***Religious Education***

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

***(Revised September 2019)***

***Diocesan Advisors for Religious Education in Primary Schools***

***Dublin Archdiocese***

**Aim of Religious Education**

The aim of the Religious Education curriculum is to help children mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives, through their encounter with, exploration and celebration of the Catholic faith.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The curriculum distinguishes four interrelated strands of Christian Faith, The Word of God, Liturgy/Prayer and Christian Morality. The strands overlap and interact to from a holistic learning experience for the child.

Christian Faith: Teaching and learning in this strand assists children to become religiously literate in key truths, doctrines and practices of the Catholic religious tradition.

The Word of God: In this strand children are introduced to an age-appropriate way to Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church.

Liturgy and Prayer: Children are encouraged to engage with liturgical signs, symbols and rituals which nurture their relationship with God as Father, Son and Spirit, and to develop their capacity for personal prayer and for participation in the liturgy of the Church.

Christian Morality: The teaching and learning in this strand helps children to grow in awareness of their identity as persons created in the image and likeness of God and called to live in loving, respectful, relationship with God, other human persons and the whole of creation. The children are introduced to Jesus as the example for living an ethical life and are formed in gospel values and in love of God and neighbour. [[2]](#footnote-2)

**SUGGESTED GUIDELINES TOWARDS**

**THE FORMULATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

**FOR CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

1. **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

The school is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

* State how the policy was formulated and who was involved, e.g. Board of Management, Teachers, Chaplain, Parents, Special Needs Assistants, Ancillary Staff, Student Council etc...
* The Mission Statement of the School
* A brief history of the school.
* Rationale
* State symbols that are on display to identify that the school is a Catholic school, e.g. is there a crucifix/ statue of Our Lady/ holy water font / a picture or statue of the school patron

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

* How are staff led and supported in the teaching of Religious Education
* State where the schedule is on display in a public place
* State the time the Religious Education is taught daily for the 30 minutes allocated

1. **AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

State the aims of the RE policy

1. **GENERAL INFORMATION** (update regularly)
2. **Diocesan Information**

* Name of Archdiocese
* Name of Patron/Archbishop
* Name of Director of Education

1. **Parish Information**

* Name of Parish
* Name of Parish Priest
* Name of Chairperson of Parish Pastoral Council
* Name of Parish Pastoral Worker

1. **School Information**

* Name of Patron of School
* Name of Chaplain
* Names of Board of Management members
* Name of Religious Education Coordinator

1. **MATERIALS**

* The *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* is the foundation document for all Religious Education in Catholic primary schools.
* The *Grow in Love* is the programme approved for use in Catholic primary schools in Ireland.
* State that each teacher has his/her own *Grow in Love* manual, CD and poster set. Ensure each teacher has registered with the login code for the *Grow in Love* programme and using the school email address.
* State that each child has access to the *Grow in Love* book appropriate to the child’s own level
* State the day children at all class levels bring home materials from the *Grow in Love* programme.
* State whether children have journals/copies designated for RE only from third class up.
* State which set of approved Bibles the school has (e.g. *Contemporary English Version*, the *Good News Bible*, *New Revised Standard Version* or *The Catholic Children’s Bible*).
* State how *monthly memos* sent out by the Education Secretariat are received and circulated.

1. **PRAYER SPACE**

Each class should have a designated prayer space which changes in accordance with the liturgical cycle - *Grow in Love* programme.

1. **PRAYER**

Participation in experiences of prayer (formal and informal), silence and meditation develops children’s capacity for personal prayer.

* State times of prayer
* In class
* As a whole school community

1. **STATE THE ARRANGEMENT FOR SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION BETWEEN HOME/PARISH/SCHOOL**
2. **IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR**

* State how are Religious Education and Ethos integrated with other areas of the curriculum.
* State how the understanding and living of the ethos in your Catholic primary school is being facilitated and developed.
* State arrangements that are in place to provide CPD in Religious Education to all staff.
* State how the partners in education in your school community are informed of the annual school Mass organised by the Archdiocese.
* State how your school engages with Catholic Schools' Week.

**10. PARTNERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

State how parents/guardians are encouraged to support their child’s religious education through prayer at home, home/link in RE class, parent/teacher meetings in the school.

**11. PUPILS OF OTHER TRADITIONS**

State how your Catholic school is open and inclusive and how children who are not of the Catholic faith are invited to participate in and engage with the religious education classes.

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1. **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS**

State what provision for religious education is provided for children with special educational needs

1. **ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR**

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

1. **REVIEW**

* State how often the Religious Education Policy will be reviewed.

1. **RATIFICATION & COMMUNICATION**

* State the role of the Board of Management.
* State how the Religious Education Policy is communicated to all partners.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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*The Irish Catholic Catechism for Adults* (Veritas: Irish Episcopal Conference, 2014)

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

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

*The Lion Children's Bible* (Lion Children's Books: 2012)

*Read With Me Bible – A Story Bible for Children (*Candlebooks: England, 2004)

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*CPSMA Handbook* (CPSMA: Maynooth, 2016)

*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)

*Understanding and Living The Ethos in a Catholic Primary School* (Veritas Publications, 2019)

1. Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland, Irish Episcopal Conference, p.31 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid, pp. 34-35 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)