

Thanks for your interest in the Moray Schools Orienteering League. We hope you enjoy taking part. Full information about the league events is in the 'Juniors' section of our web site, but here are some answers to the questions we've been asked so far.

What equipment do I need? Just a pair of trainers and sports kit. Normal outdoor clothes will do fine if you don't intend running too fast. We don't recommend shorts as you can get scratched legs in the forest undergrowth if you don't have full leg cover. For the long course we recommend taking a compass, and if you're running on your own on the long course we recommend you take a whistle in the unlikely event that you need to summon help.

How do I know I'm in my school team? Everyone's in the team! Any number of people can take part from any school. It's the fastest 4 from each school who count for the team score – you don't even have to tell the school you're taking part – your school will be sent the results afterwards.

I'm not very good with maps. How will I manage? Come and find out! The short course (primary pupils) is quite easy. The long course (secondary pupils) is a bit more difficult, but it's fine to go with an adult, provided the adult lets you do the navigation yourself and only helps if you get really stuck. A lot of people find orienteering challenging at first but the idea of this league is to put some fun in to map reading, and the more events you do the better you'll get at it. If there aren't 4 others from your school who get round the course without any mistakes you can still score points for your school just by taking part - even if you don't find all the controls.

I'm not a very good runner. Will I be last? No chance! The best runners don't usually make the best orienteers. If you can navigate accurately at a steady pace you'll do much better than someone who runs fast but keeps getting lost. Some people walk most of the way and just run on the downhill bits.

Can I take part with a friend? Yes of course. Both of you should register as individuals so that you each get your own map and timing chip. Both of you will count for your school team, and as you go round the course you can either stick together or split up if one of you wants to go faster than the other.

What does it cost? It's £3 to take part, and you get to keep your special waterproof map afterwards as a souvenir. If you join Moravian Orienteering Club you get £1 off!

What are the maps like? The maps are specially designed easy-to-read orienteering maps. The scale can vary from 1:5000 (1 cm = 50 metres) to 1:10000 (1 cm = 100 metres) so they're much more expanded than Ordnance Survey maps that you might have used in school. If you have your own school map this might be at a scale of 1:1000 or 1:2000 so it pays to check the scale before you start your course to get an idea of how far you have to go to find each control.

How long are the courses? The short course, which follows paths and trails, is about 2 Km and the quickest competitors take about 15 minutes to get round. Everyone usually manages it in under 40 minutes. The long course is designed so that the best orienteer will take about 25 minutes by running the 'direct route'. There's no right or wrong route, and it's usually possible to make the navigation easier by taking a slightly longer route between controls using obvious features like paths. By taking easier routes you can often afford to run faster without risking getting lost.

Can adults take part? Yes, adults are welcome too, but they don't count for the school competition. We have our own club league that adults can take part in, and they do the long course.