

Our Lady of Lourdes NS

School Plan for Religious Education

Introductory Statement

Our Lady of Lourdes is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Ferns. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life of Jesus Christ.

It promotes Religious Education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

This policy on Religious Education and Faith Development was formulated with the involvement of the Board of Management, Teachers, Ancillary Staff & School Chaplain.

Aims of this Religious Education Policy;

It is hoped that through the process of developing this policy that we as a school community can:

- ✓ Ensure that there is an acknowledged sense of God, Faith, Prayer and Worship within the school
- ✓ Ensure that there is an ordered community where respect for all is evident at all times
- ✓ Ensure that there is an outward-looking care for the less fortunate in society
- ✓ Ensure that there is evidence of parental interest in the religious education programme
- ✓ Implement recognisable links between parish/home/school
- ✓ Endeavour to foster and deepen the children's faith.

Pupils of Other Faiths

Subject to the terms of the Admission Policy the school enrolls pupils of other faiths or no faith and respects their beliefs and practices. Consultation with parents of these pupils takes place on enrolment. Each child is welcome to attend and benefit from the Catholic religious education programme offered. If parents have difficulty with this the Principal shall meet with them to see if an accommodation can be reached. Parents are welcome to view the Religious programme. Sensitivity is always shown when pupils cannot participate in the Religious Education Programme or in liturgical celebrations. The school cannot, however undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith. It is expected that all parents and pupils would accept and respect the school's Catholic Ethos and that those participating in religious Instruction Classes would follow Teacher direction.

Religious Education Programme

The Board of Management and the teachers have adopted the Alive –O Catechetical Programme approved and recommended by the Irish Hierarchy for use in Catholic Schools.

The programme incorporates the recommended approach to religious education for the reception of the sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation. The programme also compliments material covered in the RSE Programme.

The programme is studied each day for one half-hour. A Christian ethos permeates the school day and the life of the school.

Whole School Dimension

Meaningful pictures, statues and Class artworks are on display throughout the school building.

The major Catholic and local feasts are celebrated. They are marked with the aid of signs and symbols displayed throughout the school

- ✓ Advent – the Advent wreath

- ✓ Christmas – tree and crib
- ✓ Feast of St. Brigid – traditional crosses
- ✓ Feast of St. Patrick – depiction of story and shamrock
- ✓ Lent – symbols of repentance and ashes(received in Church)
- ✓ Easter – symbols of the new life of resurrection

The Board of Management allows pupils to attend 9.00am Mass on Ash Wednesday and the 8th December in the Church of the Most Holy Trinity and then come to school immediately afterwards.

Liturgical celebrations are held on the following occasions:

- ✓ Mass for the beginning & end of each School Year
- ✓ Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes if on a school day
- ✓ Mass to celebrate the coming of Christ at Christmas
- ✓ Times of trauma or crisis and for other occasions which from time to time are considered appropriate to celebrate or to mark.

The pupils of the school contribute through participation in choir and music playing to:

- ✓ The celebration of First Communion, Confession & Confirmation

Nativity plays are a feature of Junior & Senior Christmas Concerts. A Christmas Carol Service is undertaken some years.

The catholic education offered in Our Lady of Lourdes is conducted in collaboration with the children's parents and the local parish. We see our role as being supportive of the role of parents and parish.

Responsibility for Implementing This Policy

The Board of Management in consultation with the Principal and post holder responsible for Religious Education are responsible for facilitating implementation of the policy. Individual teachers teach the programme appropriate to their class. Assistance to teachers is viewed by the Board of Management to be an important aspect in implementing the religious education programme undertaken by the school. To this end In-service on handing on the faith/ Alive O Programme is facilitated. Parents are also asked to be responsible for their child's religious formation.

Teachers:

- ✓ Inform themselves through studying the Alive – O teacher's manual
- ✓ Deliver and teach the Alive – O programme appropriate to their class
- ✓ Cooperate with the Chaplain/ Parish and the Diocesan Advisers
- ✓ Avail themselves of in-service support provided.
- ✓ Support the spirit and ethos of the school

Parents:

- ✓ Co-operate and support the school in its effort, especially at times of sacramental preparation and at other school events to which they are invited. They are also asked to help with religious education homework and to read the parts of the Alive-O programme that are intended for them.

Principal:

- ✓ Takes an active role in encouraging the whole school aspects of the programme and monitors progress throughout the school
- ✓ Time-tables Religious Education as a topic for staff and board meetings
- ✓ Liaises with the school chaplain in defining the role of the chaplaincy and the parish in the life of the school
- ✓ Helps to facilitate supportive interaction of all parties in implementing the programme.

Implementation of Religious Education throughout the School Year:

- ✓ Religion is usually taught for a half hour daily.
- ✓ Religious Education and Ethos are integrated in other areas of the Curriculum such as Art, Music, SPHE, History, Geography.
- ✓ Formal prayers are recited at the start and end of the school day, before and after lunch and Angelus is said from 3rd Class upwards
- ✓ Shoe Box Appeal boxes are collected in November, in this way children are made aware of the needs of those less fortunate
- ✓ The Parish Chaplain organises Confessions for the pupils once a term during the school year
- ✓ The Parish Chaplain and Sisters from the Order of The Incarnate Word visit regularly and are very welcome. The role of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word is to support the work of the teacher within the boundaries of the Alive-O programme.
- ✓ Visits from Catechetical Advisers are facilitated.

Sacramental Preparation:

- ✓ Pupils are prepared for the Sacraments of First Penance and First Holy Communion over a two-year period, in 1st and 2nd Class
- ✓ Pupils are prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation over a two-year period, in 5th and 6th Class
- ✓ Sacramental preparation in the school is an on-going process from Junior Infants to 6th Class, as part of the children's faith journey and is undertaken in partnership with the Home and the Parish
- ✓ Parents are helped towards an understanding of the Sacraments by being encouraged to actively participate in the Sacramental preparations with their child e.g. helping to compile scrapbooks, locating photographs, providing information the children about their Baptism etc.
- ✓ Meetings with parents are held early in the school year to encourage partnership with the school and parish and to invite participation in the ceremonies.
- ✓ The Parish undertakes to implement the 'Do This in Memory' Programme for Holy Communion. A defined framework for the programme is arranged in September which plans for the year's programme.

Health & Safety Issues:

Signed consent for trips to the church is sought at enrolment. All due care is taken to ensure safety when religious events are catered for in the school setting.

Resources:

Each Class Teacher is supplied with a class appropriate Teachers Book, copy of Pupils Book and Workbook, Posters, CD, Video and Handouts for Parents to compliment material taught. Each child has an individual Pupils Book & /Workbook. Class Teachers are also provided with Candles & Class Bible. The school has altar requisites and a number of Holy Statues.

Children with Different Needs:

As with all aspects of School Work, material is differentiated to accommodate those of varying ability levels.

Review:

The Policy will be evaluated on an on-going basis by the Teachers, Principal, Parents and Board of Management.

Ratification and Communication:

The policy has been ratified by the Schools Board of Management at the meeting held in June 2012.

Acknowledgements

Our Lady of Lourdes would like to gratefully acknowledge the active involvement of the Priests and Sisters of The Parish in our School Community. Those on the Parents Council and other Parish Bodies who have contributed to religious events in our school are also thanked. The contribution of Teaching Staff, organisational and musical to school religious events is also much appreciated. The very considerable efforts of Class Teachers, with Sacrament Classes is also recognised as is the work of all Class Teachers.