

St. Peter's Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Introduction:

St. Peter's Primary School is a catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. 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 has been implemented in response to the necessity to accommodate the likely influx of 'new Irish' of other faiths into the school community over the coming years.

Relationship to school ethos:

This school enrolls pupils of the faiths or no faith in the school subject to full enrolment criteria and respects their beliefs and practices in accordance with the school ethos of inclusivity. Our vision statement is Mól an Oige agus Tíocfaidh Siad and we actively encourage all in our school community to encourage and support each other positively.

Aim of Religious Education Policy

At St. Peter's Primary School we follow the aims of the schedule for Catholic schools that state 'A Roman Catholic school (which is established in connection with the Minister) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.'

General Information:

a) Diocesan Information

Diocese: Dublin

Archbishop: Archbishop Diarmuid Martin

Director of Education: Anne Mc Donagh

Diocesan Advisers: Cathy Burke, Fiona Crotty, Elaine Mahon & Sonia Murray

b) Parish Information

Parish: St. Peter's

Parish Priest: Fr. Ben Mulligan

Teacher input:

In this school the following areas are covered;

- . In-service on delivering Alive-O programme
- . Study of Alive-O Teachers Guide
- . Prayer Services
- . Nativity plays
- . Carol Services

Materials

The Board of Management and teachers have adopted the Alice-O programme approved and recommended by the Irish hierarchy for use in Catholic schools. A full outline of the religious programme can be found at;

http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=841%3Areligious-education-primary-alive-o&catid=450&Itemid=51

All teachers have an Alive-O kit for their class. Each child has an Alive-O textbook while pupils from Junior Infants-4th class have an Alive-O workbook. 5th & 6th class use a religion copy as well as other religious materials from the diocesan website. Confirmation pupils use worksheets from the Confirmation workbook from Veritas.

See Appendix 1 for Useful Websites.

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 Alive-O Programme approved and recommended by the Irish hierarchy for use in Catholic schools. This programme is delivered each day for the recommended 30 minutes. The programme is taught to each class. All Catholic feasts are celebrated.

- Christmas – tree and cribs, Christmas Stories, Carol services, visit to local nursing homes to entertain patients
- Feast of St. Brigid – making traditional crosses
- Feast of St. Patrick – depiction of story and shamrock, St. Patrick’s Day Cards, entry in St. Patrick’s Day ‘Windows of the World’
- Lent – Symbols of repentance, visit of local clergy to school to school to distribute ashes
- Easter – Easter cards, story of the death of Jesus and resurrection, artwork and workbooks
- Observance of Holy Days of Obligation
- Celebration of the opening and closing of school year with school mass
- Family masses throughout the year

Sacred Space and Symbols

Each classroom has a Sacred Space set up which is used during Prayer services, daily prayers and moments of reflection. This space also displays the children’s work on current themes of the Alive-O programme and changes throughout the Liturgical Year. Each classroom has a crucifix while around the school symbols of our faith communicate our school’s catholic ethos. A statue of our Lady adorns the Welcome Area. At Christmas an Advent wreath and crib are displayed in the Welcome Area. A Holy Water Font can be found outside the Rachel Murphy Hall.

Doctrine

Prayers recited throughout the day include;

- The Sign of the Cross
- Morning Prayer
- Evening Prayer
- Grace Before Meal
- Grace after Meals
- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory be to the Father

(Senior classes will recite prayers in Irish.)

Special emphasis is put on hymns for Christmas and liturgical & sacramental ceremonies.

Suggested songs and hymns include;

2nd class

- Connected
- Circle of Friends
- How Lucky We Are!
- The Twelve Tribes
- Silent Night
- Being Connected
- The Way To Be
- I'm Sorry God
- Mary Our Mother
- Listen
- The Lords Prayer
- Come Holy Spirit
- Happy in the Presence
- My Shepherd is the Lord
- This is the Day
- We Come to You Lord Jesus
- Holy Holy
- Love
- Let the Children Come
- Eat this Bread
- Lets All Join Together

3rd/4th class

- Communion Choir
- Happy in the presence of the lord
- My Shepherd is the Lord
- This is the Day
- Holy Holy
- We come to you Lord Jesus
- Love
- Let the Children Come
- Eat This Bread
- Lets All Join Together

5th/6th class

- Fan the Flame

- The Cloud's Veil
- Song of Confirmation
- Come Holy Spirit
- Confirm Us Today
- Christ Be Our Light
- Today & From Now On
- Be Not Afraid

Communion choir -

see relevant hymns above

- Connected
- Lamb of God
- Gloria
- Alleluia
- This is the day
- Wonderfully made
- Circle of Friends

Christmas hymns

- Away in a Manger
- Carol of the Journey
- Mary will you take this baby boy
- Silent Night
- Joy to the World
- Hark the Herald Angel
- The First Noel

Liturgical Celebrations:

Highlights of the liturgical year are embraced and celebrated including advent, Christmas, Lent, the Triduum & Easter. A school mass celebrating the opening and closing of the school year is held in St. Peter's Church each year. Children are also brought to mass in the local church to celebrate Holy days of Obligation. Children receive ashes in school each Ash Wednesday from the school chaplain. A mass is held in June in the school to celebrate 6th class graduation. This mass takes place in the evening for pupils, parents and staff.

Teachers are invited to an annual mass in the Deanery of Bray to bless the beginning of the school year.

Sacramental Preparation:

Preparation for the sacraments begins in Junior Infants and continues throughout the school. The whole school celebrates the specific sacraments of Confirmation and First Communion each year. Pupils in 2nd and 6th class attend mass with the community in the local church in preparation for their specific sacrament.

Sacrament of Confession and Sacrament of First Holy Communion

Children in 2nd class make their First Confession and communion in St. Peter's church and. Children are thoroughly prepared in all aspects of this sacrament by the individual class teacher in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school. Parents of children preparing for First Holy Communion are invited to participate in the 'Do This in Memory of Me' programme facilitated by the parish coordinator. Meetings are held during the liturgical year which parents are invited to attend.

Sacrament of Confirmation

6th class pupils celebrate the Service of Light and Confirmation in St. Peter'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. Parents of children preparing for Confirmation are invited to participate in the Confirming Our Children programme including three community masses during the year run by the parish coordinator, Sr. Patricia. Meetings are held during the liturgical year which parents are invited to attend. All 6th class pupils attend a Confirmation retreat in the second term organised by the parish priest and school chaplain. The school chaplain also arranges confession for 6th class pupils in the school before Confirmation.

Implementation of Religious Education throughout the school year:

Religious education is integrated with all aspects of the curriculum especially the Arts, English, Gaeilge and SPHE. Morning and evening prayers are recited in all classes with specific prayers chosen by the class teacher. A variety of feast days are celebrated in school such as Christmas, Easter, Lent, Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, St. Brigid's Day and our patron saint, St. Patrick.

Every effort is made that newly qualified teachers do not teach a sacramental class. However as a small school this is not always possible. All staff support the class teacher of each sacrament whether it is assisting in art work, supervising trips to the church, preparing booklets, practising prayers & hymns, preparing the school choir and supporting the teacher with questions and queries. Each sacrament is a whole school celebration and most staff attend the actual sacrament celebration in the church.

Missionary awareness and charity support is actively encouraged in St. Peter's Primary School. Every Christmas we have a present giving event for Barnardos, Tallaght, where each family chooses a child from the giving tree and purchases a Christmas present. The children from 6th class make a class donation to a chosen charity each year from their Confirmation money. This has been to Trocaire & GOAL in the past and is usually chosen by the children. Often when a tragedy or natural disaster occurs the school organise a fundraising event. These have included a Day for Haiti and Tsunami collection. These are usually organised by the senior pupils for all others to participate. We also include speakers to come and speak to senior children every year - these have included individuals from Haven, GOAL, VSO & many others.

A school retreat takes place each February for 6th class pupils. This is organised by the parish and takes place with children from 4 other local schools. Retreats and events for teachers organised by the Diocesan Advisors are advertised on the staff noticeboard. Staff attend the annual teachers mass in the Holy Redeemer Church in Bray and BOM members attend events in Dublin city such as Child Protection training and other advisory evenings.

Fr. James visits the school regularly. No specific arrangements are in place as the parish priests are very busy and come when they have a free moment but in general Fr. James visits every fortnight. He visits all classes but spends additional time with the sacrament classes.

Partners in Religious Education:

Home/School

Parents are encouraged to support their child's religious education through the following;

- prayer at home
- homework
- curriculum meeting at beginning of the school year

- parent/teacher meetings
- sacrament preparation meetings
- sacrament celebrations
- 1st class parents prepare the Communion Reception in school
- school mass at beginning and end of school year
- joining community at mass on holy days of obligation
- 6th class graduation mass in classroom
- supporting the Catholic ethos of the school

School/Parish

The following programmes are implemented in our parish;

- Baptismal programme
- Do this in memory programme
- Confirming our Children programme

The two school linked programmes are coordinated by Sr. Patricia who, following an initial meeting with all parents of children receiving the sacrament, liaises with parents through 2/3 parent reps and the class teacher & Principal. A number of parish based masses are held throughout the year which are coordinated by the parent reps.

Pupils of Other Religious Traditions:

Pupils of other faiths are very welcome at St. Peter's Primary School. When they enrol it is clearly stated that they are enrolling in a school with a strong Catholic ethos and that this ethos of caring and consideration for others permeates all in the community. Children are not removed from class during the religion lesson but can work at other curricular tasks. Children of other faiths and their families are most welcome to join their class at any sacramental or liturgical celebration.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Staff

- Deliver Alive-O Programme
- 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
- Avail of support at information meetings throughout the year
- Actively support the ethos of the school

Principal

- Overall responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic ethos in the school
- Facilitate supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the programme
- Facilitate the formulation of the Religious Education Policy
- Facilitate the prayer life of the school throughout the liturgical year, e.g. prayer at assemblies, special feast days etc...
- Encourage the use of sacred spaces in classrooms and in school common areas, and to ensure the prominence of religious symbols and icons.
- Provide input on religious education at staff meetings, in order to maintain a conscious profile of the subject
- Facilitate links with chaplains and parish personnel
- Enable parents to take an active role in the religious education and formation of their children, e.g. use of home links in Alive-O
- Liaise with Diocesan Advisers
- Distribute resources, e.g. Lenten and Advent resources, Bible Society material, Trócaire boxes etc

Success Criteria:

- An acknowledged sense of God, Faith prayer and worship within the school community
- Respect for all within the school community
- Parental interest
- Recognisable links between home, school and parish
- An outward-looking care for those less fortunate in society

Review:

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as issues arise.

APPENDIX 1

USEFUL WEBSITES

- <http://www.dublindiocese.ie> – the website for the Archdiocese of Dublin contains a comprehensive section on Liturgical Resources with materials available in both English and Irish
- <http://www.ress.ie> – Religious Education Support Service
- <http://www.antobar.ie> – a religious education resources site compiled by An Tobar, Coláiste Mhuire, Marino Institute of Education, Dublin
- <http://www.glencree.ie> – for information on the Glencree Centre for Peace Education Programme
- <http://www.theresite.org.uk> – an extensive range of resources relevant to religious education
- <http://www.interfaithcalendar.org> – a listing of all the major religious events and dates
- <http://www.adherents.com> – up-to-date statistics about numbers and distribution of major religions
- <http://www.faihharts.ie> – arts resources for religious education in Catholic schools in Ireland
- <http://www.religion-online.org> – a collection of essays and books on topics of theology by reputable scholars
- <http://www.cpsma.ie> – Catholic Primary School Management Association
- <http://wellsprings.materdei.ie> – a programme to deepen the awareness and appreciation of the identity and ethos of Catholic primary schools
- <http://www.catholicireland.net> – a registered charity set up to promote and support the work of the Catholic Church in Ireland and abroad on the World Wide Web
- <http://www.catholiceducation-ni.com> – Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education
- <http://www.staffroom.ie> – advertises posts for principals and teachers. Supported by CPSMA and the Irish Episcopal Conference
- <http://www.ceist.ie> – the trustee body for the voluntary secondary schools of five religious congregations
- <http://www.lecheiletrust.ie> – the Le Chéile Trust represents the educational responsibilities of twelve religious congregations
- <http://www.desplaces.ie> – represents the educational association of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans)
- <http://www.loreto.ie/education> – represents the educational responsibilities of the Loreto Sisters