



Our Lady's  
Secondary School  
CASTLEBLAYNEY

## A chara,

Choosing the correct second level school for your son / daughter is very important and I hope that we can help you in making that choice. I hope that this brochure will give you an insight into life in Our Lady's and all that we have to offer.

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Secondary School under the trusteeship of CEIST and following the Mercy tradition. As a school we aim to provide a holistic education for all our students that will allow them to reach their full potential. Our Lady's is a place of growth that strives for excellence in teaching and learning by providing a rich and diverse curriculum catering for the needs of each individual student. We do this by offering a broad and balanced range of curricular and extracurricular activities delivered by a committed, hard working and enthusiastic staff.

Through our Student Support Team we strive to ensure that each child in our care is happy, safe, valued and known. We place great emphasis on the dignity of the individual and on respect. We want to work together with all members of our school community to ensure that our students grow and develop so as to reach their full potential.

As a school we constantly ask ourselves what we want for our students and more importantly what do our students want from us. Like you, as parents, we want the very best for our students and we believe THAT OUR STUDENTS AND YOUR CHILDREN DESERVE NOTHING LESS.

We want our students to be ambitious and to set high standards for themselves. We want them to do the very best they can in State Exams which will give them options and opportunities for the future.

We want our students to take part in as many of our varied range of extracurricular activities as possible. We believe that every student has something positive to contribute to school life both inside and outside the classroom. We want them to be an important part of school life and we want school to be an important part of their lives.

Most of all we want our students to be happy here in Our Lady's. We want them to make many new friends and to benefit from the many opportunities and experiences that we can offer them. We want them to leave with happy and positive memories of their time here. We know that happy students will work harder and achieve more.

**Mr. Eddie Kelly** Principal



Deputy Principal Darren Bishop



Deputy Principal Jane Treanor

## MISSION STATEMENT

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School operating under the trusteeship of CEIST according to the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy. We, the staff and students, enjoy working together to realise our full potential in a healthy, safe, stimulating and friendly environment where the atmosphere is one of mutual respect, cooperation and challenge. We take a holistic approach focusing on the wellbeing and development of each individual socially, culturally and academically. Within our school community, each student is treated equally. All are considered uniquely talented, with effort valued as much as excellence. On a day-to-day basis, the Christian message inspires everyone in the school to be charitable, inclusive and understanding.

## TÁ AN GHAELGE BEO I SCOIL MUIRE

Déantar gach iarracht i Scoil Mhuire Gaeilge a chur chun cinn. Tá sé mar aidhm ag an scoil úsáid na Gaeilge a spreagadh agus cuirtear béim ar an nGaeilge labhartha sna ranganna Gaeilge chun féinmhuinín na ndaltaí a chothú i labhairt na dteanga. Chomh maith le sin bíonn ciorcal cainte ar siúl ag am lóin dhá uair in aghaidh na seachtaine chun meas agus spéis na ndaltaí don teanga a neartú agus deis a thabhairt dóibh í a chleachtadh lasmuigh den rang. Eagraítear sraith d' imeachtaí spraiúla do gach bliain i rith sheachtain na Gaeilge Ullmhaítear daltaí don bhéaltríal don Teastas Shóisearach agus gach bliain bronnann Coiste na dtuismitheoirí scoilreachtáí Gaeltachta. Is mian linn atmaisféar cairdiúil, co-oibríteach a chruthú agus a bhuanú sa scoil agus tá an Ghaeilge mar chuid den atmaisféar sin

## A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

### INDUCTION OF NEW PUPILS

Every possible care is taken to ensure that the transition from primary to secondary school is as smooth as possible. Our Open Night provides an opportunity for pupils and their parents to visit the school, to view our facilities and to discuss with teachers the variety of subjects and activities on offer. A teacher will then visit the Primary School to discuss the individual needs of each student enrolling in Our Lady's. Students who have enrolled in Our Lady's will then spend a full day in our school in mid March where they will sample some subjects, meet the teachers and support staff and become familiar with the structure of the day and the layout of our school.

In late August / early September First Year students will have a week of induction activities. During this week they will meet with their class Tutor, Year Head and various subject teachers. They will receive their timetables and have the opportunity to familiarise themselves once again with the layout of our school and engage in a variety of team building activities.

The School Chaplain and Guidance Counsellors will be available to meet with all First Year students during their first few weeks at school to discuss the transition from primary to secondary and to address any concerns or worries that they may have. A group of Sixth Year Student Leaders are assigned as mentors to First Year students. They meet with the First Year students in small groups during tutor class to help them settle into school. The senior students act as positive role models and provide encouragement and support for new students. These students help organise lunchtime activities for first year students as well as assisting with the lunchtime leagues for boys and girls.

All First Year Students will get to sample their option subjects for six weeks at the beginning of September. This allows students to become familiar with each of the subjects before deciding which two option subjects to choose at the end of September. The Guidance Counsellor will meet each First Year student individually to discuss their subject choice. An Information Evening for First Year Parents will be held in early October before students choose their optional subjects.

### QUOTES FROM FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

“What I love most about Our Ladys is how nice and understanding all the teachers and students are. I also love how we get to move to different classes throughout the day.”

“I love to move from class to class. I have met so many new friends and teachers. The staff are really helpful and so are the students from 1st to 6th year. The subjects in Our Lady's are very interesting and there's lots to learn everyday!”

“What I love the most is how welcoming all teachers, students and staff are to the new students and how it's a nice place to meet new friends and people.”

“I like having to move classes and also when it's lunch with all the different types of food in the Food Village canteen. I also like the different sports that you can do in Our Lady's.”

“What I love about Our Lady's is that when we move classes you see lots of new people and new teachers. You might get lost but there always is one person you can reach out to in this school. Everyone is so helpful and we all have the craic with each other”

“I love how this school makes sure everyone feels included, and there's so many clubs and activities for each of us to do”



# 'EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING'

RESULTS IN STATE EXAMINATIONS ARE CONSISTENTLY ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGES IN ALL SUBJECTS

## Junior Cycle Curriculum

We offer a rich, broad and varied curriculum which provides our pupils with a range of subjects that meet the learning needs of all. The subjects are:

English	Science
Irish	French
Maths	German
History	Business
Geography	Graphics
Music	Wood Technology
Home Economics	Religious Education
Physical Education	Art, Craft & Design
Social, Personal & Health Education	Wellbeing
Computer Studies	Civic, Social & Political Education

## Senior Cycle Curriculum

Students prepare for the Leaving Certificate by studying a wide range of subjects at Higher and Ordinary Level. At Our Lady's we pride ourselves on the wide range of subject choice that we can offer our students. We are one of very few schools who offer all our students the choice of studying the three science subjects and three business subjects for the Leaving Certificate.

English	Business Studies
Irish	Accountancy
Maths	German
History	French
Geography	Biology
Music	Chemistry
Home Economics	Physics
Physical Education	Religious Education
Economics	Art, Craft & Design
Construction Studies	DCG
Agricultural Science	Applied Maths
Politics & Society	Leaving Certificate PE
Technology	

## Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

LCVP is a senior cycle programme that students can take along with the Leaving Certificate. The programme focuses on preparation for the world of work with a focus on self directed learning, enterprise, work and the community. It is a two year programme which is certified and may be used for points purposes for entry to third level colleges. Pupils are also given the opportunity to participate in work experience modules.

## Leaving Certificate Applied

The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme is a two year alternative Leaving Cert Programme available to students who wish to follow a practical programme with a strong vocational emphasis. It is aimed at preparing students for adult and working life. The educational experience is active, practical and student centred. Students who successfully complete this programme have the option of progressing to programmes at Colleges of Further Education.

## Junior Certificate Schools Programme

The Junior Certificate Schools Programme is based on the concept that all young people are capable of real achievement in school and that they can have a positive experience of school and enjoy the experience of improvement and success. The Programme provides a curriculum framework which will assist schools and individual teachers in adopting a student-centred approach to the Junior Certificate. It is not an alternative to the Junior Certificate but a support framework to it. It aims to ensure that all participating students sit the same Junior Certificate examination as their peers in as many subjects as they can succeed in. Students in the Special classes may access this programme.

## Level 1 & Level 2 Learning Programme

The Level 1 & 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) guidelines covers learning, teaching and assessment for students with general learning disabilities in the low mild to low moderate range of abilities in first, second and third years of post primary school. These students will benefit from a student led programme focusing on development and learning in such areas as literacy and numeracy, language and communication, mobility and leisure skills, motor coordination and social and personal development.

## Transition Year

Transition Year is a one year compulsory programme taken directly after the Junior Cert to provide a bridge to enable students to make the transition from Junior to Senior Cycle. Pupils can participate in a comprehensive Transition Year Programme which incorporates an academic and practical curriculum and promotes personal and social development. Studies have shown that students who complete TY are more confident and self reliant. They achieve 40 – 50 more CAO points and appear to find the transition from second level to third level easier. Here in Our Lady's we offer a first class balanced programme which we evaluate regularly and as we see necessary. As well as continuing with their academic subjects which is great preparation for the Leaving Certificate students also enjoy two weeks work experience during the year and also complete a number of enjoyable modules. Recent modules in Transition Year include:

Mini Company	Young Social Innovators	Fitness 4 Life	Drama
Keep Fit	Coding	Technology	Sign Language
Sport & Leisure	Debating	Community Care & Sustainability	Wellbeing
Young Scientist	Cookery	Musical Theatre	First Aid
GAA Future Leaders	Microsoft Office	Technology & Design	Dance
Digital Media	Active Schools		Self Defence
Junk Kouture			Horticulture

## School Facilities

Our Lady's Secondary School prides itself on the facilities available to its students. These facilities enhance both the curricular and extracurricular educational experience of our students. In September 2023 the school opened a new extension consisting of 10 general classrooms, 2 Science labs & preparation areas, a Technology room and a preparation area and an Art room. The school has a range of facilities such as:

• Chemistry Laboratory	• Two Home Economics Kitchens	• Demonstration Room	• Concert Hall
• Physics Laboratory	• Two Woodwork Rooms	• Guidance Office	• Floodlit Astro Turf Pitch
• Biology Laboratory	• Technical Graphics Room	• Chaplaincy Room	• Canteen & Shop
• Three Computer Suites	• Music Room	• Learning Support Suite	• General Purpose Area
• Interactive Whiteboards	• Art Room	• Prayer Room	• Locker Facilities
• Textile Room		• School Gym	• Fitness



# Academic

In Our Lady's we place a great deal of emphasis on academic excellence. We expect students to work to the best of their ability and to strive to reach their full potential. It is not unusual for 100% of our Leaving Certificate Class to go to third level education. This is a reflection of the dedication to their studies of our

students and of the commitment of our teachers. We are especially pleased that each year students from our school receive scholarships to their chosen universities which include Trinity College, NUI Maynooth, University College Dublin and Dublin City University.



2023 DCU Entrance Scholarship: Sarah Carragher



2023 Tax Institute Scholarship: Adam Mc Bride



2023 Trinity College Scholarship: Aoife Wynne



2023 UCD Entrance Scholarship Jesse Hendry & Rachel Keenan



2022 Naughton Foundation Scholarship Kaitlyn Brereton



2022 DCU Entrance Scholarship Emer Ruddin



2022 Trinity College Entrance Scholarships Niamh Mullin



Naughton Foundation Scholarship Winners Jason Carragher 2020 & Kaitlyn Brereton 2022



2022 UCD Entrance Scholarship Kevin Yatagampitiya



2021 UCD Entrance Scholarship Recipients

## Recent scholarship winners include:

- 2024 UCD Ad Astra Academic Scholarship: Max McGinnity
- 2023 DCU Entrance Scholarship: Sarah Carragher
- 2023 Trinity College Scholarship: Aoife Wynne
- 2023 Tax Institute Scholarship: Adam Mc Bride
- 2023: UCD Entrance Scholarship: Jesse Hendry
- 2023: UCD Entrance Scholarship: Kealan Mc Mahon
- 2023: UCD Entrance Scholarship: Rachel Keenan
- 2022 Naughton Scholarship: Kaitlin Brereton
- 2022 T.U Shannon Scholarship: Anzelika Bukovska
- 2022 University of Ulster Athlete Scheme: Paudie Heavin
- 2022 DCU Entrance Scholarship: Emer Ruddin
- 2022 UCD Entrance Scholarship: Cian Mc Kenna
- 2022 UCD Entrance Scholarship: Kevin Yatagampitiya
- 2022 Trinity College Scholarship: Niamh Mullin
- 2021 DCU Entrance Scholarship: Emils Zeps
- 2021DCU Entrance Scholarship: Cormac Mc Cusker
- 2021 DCU Entrance Scholarship: Katie Ward
- 2021 UCD Entrance Scholarship: Jodie Mc Quillan
- 2021 UCD Entrance Scholarship: Emma Hanratty
- 2021 UCD Entrance Scholarship: Tara Quinn
- 2021 UCD Entrance Scholarship: Mia Mackie
- 2021 UCD Entrance Scholarship: Phaedra Clarke Casey
- 2021 UCD Entrance Scholarship: Vincent Chen
- 2021 Maynooth Entrance Scholarship: Laura Christie
- 2021 Maynooth Entrance Scholarship: Dylan Gleeson
- 2021 Maynooth Entrance Scholarship: Michaela McGeough
- 2021 Maynooth Entrance Scholarship: Louise Murphy
- 2021 Institute of Technology Carlow Entrance Scholarship: Jordyn Callan

# ANNUAL AWARDS

In Our Lady's we recognise the importance of acknowledging the achievements of our pupils. This is done regularly during the year at year group assemblies, on the electronic notice board or by announcements over the intercom. At the end of the year students in Junior Cycle will have their individual Awards Ceremonies while the Transition Years have their own separate Awards Night. One of the main highlights of the school year is the Annual Awards Night in May when we reward and acknowledge student participation in all areas of school life. This night not only celebrates academic achievement but also participation and success across a wide area of school life including sport, drama, music, art, literature and enterprise. The ultimate accolade presented on the night is the Gerald F. Gillanders Student of the Year Award.



Board of Management Cup for Excellence in English Leila May Daly with Aidan Campbell



Callaghan Cup for Excellence in Irish Amy Mc Ardle with Vincent Callaghan



CEIST Award Edel Murphy with Ms. Christie



Cooltrim Cup for Business: Sean Brennan & Luke Connolly with Ms. Clarke



German Swiss Embassy Cup for Excellence in German Ellie Ward with Ms. McKenna



Gerry McGuill Award for Junior Cycle Achievement 2023 Mischa Bogue with Mr. Bishop



Junior German Award Christian Witek with Ms. McKenna



Junior Maths Award Alex Bannigan with Pete McMahon



Junior Sports Person of the Year Lucy Carey with Declan Loughman



LCVP Award Pierre Mlagami with Ms. Irwin



Leaving Cert Applied Award Ellen Rose Mc Namara with Ms. Shortt



Nogent Sur Vernisson Cup for Excellence in French: Leila May Daly & Laura Mc Nally with Ms. Christie



O'Dufaiigh Cup for Excellence in History Tom Carey with Brendan O Dufaiigh



Parents Association Cup for Excellence in Maths: Cathal Mc Cooney with Mr. Kieran



Senior Art Award Maeve Coogan with Ms. McArdle.



Senior GAA Player of the Year Max Mc Ginnity with Mr. Lyons



Senior Girls Basketball Award Katie Glynn with Ms. Brady



Senior Home Economics Award Poppy Caraher with Ms. Bruen



Senior Ladies GAA Award McElroy Shield Laura Grimes with Claire McElroy



Senior Sports Person of the Year Philip Brady Cup Niamh Flanagan with Mary Brady



Track & Field Athlete of the Year Award Hazel Hughes with Ms. Darby



Ulster & All Ireland Ladies U20 Winners: Laura Grimes & Hazel Hughes with Mr. Nolan



All Star Award Presentation, Boys Max Mc Ginnity, Bobby Mc Caul, Jamie Money with Mr. Lyons



All Star Award Presentation, Girls Laura Grimes, Hazel Hughes, Tara Renaghan & Niamh Flanagan with Ms. Kerr

## SPORT IN OUR LADY'S

The excellent facilities we have at Our Lady's Secondary School allow us to offer our students a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. At Our Lady's Secondary School we participate in a wide range of sports at local, provincial and national level. In recent years the school has enhanced its sporting reputation with several successes particularly in the area of Gaelic Games and Basketball.

- 2024: U/14 Girls GAA Ulster Plate Winners
- 2024: U/20 Senior Girls GAA Ulster & All Ireland Winners
- 2024: Dalton Competition Shield Winners
- 2024: Jamie Mooney, Max Mc Ginnity & Bobby Mc Caul Ulster Schools All Stars
- 2024: Hazel Hughes, Laura Grimes, Niamh Flanagan & Tara Renaghan Ulster Ladies All Stars
- 2024: U/19 Girls All Ireland A Basketball Finalists
- 2024: First Year Girls Basketball Regional A Winners and All Ireland Playoffs
- 2024: Aine Smith, Maeve Smith, Odhran Smith & Hazel Hughes Ulster Athletics Finalist
- 2024: Maebh Clerkin Queen's University Rugby Future Stars Scholarship
- 2023: UUJ Senior Boys GAA 7's Shield Winners
- 2023: Rannafast Shield Winners
- 2023: Macy Treanor Ulster Interprovincial Soccer Squad
- 2023: Oisín Mc Grath Cup finalists
- 2023: DCU 7's Ladies Winners
- 2023: UUJ 7's Shield Winners
- 2023: U/14 Girls GAA Winners
- 2023: Jamie Mooney Ulster Schools All Star
- 2023: Hazel Hughes, Laura Grimes, Niamh Flanagan & Hannah Haughey Ulster Ladies All Stars
- 2023: U/15 Girls Regional Soccer Winners
- 2023: U/17 Boys Regional Soccer Winners
- 2023: U/15 Boys Basketball All Ireland semi finalists
- 2023: Lucy Carey, Emma Mc Guigan, Rebecca Keenan & Annie Carroll North East Regional Basketball Squad
- 2022: MacLarnon Cup Finalists
- 2022: U/14 Boys GAA Ulster Winners
- 2022: DCU 7's Winners
- 2022: Ulster Ladies A U/19 Finalists
- 2022: Jamie Mooney Queens University GAA Future Stars Scholarship
- 2022: Ulster Colleges All Stars Amy Callan
- 2022: Ulster Ladies A U16 Finalists

In addition to the above sports students will also have the opportunity to experience and participate in other sports such as:

Gaelic Games	Badminton	Hurling	Camogie
Basketball	Rugby	Hockey	Bowling
Soccer	Volleyball	Athletics / Trialathon	Equestrian



## MUSICALS AND DRAMA

The Biannual musical for Transition years and Fifth Years has proved to be very popular and provides the students with life long memories. Students benefit greatly from the experience of acting, singing dancing, and back stage experience on set, props, lighting, sound, make up and costumes and programme making all pointing to a rewarding experience. Recent productions have included:

- |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2024 <b>Back to the 80's</b>   | 2011 <b>All Shook Up</b>        |
| 2022 <b>Rock of Ages</b>       | 2009 <b>Burn Baby Burn</b>      |
| 2019 <b>Loserville</b>         | 2007 <b>High School Musical</b> |
| 2017 <b>Bring it On</b>        | 2005 <b>Godspell</b>            |
| 2015 <b>The Wedding Singer</b> | 2003 <b>Grease</b>              |
| 2013 <b>The Wiz</b>            |                                 |

Our school choir under the direction of Ms. Murray perform at all school functions and events. The choir have also experienced success in several prestigious competitions in recent years:

- National ShowChoir Best Vocal Group 2023
- National Showchoir Runners Up 2019
- Llangollen International Music Festival 2019
- Navan Choral Festival Winners 2019
- Sligo Choral Festival Winners 2019
- National Showchoir Winners 2018
- Navan Choral Festival Winners 2018
- Sligo Choral Festival Winners 2018
- National Showchoir Winners 2018





## Student Support

Supporting all our students is part of the ethos of Our Lady's Secondary School. We aim to provide a safe, happy and caring school that will allow for academic, social, spiritual and emotional development. A Student Support Team is in place which is made up of staff members who have a specific pastoral role. The Student Support Team meet on a weekly basis and deal with individual student issues as well as wider issues that may affect a group of students or the wider school community. The types of supports we offer include:

- Individual Counselling
- Guidance Counsellor
- School Chaplain
- Home School Liaison Support
- Training for Peer Mentoring Group
- Induction Programmes
- Mentoring Programmes
- Referral to outside agencies

## Guidance

Students in Our Lady's have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in third level educational needs and career choices and in their academic, social and personal development. We put in place a range of learning experiences, which are designed to assist students to make choices about their lives and to enable each student to get maximum benefit from their education. Guidance in Our Lady's is a continuous developmental process which begins prior to the students' entry to this school and ends on completion of their education here. The school has two full time Guidance Counsellors who play an integral role in the personal, vocational and academic development of students at both Junior and Senior Cycle.



## Chaplain

Students in Our Lady's also have access to a School Chaplain. The Chaplain is available to talk to and listen to students and to support them in various ways. The Chaplain supports the academic, pastoral, personal and social developments of students in our school as we strive to provide an environment where all our students are both known and valued.



## Student Leaders

Student Leaders are 6th Year students who provide help, support and assistance to Junior Cycle students. They are selected towards the end of Fifth Year and receive training for their role. They help with organising the First Year Induction Day and each Student Leader is assigned a First Year class group. Student Leaders are excellent role models for younger students and are extremely welcoming, supportive and helpful to these year groups. Student Leaders are given the opportunity to participate in a number of key events that help develop their leadership skills, sense of responsibility and self-esteem. These events include First Year Induction Day, Open Night, Fundraising activities and several outside school activities.

## Student Council

The Student Council is a democratically elected group of 24 students with 4 representatives from each year group in the school. This group evokes within the students an interest in the school itself by taking on board their suggestions and involving them in decisions made in the school by management. Students learn to co-operate with the Student Council Liaison Teachers, Principal & Deputy Principals, staff, Parents Association and Board of Management as fellow stake-holders who all share the same aim and vision which is to make the school a better place for all members of the school community.

The students meet every week at lunch-time and have been involved in everything from discussing new school policies to fund-raising for a worthwhile cause, to organising the Debs, helping out at school functions or making tea at Parent Teacher Meetings. It is an important role in the school as they voice the issues and needs of the entire student body. The work they do is interesting, challenging and very worthwhile!

## NEW EXTENSION

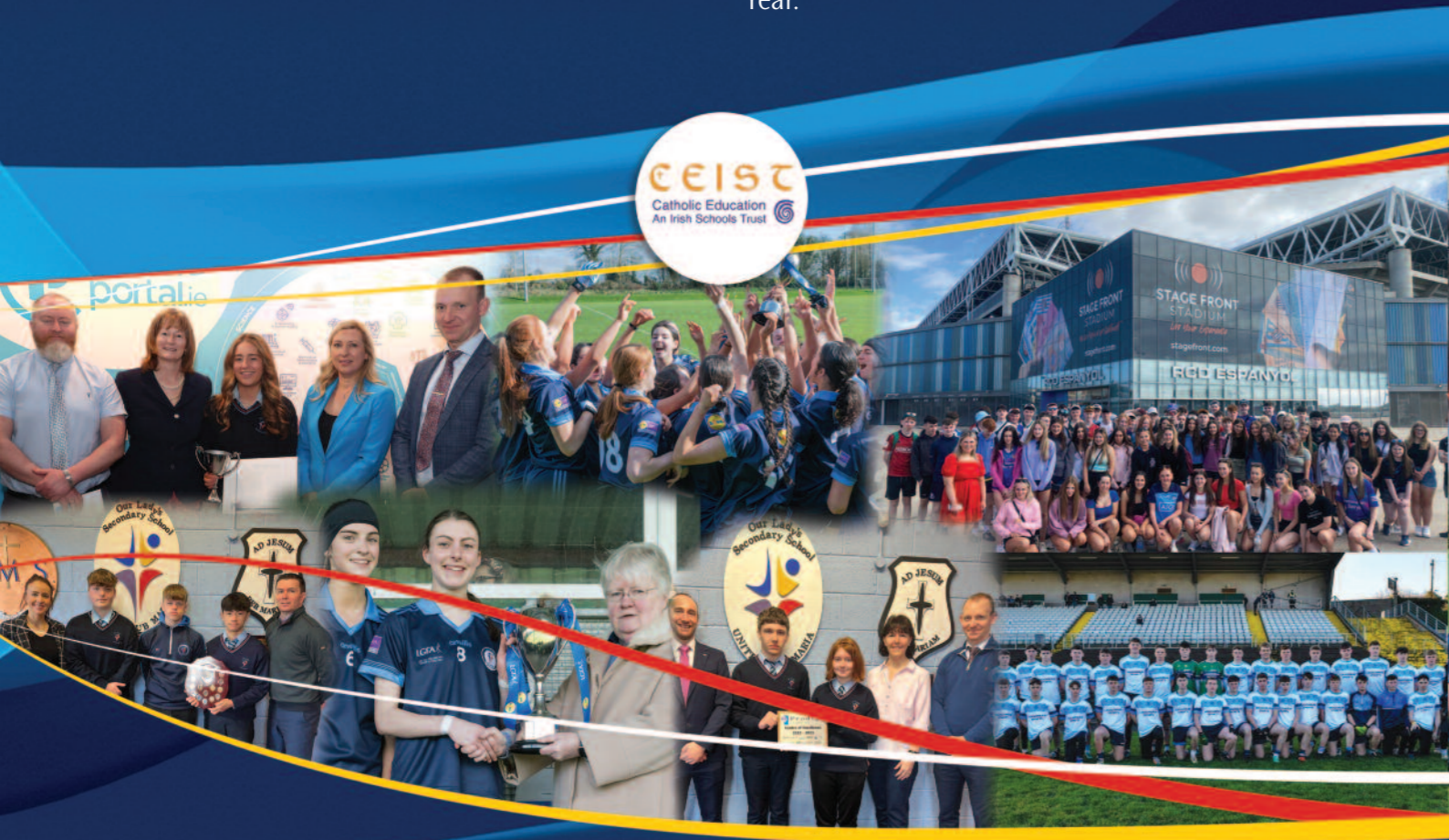


## Board of Management

Our Lady's is a Voluntary Secondary School under the trusteeship of CEIST and is funded by the Department of Education and Skills. The Board of Management oversees the administration of the school and comprises of nominees of parents, teachers and trustees. The daily management of the school is the responsibility of the Principal, who is also the secretary to the Board of Management.

## Parents Association

The role of the Parents Association is central to the further development of Our Lady's Secondary School. Our Parents Association is a vibrant and progressive group who contributes greatly to the ongoing and future needs of the school. In recent years the Parents Association have organised fund raising activities, sponsored Gaeltacht scholarships and contributed to Microsoft Office in Transition Year.



## Contact Details

Principal: Mr. Eddie Kelly

Deputy Principals: Ms. Jane Treanor, Mr. Darren Bishop

Address: Our Lady's Secondary School, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan

Telephone: (042) 97 40351 Fax: (042) 97 49197 Email: [office@olss.ie](mailto:office@olss.ie) Website: [www.olss.ie](http://www.olss.ie)

Facebook: [@olsscastleblayney](https://www.facebook.com/@olsscastleblayney) Instagram: [@olsscastleblayney](https://www.instagram.com/@olsscastleblayney) X: [@OLSSBlayney](https://www.x.com/@OLSSBlayney)

