

Religion Policy for Scoil Íde

Introductory Statement

Scoil Íde is a Catholic Primary School under the patronage of the Bishop of Galway. The school models and promotes a philosophy inspired by belief in God and traditional Catholic values. We promote religious education for the pupils in accordance with our Catholic ethos.

This policy was commenced in September 2011. This draft upon completion will be given to the Staff, the Board of Management and Parents' Association for ratification.

Aim of Religious Education Policy

The aim of this Religious Education policy 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 to in their own lives. This is what we, in Scoil Íde aim to do.

Rationale

This policy has been formulated in order to

- foster and nurture our Catholic faith
- create an environment where all faiths are respected.

Relationship to school ethos:-

The vision statement/mission statement is displayed in the front hall of the school. This school enrolls pupils of the Catholic and other faiths subject to the enrolment criteria, and respects their beliefs and practices in accordance with the school ethos.

School procedures:-

Every pupil is welcome into the school having satisfied enrolment procedures but the school cannot undertake to educate pupils of other faiths in their own faith. The Board of Management and teachers have adopted the Grow In Love Programme approved by our spiritual leaders for use in Catholic schools. The programme is still in the process of being rolled out for primary schools. As from next year 2019/2020, all classes Junior Infants to Sixth will be using this programme. This programme is delivered each day for the recommended 30 minutes and is taught to each class. There are also daily prayers and monthly assemblies. All Catholic feasts and customs are celebrated, including:-

- Advent and making Advent wreaths
- Christmas - there is a good deal of preparation for this including Christmas stories, carol services in school and in church, nativity plays and putting up cribs and a tree.
- St. Brigid and St. Patrick and St. Ita - we celebrate these through drama, story, music and art activities
- Lent - symbols of repentance, distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday, Stations of the Cross, making sacrifices appropriate to the children.
- Easter - Stories on the death and resurrection of Jesus, artwork and workbooks, Easter cards.
- Observance of holy days of obligation
- Celebration of the feastday of our Foundress, St. Claudine Thevenet
- May Altars
- Other celebrations when they arise
- An opening mass at the start of the school year and a closing mass at the end of the year
- 6th Class graduation Mass with parents and school staff to celebrate eight years of primary education

Scoil Íde embraces the central tenets of multi-denominationalism. All religions are welcome and respected within Scoil Íde. Children of other faiths are not expected to participate in the religious instruction or celebrations within the school. Children however will not be withdrawn from the class by a member of the school staff during Religious instruction or prayer time. They can of course be withdrawn

by their parents during this time, provided the parents make their own provisions for supervising the child during religious instruction periods and prayer times.

Liturgical Celebrations

Pupils receive the sacraments of First Confession and First Holy Communion in 2nd Class and Confirmation in 6th Class. Children are prepared thoroughly in aspects of these sacraments by the individual class teachers in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school.

Parents in Scoil Íde are invited to achieve a deeper understanding and involvement in the Sacraments through regular communication with home and through participation in such programmes as the 'Do This In Memory' Programme for First Holy Communion.

Teachers ensure that Sacramental preparation is an ongoing process from Junior Infants to Sixth class through teaching prayers and values such as forgiveness from the Infant Classes onwards.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Prayers of Forgiveness are taught at the beginning of Second Class. Children are familiar with the vocabulary associated with the Sacrament of Reconciliation by the time they make their First Confession.

Sacrament of First Holy Communion

Parents are invited to participate in the preparation for First Holy Communion through the 'Do This in Memory Programme' and through communications from the School. The prayers of the Mass are taught from the beginning of Second Class.

Sacrament of Confirmation

The values espoused by the school in the preparation of the children for Confirmation are based around the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit. All the sacraments are revisited in order to develop a 'sacramental mentality'. Parents are invited to attend the ceremonies preparing for Confirmation - i.e. the Commitment Ceremony and the Service of Light. A Retreat for pupils in 6th Class is undertaken prior to Confirmation and is held in a venue other than the school.

Teacher/Staff Input:-

In this school the following areas are covered:-

- we follow the Grow in Love Programme
- we prepare children for the sacraments
- we organise and prepare children for prayer services, class and school masses, Stations of the Cross, Nativity plays and Carol Services.
- We actively support the ethos of the School

Diocese

Diocese - Galway

Patron - Bishop Brendan Kelly

Parish Information

Name of Parish - Salthill Parish

Name of Church - Church of Christ the King

Name of Parish Priest - Fr. G. Jennings

School Information

Name of School - Scoil Íde, Ardnamara, Salthill.

Name of School Chaplain - Fr. Charlie Sweeney

Materials

The Grow in Love Programme is the programme approved for use in Catholic Primary Schools in Ireland.

The contents of the Grow in Love programme for each class level (Junior Infants to Fifth) are attached in Appendix A.

There is a set of Grow in Love posters available to each class teacher.

There are CDs in the Teacher's Kit.

Additional resources are provided online, at www.growinlove.ie.

Symbols

The symbols on display within the school which show that this is a Catholic School include:-

The school's Mission Statement on display in the front hall together with a picture and statue of our Foundress St. Claudine Thévenet.

There is a crucifix in the main hall.

A Sacred Space in each classroom which changes in accordance with the liturgical year.

Implementation of Religious Education throughout the School Year

Religion is taught throughout the school each day for 30 minutes

Religious Education and Ethos are integrated closely with other areas of the Curriculum e.g. SPHE, where values of forgiveness and respect for the individual are propounded.

The prayers that are recited throughout the day include:-

Morning Offering

Grace before Meals

Grace after Meals

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Prayer at going home time.

As the children mature through the school they recite many of these as Gaeilge.

Children are taught the ritual format of the Mass in Religion Class and also through participating in school masses throughout the year.

Missionary awareness is highlighted through the different charities such as Trócaire and other agencies. The school participates in a sponsored silence each year for Trócaire and in the Christmas shoe box initiative. The school supports various charities throughout the year and engenders a spirit of giving to those less fortunate in the children.

The school calendar, which is sent to parents at the beginning of the school year outlines the dates of all the school masses throughout the year. Parents are invited to attend the masses throughout the school year by way of texts or emails through the Aladdin system.

Partners in Religious Education

Home/School

The Children's Book contains pages to be worked on 'In School' and one page to be worked on 'At Home'. The 'At Home' page provides an opportunity for parents/guardians to work in partnership with the school through showing them what the children are learning in school and suggesting to them ways of engaging with their children about what they are learning. Parents are invited to all school masses and sacraments. The school participates in the 'Do this In Memory Programme', which actively involves parents in their child's preparation for First Holy Communion

Parents' Responsibilities

- Support the school during times of sacramental preparation and assist at home with religious education homework
- Attend the Commitment service and Service of Light prior to Confirmation
- Participate in the 'Do this in Memory' programme for First Holy Communion
- Participate in the end of year 6th Class Mass to celebrate the end of their child's primary education
- Where possible, attend the opening of year and closing of year school masses

Principal

The principal facilitates supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the programme.

Success Criteria

- An acknowledged sense of God, faith, prayer and worship within the school community
- Respect for all within the school community
- Parental interest
- Recognisable links between home, school and parish
- Respect for all religions of pupils in school
- Self esteem nurtured by joyful celebration of belonging to God's family
- An ability, appropriate to the children's stage of development, to question and exercise their faith.

Review

This policy will be reviewed again in 2021 or sooner if the need arises.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Religious Education policy will be discussed at a staff meeting throughout the year.

Ratification and Communication

The Religious Education Policy was ratified at a meeting of the Board of Management on _____ of _____ 201 .

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