

Killurney National School



Religious Education Policy

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Scope of the Policy:

As a catholic school the religious education policy has an impact on the whole school community. Support for the implementation of the policy comes from several groups.

Board of Management:

Approves the policy and ensures its implementation and monitors its review.

Principal and Deputy Principal:

Supports and procedures of the policy and ensures its effective implementation.

School Staff:

Embraces and safeguards the ethos of the school and supports the cross culture of religious education.

Classroom Teachers:

Implement and review the policy, to ensure a high standard and effective delivery of Religious Education.

Pastoral Care personnel:

Supports the staff and monitors the effects of the policy and provide support and guidance to the pupils.

Parents/Guardians:

Support the ethos of the school and the Religious Education programme and facilitate the faith formation of their children.

Children:

Participate in the religious education programme and related activities.

Vision and Mission Statement:

Killurney National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the local Catholic bishop

A Catholic school is a living expression of a long and varied tradition of education inspired by the life of Christ as lived in the Church. Such a school emphasises the dignity of the human person as a child of God called to work with other persons in creating an inclusive community in service of the common good, where knowledge is sought and respected while faith is nurtured and challenged.

Killurney National School is situated in a rural setting serving a diverse population. One of the greatest strengths of the school is its social inclusion. The presence of pupils from diverse backgrounds enriches the life of the school community.

Our mission statement here in Killurney supports the ethos and vision of the church:

Here in Killurney, we strive to create a positive and inclusive learning environment which promotes the holistic development of all of our pupils. While we are committed to maintaining high standards in academic attainment

within our school, we also place a huge emphasis on the emotional, moral, spiritual, physical, social and cultural development of each child.

Our School Ethos

The “ethos” of our school encompasses collective attitudes, beliefs, core values, traditions, aspirations and goals. These are reflected in the actual practices which are carried out in the school on a daily, weekly and yearly basis. While it is impossible to outline all aspects of the school “ethos”, the following characteristics are experienced and promoted as essential elements in the establishment of a supportive and positive “ethos”.

- The ethos is that of a Christian Catholic school, religious instruction, in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church is part of the education given to children who belong to that Church.
- The pupils are prepared for the reception of the sacraments of First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation, in accordance with arrangements in the diocese.
- Prayer is a feature of the school day.
- The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil, including his/ her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment.
- The Principal and teaching staff aim at maintaining high professional standards and creating a safe and happy environment.
- All staff in the school is highly esteemed and respected. It is recognised that their work makes a valued contribution to the process of education.
- A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community. Pupils are drawn by example and teaching to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities.
- Close contact is maintained between school and home. Parents/ guardians and teachers support on another and collaborate with one another in leading the children to the fullness of their potential at the different stages.

Nature of Religious Education:

As a Catholic school religious education is a core subject on the school curriculum and an integral part of the ethos of the school. Religious education is provided for pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church that derives its trust and ultimate foundation from the person of Christ. Such education has nothing in common with indoctrination that amounts to teaching a pupil a religious way of behaving and believing. This type of teaching deliberately harms pupils by undermining their natural ability to reason. In contrast, Religious Education is committed to the deepest respect for both faith and reason as it contributes significantly to the formation of rational and mature citizens of democratic society.

Three types of learning in religious education are evident in Killurney NS

1. 'Learning into religion'

Pupils are provided with religious instruction and experience, such as prayer and sacramental participation that will help them to grow into their faith and in their understanding of the Catholic tradition.

2. 'Learning about religion'

While particular focus is given to Christianity, pupils are exposed to a broad range of religious traditions and to the non-religious interpretation of life. Such a broad exposure seeks to develop in pupils, powers of tolerance and mutual understanding and the skills needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other or of no religious traditions.

3. 'Learning from religion'

Pupils evaluate both what has been learned and how it can impact on their daily living. Pupils are invited to learn from what they are discovering.

Religious Education that Killurney National School provides is open to, and inclusive of all pupils, regardless of their faith backgrounds and they are invited to participate in and engage with the religious education programme in various way.

The Aims of Religious Education:

The Catholic characteristic ethos underpinning Killurney Primary school permeates the whole school's day. Two hours each week, is devoted to Religious Education as well as discretionary time through other subjects. Time is also given to prayer: Morning and night prayers, grace before and after meals and other related religious activities.

In Killurney National School religious education endeavours to:

- Develop in pupils a knowledge and understanding of their own religious tradition and beliefs, with respect for the religious traditions and beliefs of others.
- Help pupils grow in their identity as persons created in the image and likeness of God.
- Enable pupils to respond to God's love, by showing love for themselves, for others, for God and all of creation.
- Deepen in pupils, an understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and how to participate in the mission of the Church.
- Foster awareness in pupils of shared values such as justice, peace and the dignity of the human person.
- Heighten in pupils an awareness of empathy and compassion for local needs/issues and global problems.
- Prepare pupils for the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- Give pupils accurate, clear, age based and ability appropriate information.

- Prepare pupils for living in a community with people of their own faith, of other faith traditions and none

Rationale:

The religious education policy allows each member of the staff to reflect on what it means to be a Catholic school and to articulate a commitment to it.

Curriculum-Junior and Senior Infants

Grow In Love

The aim of the 'Grow in Love programme' for Junior and Senior Infants is to help pupils mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives through their encounters with, exploration and celebration of the Catholic faith.

Content/themes of the 'Grow in Love' programme:

- My Family
- The Holy Family
- Our World
- Advent and Christmas
- Stories about Jesus
- Holy Week and Easter
- The Church
- Water/Food
- Baptism
- We give Thanks-The Mass

Resources: Grow in Love Teacher's Manuals, pupil books, poster set, online resources, CD

First and Second Class:

Grow in Love

The aim of the 'Grow and Love' programme for First and Second class is to help pupils prepare for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

Content/themes of the 'Grow in Love' programme:

- Belonging
- Jesus
- Baptism
- Advent/Christmas/Lent and Easter
- Saints
- Celebrating Mass
- Choices
- Preparing for Reconciliation
- Creation
- Gifts and Talents
- Story of Pentecost
- The Catholic Church, mosques and synagogues

Resources: Grow in Love Teacher's Manuals, pupil books, poster set, online resources, CD

Third and Fourth Class:

Grow in Love

The aim of the 'Grow in Love' programme for Third and Fourth class is to emphasise for the pupils that God loves them always, unconditionally, that God created the world and everything in it out of love and that God sent his son Jesus to show us how much he loves us. Pupils are introduced to the different parts of the Bible and its stories. They will explore what it means to be a missionary and will look at how people of faith down through the ages responded to God's call.

Content/themes of the 'Grow in Love' programme:

God

The Bible

Jesus

Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter

God's Covenant and our response

Building God's Kingdom

The Great Commandment

The Church

Celtic Christianity

Resources: Grow in Love Teacher's Manuals, pupil books, poster set, online resources, CD

Fifth and Sixth Class:

Grow in Love

The aim of the fifth and sixth class 'Grow in Love' programme is to re-enforce for the pupils the message that God is always with them, and they are encouraged to develop a personal relationship with God through prayer, just as Jesus called the disciples to follow him, they are called to live a Christian life, which is reflected in their choices. They will explore stories. They will explore stories in the Bible.

Content/themes of the 'Grow in Love' programme:

God

Creation

Jesus

Our Christian Vocation

Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, The Mass

The Holy Spirit/Confirmation

Social Justice

We are called to Love and Serve

Resources: Grow in Love Teacher's Manuals, pupil books, poster set, online resources, CD

Homework Policy:

The school staff holds a strong belief that families should be given the opportunity to be involved in their children's Religious Education, therefore, homework is sent home on nights where applicable i.e. during Sacramental preparation.

Facilities and Resources:

- Classroom teachers
- Parents
- Local community groups
- Local clergy
- Sacred space
- Textbooks
- Interactive white boards
- Religious education notice board
- Religious education shelf
- Religious education filing cabinet
- Audio visual equipment

Withdrawal from Religious Education Classes:

Killurney Primary School respects and acknowledges the rights of parents/guardians who require their son/daughter to be excluded from Religious Education. The way such as an 'opt-out' is facilitated is related to available resources within the school and complies with the school's policies on curriculum, supervision and child safe-guarding.

Two options which the school provided for pupils when a request for 'opt-out' from religious education includes:

1. Staying within the classroom following an educationally appropriate activity, for example reading a novel.
2. Parents provide supervision within the school for their children during Religious Education where alternative supervision is not feasible.

The Procedure in Place to Facilitate a request for withdrawal from Religious Education is as follows:

A written notification from the parents/guardians to the principal.

Parents/guardians meet with the principal

The principal answers specific questions that parents/guardians may have on the content of Grow in Love religious education programme. If there is a request for an opt-out from religious education the principal explains the two options, the school can provide for their son/daughter.

Staff Support and Development:

Effective religious education does not just happen spontaneously or accidentally. The very nature of the religious education class requires teachers to keep 'upgrading' and enhancing their teaching skills and resources.

Support and development for the staff are as follows:

- The Board of Management is supportive of the religious education programme.
- All religious education teachers are encouraged to attend an in-service on the 'Grow in Love' programme and any follow up formation that is provided by the diocese.
- Magazines and articles relating to religious topics are circulated among the staff.
- A formal/informal visit from the Diocesan Advisor.
- As with all Subject Departments in the school a budget is provided to support teaching and learning in religious education.

Outside Support is received from the:

- Board of Management
- Trustees of the school
- Parish clergy
- Diocesan Advisor

Liturgy:

All staff are encouraged to participate in the Liturgical Life of the school.

To ensure that significant liturgical events are celebrated and recognised throughout the school year the following takes place:

- End of year Mass and blessing as part of Sixth class graduation ceremony
- Advent and Lenten Services of Reconciliation
- Ash Wednesday ritual
- Carol Service
- Catholic school's Week
- Morning Prayer reflective of the significant of the time of year. Feast days, Holy days.
- Sixth class Graduation Mass
- Celebrations associated with the school.
- Staff prayer and reflection
- Whole school remembrance prayer for the dead in November.
- Regular classroom visits from the parish priest.

Sacred Space:

A distinctive feature of the school is a sacred space in the front foyer of the school. The space is decorated to reflect the changing liturgical calendar and can contain quotations from Sacred Scripture and other writers, coloured fabric and symbols. Each classroom has its own dedicated sacred space.

Religious Imagery:

Religious images and symbols are an integral part of the school. These images and symbols are placed in prominent area around the school. The images and symbols include:

- A crucifix in each classroom
- A Holy Water font
- A Bible
- Statue of our Lady and the Sacred Heart etc.
- Advent wreath
- A Crib
- Lenten Holy water, Holy Week and Easter displays
- Posters

The Advent wreath, crib, Lenten, Holy Week, Easter and other religious displays are accompanied with a brief explanation.

Outreach Programmes:

Peace and Justice are an integral part of the religious education programme. Pupils are encouraged to emphasise and show compassion for local and global issues.

- Trocaire information and boxes during the season of Lent
- Class projects on local and global issues
- Visits and sending prayers and cards to local nursing homes
- Shoe-box appeal
- Display Board with newspaper articles and pictures featuring local and global issues
- Christmas Jumper Day in aid of the Children`s Health Foundation
- Whole school attendance at annual fundraiser in aid of the local hospice

Chaplaincy Services:

The role of the sacramental chaplain, the Parish priest is to:

- Encourage School-Parish links
- Be a support for the Principal and Staff
- Encourage the implementation of the Liturgical calendar
- Get to know staff by visiting the staffroom at morning tea or lunch time.
- Visit each classroom to meet the pupils and to chat with them about their Grow in Love programme
- Provide sacramental celebrations

Retreats:

A Confirmation retreat is provided for the fifth and sixth class prior to their Confirmation. The retreat provides a reflective space for pupils to deepen their understanding of Confirmation by participating in creative activities, group discussion, meditation and prayer. Pupils who do not participate in religious education, remain in another class for the day and do set work.

The school contributes towards the cost of the retreat.

Parental Involvement:

There is an opportunity for parents to be informed about the content of the religious education programme through:

- Enrolment meeting for Junior Infants
- Parent Teacher meetings
- Sacramental Meetings
- Homework when applicable

Parents are involved in the religious education programme through:

- Liturgical celebrations
- Catholic School's week activities
- Sixth class Graduation Mass
- Preparation masses "Do this in Memory" ahead of First Holy Communion and preparation masses for Confirmation

Diocesan Support:

The Diocesan Advisor visits the school each year either on a formal or informal basis. The Diocesan Advisor provides:

- Encouragement through an opening school year letter to the staff and a thank-you card at the end of the school visit
- Update on Diocesan and National Events
- Advice on policy and other related activities
- Support by visiting the classroom and meeting the teachers and pupils and attending school celebrations
- In service for Religious Education programme
- Support for the school when there is a critical incident/event in the school

Policy Monitoring and Timeframe:

At the end of each school year, the staff meet to evaluate the success of the policy implementation.

This policy is reviewed every 2 years.

Signatures:

Chairperson of the Board of Management:

Principal:

Religion Co-ordinator:

Date:
