**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

St. Patrick S.N.S is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. We are a 20 teacher school. We have 10 Special Need Assistants. Mary O’Riordan is the Principal and Laura Mulligan is the Deputy Principal.  We have a strong Catholic ethos at St. Patrick’s and all the staff play their part in providing for this ethos. We have a very connected relationship with our Parish and both Fr John O’Connor and Fr John Regan are very involved in our school environment.

This policy has been drafted in response to the need to have a policy document which underpins our approach to the teaching of religion for all of the pupils who attend our school.

We created this policy based on discussions at staff meetings, parent meetings (with our HSCL) and board meetings. At these meetings we discuss how best to maintain the good work of the Junior School and find ways to make the practise of our student’s faith relevant for the children in 3rd class through to 6th when the children are confirmed.

**Relationship between Religious Education and School Ethos**

The schedule for the Catholic Schools is distributed / circulated to all candidates who are interviewed for teaching positions in our school. It is readily available in the Secretary’s office, on the school server and is displayed in our sacred place at the school entrance.

**Vision Statement**

Mol an Óige

**Mission Statement**

The aim of our school is to provide happy and stimulating learning experiences in a safe, secure and supportive environment for our children, taking into account the social, physical, emotional, creative and spiritual well-being of each child, at the same time cultivating good habits, respect for each other, for the school and the environment.

**Aim of Religious Education Policy**

The aim of religious education is to foster and deepen the children’s faith.

**General Information**

1. ***Diocesan Information***

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| Name of Diocese | Dublin |
| Name of Patron/ Archbishop | Dermot Farrell |
| Name of Director of Education | Dan O’Connor |
| Name of Diocesan Advisor | Sr. Ann |

***b) Parish Information***

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| --- | --- |
| Name of Parish | St.Patrick’s, Corduff |
| Name of Parish Priest | Fr. John O Connor |

***c) School Information***

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| --- | --- |
| Name of School | St. Patrick’s Senior National School |
| Name of Chaplain | Fr. John O’Connor |
| Name of Religious Education Representative | Mary O’Riordan and Laura Mulligan |

**Materials**

Each class teacher has been supplied with a Grow in Love manual, posters and children’s Grow in Love text books to support the teaching of Religious Education. Also available are online resources for the Grow in Love Programme.

Children are encouraged to bring home their Grow in Love text book to consolidate what is taught (when relevant) and this acts as a link between home and school.

In 6th Class the children have a Confirmation work book which they regularly bring home to have signed.

**Symbols**

It is important to display a variety of symbols in the school in order to identify it as a   
Catholic School.

Each class: 1 Crucifix statue in each classroom

2 Candle in each room

**Sacred Spaces**

1. At school entrance- that is changed according to liturgical calendar.
2. Sacred space in each room:

Children are encouraged to bring in symbols from home relating to the R.E lesson that week.

**Doctrine**

Doctrine is the Church’s teaching on the most important truths of Faith.

**Sacramental Preparation**

During their period of education in St. Patrick’s S.N.S children are prepared for the following sacrament:

*Confirmation.*

* Children in 6th class are prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation each year. The books from Grow in Love and the confirmation workbook  are used by teachers as a guide to the programme of religious education for Confirmation
* Confirmation ceremonies are prepared and organised by the teachers in collaboration with the Priest(s) and parent/guardians
* Preparation begins at the very start of sixth class
* We have an enrolment ceremony on a Saturday in November.
* Ceremony of  Light in which pledges are taken, takes place in the weeks before Confirmation
* The Confirmation children attend mass every Wednesday morning during school time.
* The Confirmation children attend a day of retreat before their Confirmation Day, organised by our Parish.
* Confirmation ceremony takes place in late February /early March.

**Implementation of Religious Education throughout the school year.**

* In St. Patrick’s S.N.S religious lessons take place every day.
* In St. Patrick’s S.N.S religious education is integrated into other parts of the curriculum such as Art, Music, Drama, SPHE, SESE, and RSE.
* Formal prayers are recited in the morning at break times, before going home and at the end of weekly assemblies in the hall/church.
* Children are taught the ritual format of Mass through drill and practise and are encouraged to attend Mass on Sunday. Children attend prayer services at assemblies and learn to show reverence during prayer time.
* Sixth class children attend mass once a week during the school day.
* Fifth class children attend mediation once a fortnight in the church during the school day.
* Senior School children participate in the parish Carol Service before Christmas and sing at ‘midnight’ Mass on Christmas Eve.  Senior School Children are also encouraged to participate in the parish choir who sing every second Sunday at mass.

**All Catholic Feasts are celebrated.**

* Christmas- tree, crib, Christmas stories, Carol services, Nativity play at school assemblies
* Feast of St. Brigid- making of traditional crosses.
* Feast of St. Patrick- depiction of story and shamrock, St. Patrick’s Day Cards.
* Lent – Symbols of repentance, Fr John and our other Fr John visit school to distribute ashes on Ash Wednesday.
* Easter - Easter cards, story of the death of Jesus and resurrection. The children are welcomed in the church to go through the Stations of the Cross.
* Prayers services are held: start of school year, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter, end of year for  6th Class
* October and May – Our Lady’s months

Teachers of Sacramental classes are given the full support of all members of staff, including SNA’s, chaplain, secretary and Principal.

Missionary awareness is highlighted through the support offered to different charities such as Trocaire.

Teacher’s retreats, organised by the Diocesan Advisors are publicised in the staff room.

The annual school Mass organised by the diocese is also publicised in the staff room. The chairperson and members of the Board of Management usually attend.

The chaplain visits the school regularly and also makes arrangements for school prayer services and class visits through the R.E representative or Principal.

We evaluate Religious Education as a subject taught in school through the effectiveness of it. This includes the reverence and respect which the children show in Mass, their familiarity with the Liturgy, their awareness of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and their knowledge of prayers.

**Partners in Religious Education**

*Home/school*

Parents support the school during times of Sacramental preparation and assist at home by reading the ‘at home’ part of the Grow in Love book when given in homework. Parents are invited to attend the Confirmation Enrolment ceremony, the Christmas Carol Service and occasionally special prayer services and assemblies.  We celebrate Catholic Schools Week annually and we invite in the Grandparents on Grandparents Day.  Parents are informed of our Catholic School celebrations through Aladdin.

*School/Parish*

The following programmes are implemented in our parish:

Children’s Liturgy Mass on Sunday at 11am.

6th class weekly Mass

5th class fortnightly Mediation

**Roles and Responsibilities**

This policy was drawn up by a volunteer committee drawn from all staff. Initial consultation took place in class group meetings with our Parish Priest. This was followed by full staff meeting discussion.

**Review**

The religious Education Policy will be reviewed formally every two years. It will also be reviewed informally on a constant basis through discussions with staff members.

Signed    \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Fr. John O’Connor

Chairperson Board of Management

A copy of the policy will be distributed to all members of staff.  The policy is also available on the server and on the school website.