 13 and 14 are permitted to go off site at lunch time after written parental consent forms have been submitted. Years 13 and 14 pupils are not permitted to use their cars during the school day. Appropriate consent forms need to be completed annually at the start of the new school year. Taxis are provided for transport to Omagh Academy.

Homework Diaries

Our school rules and parental information are located in the diary and I would ask parents to read these, discuss them with their children and sign the relevant sections. Please check the homework diary daily and use it to communicate with school. Homework diaries must be brought to school each day. Pupils who fail to do so will be automatically placed in lunchtime detention.

Being Seen

The importance of pupils being visible to drivers when walking to and from school cannot be over emphasised. Parents are asked to encourage their children to wear a reflective item when walking or cycling to and from school.

Printer Credits

All pupils will be issued with an amount of printing credits to use. The system will track the pupils' usage, reducing the balance as the year progresses. We hope this will ensure only necessary printing is undertaken and that there is no waste of paper or toner. If a pupil runs out of credits, they may purchase more from the ICT Department in batches costing £1.00. Please encourage your child to be prudent with their printing in school and help us to put our available resources to best use.

Contact Between Home and School

We believe that the key to a successful education is an **open, transparent** and **respectful** relationship between home and school. Effective communication is an important part of this. We may communicate with parents by telephone, letter or text message. Please ensure you have informed the school office of any changes to your contact details. In cases where parents live separately, formal communication with home will always be sent to both parents where both addresses are available unless extenuating circumstances are made clear to the school. (School rules, Advice to parents, points 15 and 16).

Attendance and Punctuality

I am sure that parents realise that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly - a detailed, computerised record of attendance is kept and is often requested by prospective employers. Most pupils do attend school regularly and pupils are to be commended for that, however, the attendance of a few pupils does give cause for concern. There is often a direct correlation between poor attendance and underachievement at school. Excessive absences which extend the weekend or the holidays are noted and provided to potential employers in due course. It is important to instil into young people that attendance at school is important to a pupil's future employment prospects. Pupils should attend unless they are sick or on an authorised absence. Details of the reporting of absences can be found in the Homework Diary. Detachable slips contained within the School Diary should be used to explain absences. Punctuality to school in the morning and to classes is taken very seriously in Omagh High School. Pupils must be in school by 8.55 a.m. at the latest and **in Registration by 9.00 a.m.** Pupils who arrive late for school i.e. after 9.00 a.m. will automatically receive a lunch-time detention that day. Please note that missing the bus, sleeping in or being delayed by traffic will not be accepted as excuses for lateness.

Crossing the Crevenagh Road

The Crevenagh Road is a very busy thoroughfare and there is always concern for pupils crossing the road. A Toucan crossing is situated at the front of the school and this should be used at all times when crossing the road. Parents are asked to discuss road safety practice with their children and this message will be reinforced in school assemblies. All parents are asked **to use the car park facility opposite the school to drop off and pick up** their children. For safety reasons vehicles **must not** be parked at the front of the school.

Lockers

Each pupil must rent a locker at a cost of £5.00 per locker per year. Each pupil will be issued with a key. If the key is lost a further £5.00 must be paid for a new key. Personal belongings must not be left lying around the school but must be stored in lockers. **Please bring the £5.00 on your first day at school.**

Mobile Phones

I wish to take this opportunity to remind you that inappropriate use of mobile phones in school will not be tolerated. No use of mobile phones is permitted during the **school day**. Pupils are encouraged to leave their

phone at home but if brought to school **phones must be switched off and stored in a pupil's locker immediately upon arrival in school and left there until they leave school.**

With the media and press highlighting the potential use of mobile phones for bullying and harassment I am sure you will encourage your child to heed this requirement. **If a pupil is observed with a mobile phone during the school day the phone will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian during office hours. No exception to this rule can be made. Please note the school office closes at 5.00 p.m.(Monday - Thursday) and 4.00 p.m. (Friday). The pupil will also automatically be given an after school detention.** Repeated breaking of this rule will invoke the disciplinary procedure. I would also like to take this opportunity to point out that children need to be made aware that possessing certain images on their phones is illegal. Possession of indecent images on a mobile phone is a crime and should a pupil have such images the PSNI can take action. I mention this because young people sometimes engage in unwise acts not knowing the seriousness of their actions or the likely consequences.

Cyber Bullying

The impact of social media and instagram, snapchat etc. is far reaching and potentially uncontrollable. The damage and hurt of cyber bullying can have long lasting and detrimental effects on our children. Parents are encouraged to monitor the use of these apps.

If the school and home could work together in this regard we may avoid potential difficulties in the future.

Games and PE

These are compulsory for all pupils. We are committed to promoting the health of all our pupils and these activities are critically important in maintaining health.

A student who is unable to turn out for PE or Games must, on the day concerned, bring a parent/guardian's letter stating the reason. Notes should be given to the PE teacher who normally supervises the class. Non-participation lasting more than one week will require a medical certificate which should be given to the pupil's Pastoral Leader.

School Property

Students should treat the school and its environment with **respect**. Pupils must not:

- damage or destroy school property or the property of others
- drop litter
- bring chewing gum onto the school grounds
- be in or go near restricted areas of the school. Pupils will be made aware of these areas.
- be on the school premises after 3.25 p.m. unless with permission/supervision of school staff

Main Dates for the School Year 2024-2025

15 August 2024	AS/A2 –Level Results
19, 20, 21 August 2024	Baker Days 1, 2 & 3 (Staff only)
22 August 2024	GCSE Results
22– 23 August 2024	Year 13 pupils only – Interviews by appointment
26 August 2024	Bank Holiday – (School closed)
27 August 2024	Year 14 pupils only – Interviews by appointment
28 August 2024	Year 14 pupils only - Interviews by appointment (New pupils 9.00 am to 12.30 pm)
29-30 August 2024	Year 8 pupils only - 9.00 am – 12.30 pm – Baseline Testing.
30 August 2024	Year 13 Induction Event – 9.00 am – 12.30 pm
2 September 2024	Years 8 - 14 in school & Years 9 - 14 - Baseline Testing
19 September 2024	School Horse Show
14 - 18 October 2024	Assessment Week – Tracking Point 1
24 October 2024	Harvest Assembly – Crevenagh House
25 October 2024	Baker Day 4 (Staff only)
28 October – 1 November 2024	Mid-Term break
11 November 2024	Remembrance Assembly – Auchinleck House
13 November 2024 tbc	Year 8 Parents’ Meeting – by appointment
21 November 2024 tbc	Prize Day – 1.00 pm
5 December 2024 tbc	Annual School Carol Services
12 - 20 December 2024	Mock and School Exams – Tracking Point 2
20 December 2024	Last day of term
23 December 2024 – 3 January 2025	Christmas Holiday (School closed)
6 January 2025	Staff Development Day 1 (SDD 1) – (Staff only)
7 January 2025	First day of term
11-18 January 2025	Ski Trip
28 January 2025 tbc	Open Night
5 February 2025 tbc	Year 10 Parents’ Meeting – by appointment
12 February 2025 tbc	Year 12 Parents’ Meeting – by appointment
13 February 2025	Staff Development Day 2 (SDD 2) – (Staff only)
14 & 17 February 2025	Mid-term break
19 February 2025 tbc	Years 13 & 14 Parents’ Meeting – by appointment
24-28 February 2025	Assessment Week – Tracking Point 3
5 March 2025 tbc	Year 9 Parents’ Meeting – by appointment
10 – 13 March 2025	Show Week – Strule Arts Centre
14 March 2025	Staff Development Day 3 (SDD 3) – (Staff only)
17 March 2025	St Patrick’s Day Bank Holiday (School closed)
19 March 2025 tbc	Year 11 Parents’ Meeting – by appointment
31 March – 4 April 2025	Year 11 Mock Exams – Tracking Point 4 for Years 11 – 14 only
10 April 2025	Easter Assembly – Strule House
11 April 2025	Last day of term
14-25 April 2025	Easter Holiday (School closed)
28 April 2025	First day of term
5 May 2025	Bank Holiday (School closed)
22 - 28 May 2025	School exams – Tracking Point 4 for Years 8 – 10 only Controlled Assessments & Revision Classes for Year 11
26 May 2025	Bank Holiday - (School closed)
6 June 2025	Baker Day 5 – (Staff only)
26 June 2025	Last day of term for pupils
27 June & 30 June 2025	Staff Development Days 4 & 5 (SDD 4 & SDD 5) (Staff only)

Baker Days and School Development Days are staff training days – pupils do not attend school.

Parents may be notified of other main events, or changes to the calendar during the year. For the most up to date calendar please consult our school website.

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