

Ballymacward P.S.

Religious Education Policy

Approved by Board of Governors

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Ethos

The ethos of the Catholic school represents the very essence of why the school exists. This ethos is firmly rooted in the Gospel and being Christ centred endeavours to develop the full potential of every child, staff member and parent within the school faith community. We make every effort to keep it alive in all areas of the curriculum by promoting such values as faith, justice, peace and tolerance.

Role and Position of Teaching RE in the Catholic School

Christianity has made a significant contribution towards the formation of society and this Christianity is expressed by Catholics within the spiritual realm of home, school and parish. Religious Education is the main channel through which faith is fostered thus ensuring that pupils acquire and develop the essential knowledge and skills to understand their faith and so engage in and contribute to society. Religious Education is compulsory for all pupils and it is recommended that half an hour each day is devoted to it. The Catholic school embraces every member of staff, pupil and the wider community and shares in the mission of the Church.

The teaching of Religious Education is essentially catechetical thus furnishing the child with knowledge about God and directly encouraging the progressive growth of a relationship with God.

Mission Statement

As a Catholic School our policy is to encourage the practice of Christian values and attitudes.
We aim to provide:

- An atmosphere which encourages children to respect themselves and others
- An environment in which our children can learn and grow spiritually, academically, aesthetically and physically.

We aim to build a system whereby staff members may develop professionally in order to facilitate the needs of our pupils.

Aims

- To develop in each child a sense of wonder of the sacred and a recognition of God's presence in their lives.
- To actively foster Catholic faith within the school community.
- To develop a language of faith through a clear knowledge of doctrine.
- To foster the moral development of the child.
- To build tangible links between school, home and parish.
- To encourage the development of skills and knowledge that will enable the child to make the right decisions in life and deepen their understanding of what it means to be a committed Christian.
- To include and respect children of other faith denominations

Objectives

- To foster faith through the Eucharist, daily prayer, meditations and prayer services and assemblies.
- To become familiar with and respect the Bible as the Word of God.
- To prepare the children for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation at the appropriate times and in partnership with home and parish.
- To enhance doctrinal, moral, spiritual knowledge and understanding through the media of discussion, story, music, art, mime, poetry, journaling, bible search, written work, drama and questions and answers.
- To promote activities which actively link the school with charities such as Trocaire, The Kilimanjaro Project, Pontifical Society of Missionary Children, NSPCC etc.

Curriculum

We will use the Alive O 1—7 programme for our daily Religious Education lessons.

Religious Education links with other curricular areas such as Literacy, Art, Music, The World Around Us and ICT. Certain aspects of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) are taught through Religious Education, but from a clearly Christian perspective. Religious Education and PDMU are not the same.

The curriculum is also significantly enriched by the spiritual life of the school, through assemblies, daily prayer, masses, sacraments and Christmas and Easter celebrations.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Religious Education is the main vehicle for the delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Education. We use 'The Wonder of My Being' programme. This is a progressive programme from Primary One to Primary Seven. It is written to present the Christian viewpoint of Relationships and Sexuality Education. It provides children with the opportunity to make responsible and well informed decisions. In P.7, children also follow the 'Inside Out' programme which includes a one day workshop organised by the Diocesan Advisers and a specialised team.

(Ref. RSE Policy)

Teaching of Special Educational Needs

Religious Education in its implementation provides opportunities to assist the faith development of children with special educational needs and teachers must have appropriate resources to achieve this. The needs of these children can be varied and complex. Lessons will need to take account of their strengths and interests. Active participation will be encouraged in the learning process.

Assessment and Monitoring

We in Ballymacward Primary School believe that Religious Education cannot always be assessed in the same way as other subjects. Written work will be looked at and marked, adding any necessary comments. The co-ordinator will monitor the children's work (as is the practice in other subjects) and will liaise with teachers in terms of planning.

Staff and Management

The school provides opportunities whereby the staff has in-service through the support of the Diocesan Advisers and sources committed to the Catholic Ethos. The RE Co-ordinator forms a crucial anchor within the area of Religious Education supporting staff and keeping the school up-to-date on recent developments.

The Principal

The Principal, in conjunction with the staff, implements the Catholic ethos in the school and ensures that RE is taught and well resourced. He is supported in this by the RE Co-ordinator and close links with the parish.

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors supports the Catholic ethos of the school and is fully informed about the implications of any curricular reviews and their impact on Religious Education.

Chaplaincy and Liturgy

Father David Delargy, our Parish Priest, works closely with the school community and supports the faith development of pupils and staff. Visitation of classes and class Masses form an essential part of the ministry as well as involvement in the liturgical life of the school and parish.

The parish-based 'Do this in Memory' programme of preparation for First Penance and First Holy Communion is supported by the staff of the school. The celebration of Catholic Schools Week is also an important community/parish event, as is the Annual Parish Christmas Carol Service which is led by the school.

Resources

Resources are updated when required. During visits the Diocesan Advisers provide information about current resources and developments.

Outside Agencies

It is crucial that outside agencies invited into the school agree with the ethos of the school and work within that context.

Review of Policy

Once ratified by the Board of Governors, this policy will be reviewed at least every two years.