

# **St. Patrick's Junior School, Skerries**

## **Religious Education Policy**

### **Introduction**

St. Patrick's Junior School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Diarmuid Martin. 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 the doctrines, practices and ethos of the Catholic Church.

### **Rationale**

This policy sets out school policy in regard to the teaching of religious education in the school, its relationship with the school ethos, procedures in relation to the teaching of religious education and procedures in place where children of other faiths or none attend the school, Catholic feasts and liturgies celebrated, responsibilities of parents, parish and teachers in the teaching of religious education, and success criteria for the teaching of religious education in our school.

### **Relationship to school ethos**

This school enrolls pupils of all faiths or no faith in the school subject to our enrolment criteria as approved by the Patron and in accordance with relevant legislation, and respects their beliefs and practices in accordance with the school ethos of inclusivity.

### **School Procedures**

Every child is welcome into the school having satisfied enrolment procedures, but the school cannot undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith. The Board of Management and teachers have adopted the Grow in Love programme approved and recommended by the Irish Hierarchy for use in Catholic schools. It is in full compliance with the aims and objectives of the Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland. This programme is delivered each day for the recommended 30 minutes. The programme is taught to each class. As well as prayer services at the end of each theme, morning and evening prayers are said in each classroom and the Grace before Meals is said at Lón. The school also teaches and practices meditation based prayer using resources provided in the Grow in Love programme and augmented as appropriate by the Christian Meditation for Children programme. Where appropriate and at the teacher's discretion, poems or songs from the Alive-O programme previously in use or from other suitable sources may be used in the religious education class. Children of other faiths who do not wish to participate in the RE class of the day or in meditation will be assigned work to do in the classroom for the duration of the class.

All Catholic feasts and the following events in the liturgical calendar are celebrated as follows:

- Christmas – Crib, Stories, Nativity Plays, Carol services, Church Pageant and Christmas tree.
- Feast of St. Brigid – retelling the story of St. Brigid's life and legends associated with her; making traditional crosses.
- Feast of St. Patrick – retelling the story of St. Patrick and legends associated with him; depiction of his story and the shamrock; St. Patrick's Day Cards.
- Ash Wednesday: Ashes are offered to all classes and teachers who wish to receive them.
- Lent – Symbols of repentance, Trócaire boxes, Bóthar, Vita etc.

- Easter – Easter cards, story of the death and resurrection of Jesus, artwork and workbooks.
- Observance of Holy Days of Obligation.
- Celebration of Prayer Services throughout the school year.
- Practice of prayer through Meditation in all classes throughout the year.
- Participation in Family masses throughout the year.
- Celebration of Mass in the school at the end of the school year, attended by 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes.

### **Liturgical Celebrations**

The whole school celebrates the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Children make their First Reconciliation and receive their First Holy Communion in St. Patrick's Church. Children are prepared thoroughly in all aspects of these sacraments by the individual class teachers in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school.

### **Teacher input**

In this school the following areas are covered.

- In-service where necessary on delivering the Grow in Love programme.
- Study of Grow in Love Teachers' Guide.
- Prayer Services.
- Nativity plays.
- Carol Services.

### **Success Criteria**

- An acknowledged sense of God, Faith, Prayer and Worship within the school community.
- Respect for all within the school community.
- Parental interest & involvement
- Recognisable links between home, school and parish.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### **Staff**

- Deliver Grow in Love programme.
- Lead daily prayer in the classroom (in the morning, before meals and at home time)
- Cooperate with Chaplain/Parish and diocesan advisers.
- Avail of In-Service support.
- Actively support the ethos of the school.

#### **Parents:**

- Support the school during times of sacramental preparation and assist at home with Religious Education homework.
- "Do This In Memory" Programme Parish community based preparation for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

#### **Principal:**

- Facilitates supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the programme.

#### **Board of Management:**

- Members attend training as requested and organized by Archbishop's House

- Facilitates supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the programme

### **Reflective Process for Catholic Schools:**

The whole school community took part in the Reflective Process for Catholic Schools during the 2013 - 2014 school year. All parties committed to continuing the reflective process and to maintaining a particular focus on one aspect of our Catholic Ethos each year.

This policy reviewed by all staff and approved by the Board of Management in April 2017

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Hyland,  
Chairperson.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date