



***Religious Education Policy
for
Scoil Mhuire agus Iosef Sinsear,
Verbena Avenue,
Bayside,
Dublin 13
D13EK83***

Aim of Religious Education

The aim of Religious Education is to foster and deepen the children's faith. People of faith perceive themselves and their world in a special way. Faith is active. As people of faith we are aware of God as a presence in our lives. We see things in relation to God. This awareness calls for a response. Our lives become a response to a compassionate and loving God. Faith is our response to God's self-communication to us through revelation. God's initiative is a gift, an invitation. The response we make is our choice, our decision. It is a response that no one can make on behalf of another, neither can it be forced from anyone. What is possible, however, is the creation of a context wherein people have the opportunity to become aware of God's invitation, to hear God's word and to explore how best they can respond in their own lives.

Faith is a personal act – the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. But faith is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith as you have not given yourself life. The believer has received faith from others and should hand it on to others. Our love for Jesus and for our neighbour impels us to speak to others about our faith. Each believer is thus a link in the great chain of believers. I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by the faith I help support others in the faith.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 166)

The presence of God in our lives is revealed in a unique way through the person and teaching of Jesus Christ. Those involved in the Religious Education of children today are offered the same challenge which Jesus offered his followers:

An argument arose among them as to which one of them was the greatest. But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side, and said to them, 'Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest' (Luke 9:46-48).

The Apostles judged who was the greatest according to a particular narrow set of values. Jesus, however, pointed out a different way of viewing the situation, which caused the Apostles to review their previously held judgements. He continually challenged the people who were with him to new perspectives. He viewed life from a particular viewpoint – God's viewpoint.

Extract from the Introduction to the Grow In Love Programme

1. **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

The policy was formulated with reference to the Dublin Diocesan publication

Suggested Guidelines towards the Formulation of Religious Education Policy for Catholic Primary Schools.

- This policy was formulated in partnership with the Board of Management, the staff, the parish and the parents and pupils of Bayside SNS

2. **THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND PRIMARY EDUCATION**

(Refer to CPSMA Handbook, Section 2)

- Scoil Mhuire agus Iosef Sinsear is a Catholic school. The Schedule for the Catholic School is displayed in the porch of the school and the Ethos Statement for the school is displayed alongside the Schedule. Religious formation is provided in line with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic church.

3. **AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

- The aim of the religious education policy is to foster and deepen the children's faith.
- To assist all members of staff in the teaching of Religion.
- To affirm that the ethos of the school is built on Gospel values.

4. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

a) **Diocesan Information**

- Name of Archdiocese: Dublin
- Name of Patron/Archbishop: Archbishop of Dublin

b) **Parish Information**

- Name of Parish: Parish of the Resurrection, Bayside
- Name of Parish Priest: Fr Peter Finnerty

c) **School Information**

- Name of Patron of School: Archbishop of Dublin
- Name of Chaplain: Fr Peter Finnerty
- Names of Board of Management members: Oliver Flynn, Séamas Ó' Cróinín, Peter Reddy, Páraic O' Carroll, Catherine McNamara, Máire Costigan, Janet Lynch, David O' Shea.

5. MATERIALS

- The *Grow In Love* programme is the only programme approved for use in Catholic Primary Schools in Ireland.
- Every teacher has the complete *Grow In Love* programme for his/her class.
- The children are using the textbooks and workbooks from *Grow In Love*.
- Home school links are encouraged.
- The school has a set of approved Bibles.
- A set of *Grow in Love* posters is available to each class.

6. SYMBOLS

- A variety of symbols are on display to identify that the school is a Catholic school e.g. a Crucifix, statues of Our Lady, Picture of the Holy Family, Crib at Christmas, Advent calendar.

7. SACRED SPACE

- Every class has a sacred space.
- The Sacred Space changes in line with the Liturgical Year.
- Religious / Prayer Assemblies are held during the school Year.
- The Prayer Space reflects the children's work on the current themes in *Grow In Love*.

8. PRAYER

- We pray as a school and as individual classes
- We provide opportunities for individual and silent prayer.
- Formal prayers are recited during the school day
- All teachers have a copy of the revised prayers and Mass responses.

9. DOCTRINE

- Catholic doctrine is taught in Bayside SNS.
- The *Questions & Answers* and *To be Learned* sections of the *Grow In Love* Programme are taught and memorised as appropriate.
- We also promote and expect from all our pupils a tolerance towards persons of different religious beliefs or of no religious belief.

10. **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

General

- Sacramental preparation is facilitated in school in cooperation with the parents and the Parish.
- Parents are helped towards a deeper understanding of the sacraments through meetings organised by the school/ Parish. They are made aware of the supports available to them and also of their own responsibilities as parents in preparation of their children for the sacraments.
- Parents are encouraged to guide their children on their faith journey through regular prayer, attendance at Sunday mass, informal visits to the church and through living the message of Jesus Christ.
- The policy concerning student dress at the sacrament of Confirmation is a matter for the parents but simplicity and practicality is encouraged.

Sacrament of Penance /Reconciliation/Confession

- The children will have received the sacraments of Penance and Communion before they enrol in the Senior School. They will continue to be facilitated to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the sacraments in line with the Grow in Love programme for senior classes.

Sacrament of Confirmation

- Catholic values are emphasised in the preparation for Confirmation.
- The children are taught to name the Gifts/Fruits and Symbols of the Holy Spirit.
- A link is made with the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Penance/ Reconciliation/Confession as part of the pathway of life as a Catholic.
- The children complete a scrapbook in preparation for Confirmation.
- The children are brought to an understanding of the significance of the pledge through discussion in class, with their parents and the priests and volunteers from the local Parish team. Home/School and Parish prepare children to understand and reflect on the pledge.
- Parents involved in the preparation of pupils for Confirmation are invited to spend time preparing their child at home for the sacrament.

11. IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR

- Religion is timetabled for teaching in each class on a daily basis for a total of two hours thirty minutes per week.(cf. Rules for National Schools: Rule 69 and composite rules 54.1, 54.2)
- Each teacher holds a recognised certificate to teach religion.
- The school welcomes the Chaplain/Pastoral Worker's visits to the school.
- Missionary awareness is highlighted, e.g. through charities such as *Trócaire* and the Lenten campaign.
- Social justice awareness is highlighted, e.g. through links with charities such as the *Society of St. Vincent de Paul*. The school holds an annual campaign for St Vincent de Paul.
- The partners in education as well as the school community is informed of and encouraged to attend the annual school Mass organised by the Archdiocese each year.
- The school focuses on a specific aspect of Catholic Schools' Week each year. This is regularly built around the theme of 'Grandparents' and /or the feast days of early February.
- Ministers of the Eucharist are invited to the school to administer the blessed ashes on Ash Wednesday
- Religious Education and Catholic Christian values are woven into the school day through rituals and prayers and by the encouragement of gentleness, kindness, friendliness and respect.
- The Sixth Class children attend mass in the Parish church once a month as part of their preparation for Confirmation.
- An Advent wreath and a crib are displayed on the main corridor each year.

12. PARTNERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A. Home/School

- The school involves parents in their children's Religious Education by encouraging parents to support the child when he/she has homework in Religion, to take an active part as a parent in their child's Religious Education to bring the child to church regularly and to provide an example of Christian values for their child.
- Religious Education is included as a subject for homework as appropriate.
- Parents are invited to attend prayer services, Christmas Nativity performance and Confirmation prayer services.
- Parents are expected to help their child learn new prayers sent home as they are being taught at school.
- The members of the school community receive a monthly Diocesan newsletter providing updates on resources and informing them of any religious events provided for members of the school community.
- The school's monthly newsletter will provide updates on RE issues as they occur and all members of the school community are welcome to take part in any religious celebrations and events as they arise throughout the school year.

B. School/Parish

- o *The principal liaises with the parish team and the parish priest visits the classes, in particular classes preparing for Confirmation.*
- o *There is a link to the parish on the school website.*

12.

PUPILS OF OTHER FAITHS AND NONE

- The school has consulted the Catholic Schools Partnership document: *Catholic Primary Schools in a Changing Ireland (2015)*.
- On enrolment all parents are given the following form and must select one option. Please note parents are welcome to alter their choice at a later stage if they so wish.
- There are three options
Option 1
- Parents / guardians signing this option give consent for their child to be educated in the Catholic Faith.
Option 2
- If the parent / guardian signs this option he/she is making clear that he/she does not want the child to be educated in the Catholic faith and they understand that there is no compulsion that the child takes part in religion classes. However they are also aware that because of lack of supervision resources it is impossible for the child to be removed from the class during RE lessons. They give an undertaking that their child will do nothing which would interfere with the right of others to receive religious instruction. The child will do another activity quietly in the classroom while the religion class is going on.
Option 3
- If a parent selects and signs the third option they are making it clear that they do not want their child to be educated in the catholic faith, furthermore they undertake that they will collect their child from school each day and return them after Religious Education is completed.

13.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Part of a staff meeting period will be allocated to formulating and maintaining a Religious Education Policy
- The Principal will take responsibility for writing/collating the policy
- An R.E. representative may be nominated from the staff depending on capacity.

14. **REVIEW**

- The Religious Education Policy will be reviewed every two years or as necessary. Indicators of success will include:
 - An acknowledged sense of God, faith, prayer and worship within the school community
 - A respect for all within the school community
 - Parental interest in Religious Education
 - Recognisable links between home, school and parish
 - An outward-looking care for the less fortunate in our society

15. **RATIFICATION & COMMUNICATION**

- The Religious Education Policy is presented to the Board of Management and Staff.
- The Religious Education Policy is communicated to all the partners involved if requested or as necessary

Appendix

Bayside Senior School is a Catholic school and the entire operation of the school is underpinned by its Catholic ethos. Our school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. The school promotes and expects from its pupils a tolerance and respect for people with different religious beliefs and those with no religious beliefs.

Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

All parents and guardians are required to read the 3 options below and then select your choice.

OPTION 1: For parents of children who wish to be instructed in Catholic faith

I/We realise that Bayside Senior School is a Catholic school. I/We wish our/my child to be instructed in the Catholic faith and to take part in the relevant Religious Education programme. I /We wish our/my child to prepare for and to receive the sacrament of Confirmation in Sixth class.

Signature of Parents/ Guardians: _____

OPTION 2: For parents of children who do not wish to be instructed in the Catholic Faith

I/We realise that Bayside Senior School is a Catholic school. I/we understand that there is no compulsion on our/my child to take part in the religious education classes in the school. I/ we understand that given the lack of supervision resources in the school it will not be possible for our child to be away from the classroom during these lessons. While I/ we do not wish our child to be taught the catholic faith I/ we respect the right of other children to do so and I / we will ensure that our/my child do or say nothing that would compromise this basic right.

Signature of parents / guardians: _____

Option 3: For parents/ guardians who wish to withdraw their child for the duration of the Religion class.

Note: If a parent/ guardian avails of this right the parent/ guardian is undertaking to remove the child from the school premises for the duration of the religion class daily.

I/ we understand that Bayside Senior School is a Catholic school. I/we understand that I/we have the right to take my/ our child out of the school for the duration of the Religion class and to bring the child back for the resumption of other classes/ school activities. I/ we wish to exercise this option on a daily basis.

Signature of parents/ guardians.

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General Directory for Catechesis – Congregation for the Clergy (Veritas: Dublin, 1998)

Holy Bible – The New Revised Standard Version/Catholic Edition (Catholic Bible Press: United States of America, 1993)

Holy Bible with Deuterocanonicals/Apocrypha – Contemporary English Version (American Bible Society: New York, 1995)

Good News Bible: Schools' Edition (Collins: The Bible Societies, 2005)

The Catholic Children's Bible (St. Mary's Press: 2013)

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Catholic Schools in a Changing Ireland: Sharing Good Practice on Inclusion of All Pupils (Catholic Schools Partnership: 2015)

CPSMA Handbook (CPSMA: Maynooth, 2012)

Assemblies for Primary Schools by Elaine Mahon and Maurice Harmon (Veritas: 2012)

Catholic Primary Religious Education in a Pluralist Environment by Anne Hession (Veritas: 2015)

Children, Catholicism and Religious Education by Patricia Kieran and Anne Hession (Veritas: Dublin, 2005)

Rules for National Schools

APPENDIX 1: FORMAL PRAYERS

Title of Prayer	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Sign of the Cross				
Glory be to the Father				
Morning Prayer				
Night Prayer				
Grace Before Meals				
Grace After Meals				
Prayer to Guardian Angel				
St. Patrick's Breastplate				
Hail Holy Queen				
Prayer to Mary				
Our Father				
Hail Mary				
Prayer to Jesus				
Confiteor				
Title of Prayer	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Act of Sorrow				
Prayer for Forgiveness				
Prayer after Forgiveness				
Mass Responses				
Gloria				
Prayers before Communion				
Prayers after Communion				
Comhartha na Croise				
An Paidir				
'Sé do Bheatha a Mhuire				
Glóir don Athair				
The Angelus (old version)				
The Apostles Creed				
The Memorare				
The Magnificat				
Mysteries of the Rosary				
Nicene Creed				

APPENDIX 2: THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR IN THE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

The principal of a Catholic school has overall responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic ethos of the school. A Religious Education Coordinator should be appointed to support the principal in this role.

The aim is that the Religious Education Coordinator will facilitate the work of the principal and the staff as they strive to enhance the Catholic ethos and charism of the school.

The role of the Religious Education Coordinator should be informed by the fundamental tasks of catechesis (*General Directory for Catechesis, 85-86*):

- Promoting knowledge of the Catholic faith
- Liturgical education
- Moral formation
- Teaching to pray
- Education for community life
- Missionary initiation

Suggested Role:

- o To facilitate the formulation of the Religious Education Policy
- o To organise the distribution and collection of all necessary resources, e.g. full *Grow in Love* Programme and kit, Bibles for senior classes etc...
- o To avail of the resources on www.education.dublindiocese.ie
- o To facilitate the prayer life of the school throughout the liturgical year, e.g. prayer at assemblies, marking special feast days etc...
- o To encourage the use of prayer spaces in classrooms and in school common areas, and to ensure the prominence of religious symbols and icons.
- o To provide input on Religious Education at staff meetings, in order to maintain a conscious profile of the subject.
- o To facilitate links with chaplains and parish personnel.
- o To enable parents to take an active role in the Religious Education and formation of their children, e.g. use of home links in *Grow in Love/Grow In Love*.
- o To liaise with Diocesan Advisers
- o To distribute resources throughout the Liturgical Year.