**Getting involved as parents**

As well as being a great way to meet other parents, the Parent Council and Parent Staff Association are a major part of school life.

* **Parent Council** – the PC represents the views of parents/carers on all matters concerning the school and meets every 6 to 8 weeks e.g. on the transition to the Robslee building, parking, uniform, attainment and communication.
* **Parent Staff Association**  – the PSA meets once a month and organises fund raising and social events for the school community such as discos, summer and Christmas fayres through which it supports many activities in school e.g. Christmas parties and purchase of additional equipment.

You will find out much more about the PC and PSA when school starts - including how to join - but in the meantime, check the school website for more information.

We look forward to meeting you in the years to come!

**Our Lady of the Missions Parent Council and Parent Staff Association**

**A Guide to P1 at OLM
(....for parents by parents!)**

**WELCOME** – we hope you and your child have a wonderful experience at Our Lady of the Missions Primary School. Please don’t worry, your baby is in good hands!

In this note, we (the OLM Parent Council and Parent Staff Association) share some “parent to parent” tips but you will also find out more about how to get involved in the school community as a parent – our PC and PSA are a vital part of school life.

**Coming and going**

* “The Mensa” – you will hear it talked about but may not know that it is the school dining hall
* Bells – the bells go twice – at 8.55am (doors open) and 9am (work starts). If you are late and the doors have closed, go to the office. The bell also goes at 3.05 (coats on) and 3.10 (doors open).

* Rainy days – if it’s raining before the morning bell, the Mensa doors are usually opened to let the children in early (they are on the right hand side of the school round the corner from the main entrance).

* Parking – parking is very busy around the school. Give yourself plenty of time if you can and check out the parking guidance on the school web site for further details. In particular, do not park in the main school car park as this is reserved for staff/buses unless you have a blue disabled badge. You can park beside the Woodfarm sports “cages” or in the overflow car park (which is on the right before the main school car park) or in the Woodfarm Pavillion car park on the Berryhill Road approach to the school.

* Dropping off - there is a drop off zone in the school car park (make sure your child gets out on the pavement side) but it is only for dropping off. We cannot emphasise enough **DO NOT PARK THERE**. Doing so is dangerous and causes chaos for other parents and staff. If someone else is going to be dropping off your child, please make sure they also know the position.
* First day – as suggested by the school, only one person should take your child into class on their first day. The classrooms become very crowded at that time. It is not fair to other children or their parents if you ignore this suggestion. Bear in mind most schools don’t allow anyone in the classroom at all.
* P1 finish time – the P1s are generally let out a few minutes before the 3.10pm bell until they settle in as the playground gets very busy. It’s best to be there by 3.05 if you can. Children who go by bus are led to their bus by a teacher before the class gets out. P1s will be brought out class by class and this will vary in order. When you are waiting, please stand back a bit from the steps as there will be a lot of foot traffic passing by the P1 door.
* Pick up – if someone else is to pick up your child at 3.10pm, you must tell the school even if it is another parent. The school is strict on pick- ups in P1.

**What you need**

* Uniform – don’t buy too many school shirts! On gym days (3 times a week), younger children wear polo shirts/sweatshirts to school rather than shirt and tie to save getting changed. See the school’s uniform policy on exactly what to get and where you can buy it.
* Gym days– don’t worry about bringing PE kit until you get a note from school saying when your child’s PE days are. Remember you need indoor and outdoor kit as per the school list.
* Washing gym kit – teachers will usually send gym bags home on a regular basis but if you want to wash kit more regularly, ask your child to bring it home.
* Bags and buckles - it may seem obvious but choose a bag and shoes that your child can fasten themselves!
* Labels – label everything thoroughly (and if you use stick on labels, replace them when they fall off!). It is astonishing how much unlabelled, good quality clothing ends up in lost property. Sew on labels are harder work but tend to last longer.
* Stationery - the school will supply pencil and a rubber, however you will want to supplement these as the year goes on.

**Food**

* Snack – make sure they have a healthy snack for playtime. Free fresh fruit is provided Tuesday to Thursday. Don’t overfill your child’s lunch box as they may get anxious about having to eat it all.
* Tuck shop – there is a school tuck shop. P1s are not allowed to go to it until they settle in. After that, if you want your children to use it, you can restrict your child’s spending (amount or type) if you wish – speak to the school office to do so.
* School lunches – packed lunches for the first few weeks are best (remember no nuts or nut based products). After that, if you want to use the school lunch service, the ERC web site has menus to check what is on offer and guide your child on healthy choices. Lunch staff visit the classes in the morning to take orders and the food is therefore waiting for them. The school uses a cashless catering system which will be explained to you separately. Be assured the lunch staff will help your child know what to do whether they are having a school or packed lunch.

**School life**

* Homework –you will get instructions at the beginning of the school year on what type of homework the P1s will be getting and what you should do with it. A handy P1 hint: have an Argos or similar catalogue to hand – great for “find a thing beginning with K homework”!
* Projects – remember that projects are not a parent competition! Your child is not learning much if you do most of it yourself and your teacher will know the score when your child turns up with a scale replica of Buckingham Palace for their “castle” project.
* Emails – the school is moving to email communications as standard where possible. Make sure your email address is up to date and check your emails every day – there is lots going on throughout the year and notes from school come out on almost a daily basis.
* Get to know other parents – try to organise a class or year night out for parents (usually mums though it needn’t be!). Knowing other parents in your child’s class can be really important for homework emergencies, play dates and of course for sharing your experiences. The school will usually distribute an invite (get the content approved before you make photocopies). It needn’t be a big “event” - usually just drinks and a chat in a local venue. Helping at events and getting involved in the PC or PSA (see below) are also great ways of getting to know faces and making the playground seem less daunting. Both groups have their AGM in September – dates to follow.
* After school activities – the school runs lots of after and in school activities throughout the school year though these usually run for 6 to 8 week blocks. You will get details as and when they come up. There is a large football club for every year group with a p1 section kicking off in September (contact Paul McConnell on 07943 502586).
* The clubs are often very popular. Make sure you respond quickly - spaces are usually allocated on a first come first served basis. Sometimes your child may not get in first time round but the school does its best to ensure all pupils get a fair chance. Parent volunteers are also a vital part in running these clubs so if there is something you could help with, do let the school know.
* Parties – P1 can be a busy year for parties as the children get to know one another. Parent tips: if you see a bargain present, get a few as you will need them! Also, do take a minute to respond to party invites – even if your child can’t go. It’s very frustrating to end up with a bunch of “no shows” for whom you may have had to pay a venue or prepare a party bag!
* Outings and trips – in each school year, your child will have various outings. Make sure they wear shirt and tie (if the school says “school uniform” in a note, it means shirt and tie). If they are to get pocket money for a gift shop eg £2 on a museum visit, please try to stick to the amount specified by the school. It is much fairer to the other children and makes life less complicated for the teachers and parent helpers.
* Helping out – if you would like to help out on school trips or outings or in the playground, please speak to the school to have your name added to the list of parent helpers. You will need to get PVG disclosure checked - speak to the school about this.

