

Religious Education Policy Document



**Coláiste na Maighdine,
Presentation Secondary School,
Cannon Street,
Waterford City.**

**Presentation Secondary School is a Catholic School
under the Trusteeship of
The Presentation Sisters & the Ceist Trustee Body.**

The Scope of the Policy

As a Catholic School within the Presentation Community, this Religious Education Policy will impact on the whole school community. Support for and implementation of the Policy will come from a number of groups:

Board of Management:

To approve the policy, ensure its implementation and monitor its review.

Principal and Deputy Principal:

To support the procedures of the policy and ensure its effective implementation.

School Staff:

In a Presentation School, the hope is that the whole staff embraces and safeguards the Ethos of the school and supports the cross curricular nature of Religious Education.

Teachers of Religious Education:

To implement and review the Policy. To ensure a high standard and effective delivery of Religious Education.

Chaplain:

This role is currently not available to the school.

Pastoral Care Personnel

(Pastoral Care Team/Class Tutors/Year-Heads/ Guidance Counsellors):

To monitor the effects of the policy and to provide support and guidance to the students.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

To support the Religious Education Programme in the school and facilitate the faith formation of their children.

Students:

To participate in the Religious Education Programme and to cultivate an openness to other religious traditions.

Mission Statement and Rationale

The Religious Education Policy is informed by the Vision Statement of the Presentation Ministry:

The Presentation Ministry is inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the example of Nanon Nagle and an understanding of faith that seeks to do justice. Presentation Sisters and associated lay people are committed to:

- building a more just and inclusive society where people's rights and dignity are respected and where communities are empowered to reach their full human development
- promoting education from social transformation
- tackling the root causes of injustice through education, critical analysis, advocacy and influencing public policy
- campaigning for global human rights, social justice and development issues
- promoting a spirituality of justice
- working with communities in collaborative and participative ways to overcome poverty and social exclusion
- evaluating our policies from the perspective of the preferential option for people who are poor
- promoting right relationships with self, others, God and all of creation
- dialogue and collaboration with all who work for social justice in realising a new vision of society. We recognise that there are many who share the values of social justice and equality, but who may not do so from a Christian perspective.

We encourage students to become involved in a variety of activities outside of the curriculum. Life skills are reinforced through participation in such activities as Community Placement, The Young Social Innovators Project, The Social Justice Group, Concern Debates, The Belmont Sports Partnership Project and The Gaisce Awards. The students are also involved in variety of fundraising projects for various charities.

The Rationale:

As a Presentation Secondary School, we are committed to the importance of both formal and informal religious and moral education. The characteristic spirit of the congregation of Presentation Sisters is based on the vision of Nano Nagle which:

Gives priority to education in a living faith whereby students grow to appreciate the life and mission of Jesus Christ with a view to being committed to the world as he was.

Has a special concern for the poor and underprivileged.

Is challenged to develop a curriculum that promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person.

The Vision of a Presentation School:

Inspired by the vision of Nano Nagle, we:

Seek to live by Christian values while recognising the dignity and value of each individual.

Contribute to the building up of the local community.

Work for peace and justice in society.

Our Specific Aims at Presentation Secondary School Waterford:

The aims of Religious Education which plays an integral part in the curriculum and philosophy of Presentation Secondary School, Waterford, is to promote in each pupil a knowledge of their faith and its practice in everyday life so as to contribute to their holistic development, while adhering to the school ethos.

Staffing

Religious Education is an integral part of our school ethos and school community, and it is imperative that it is given the status it deserves. The appointment of qualified teachers, the priority on the timetable and the allocation of three class periods to each group confirms this importance.

All our staff in the RE Department are qualified to teach RE. In addition, the school will support any teacher who wishes to gain further qualifications.

The Religious Education Co-ordinator is a rotating position among the qualified teachers. The co-ordinator receives all information that arrives by post pertaining to Religious Education. He/She shares this information with Religion teachers and other staff members if relevant. The Co-ordinator, in consultation with other Religion teachers, recommends books to be placed on the booklists each year. The Co-

ordinator is advised by the Principal of any other matters affecting Religious Education and will consult with the teachers of Religious Education before deciding on a response.

Formal meetings of the Religious Education Department take place each term.

The aims of these meetings will be to consistently review practice in the light of the Policy and to support each other in our work. These meetings are minuted on RE meeting templates.

Curriculum

Student access to subject:

Religious Education is a core subject on the school curriculum and an integral part of the school ethos. All pupils are expected to participate in RE. Everyone is invited to participate in the liturgical celebrations of the school which are in keeping with the Catholic ethos. Religious Education is timetabled for 1-2 periods a week for all year groups.

The Junior Cycle Religious Education Programme is a core subject at 1st, 2nd and 3rd year levels but is not an examination subject. There are two 58-minute class periods per week. Students follow the Junior Certificate exam syllabus.

Transition Year students will follow a programme laid out over on 58 –minute class period per week, which has been formulated by the Religious Education department in conjunction with the Transition Year Co-Ordinator.

The Senior Cycle Religious Education Programme is a core subject at 5th and 6th year but is not an examination subject. There are two 58-minute class periods per week.

Inclusion of Students of Various Faiths/No Faith

The Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus (NCCA) is a state syllabus, written to encompass students of all faiths and those of none. It states that:

Religious Education should ensure that students are exposed to a broad range of religious traditions and to the non-religious interpretations of life. It has a particular role to play in the curriculum in the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding. It seeks to develop in students the skills needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other, or of no religious traditions.

The Religious Education Programme introduces students to a broad range of religious traditions and to the non - religious interpretation of life. The religious freedom and personal conscience of individual students and their parents is respected. In a case where a student over the age of 18/parents of a student, wish their daughter to be

exempt from the Religious Education/Faith life of the school they are asked to contact the Principal to discuss the reasons for this. *(see Role of Parents) *

In the exceptional case of a student not participating in the Religious Education programme with consultation of the school management, she may choose from one of the following options which are provided to contribute to her spiritual and/or human development.

Study a spiritual or religious text from her own religious tradition in the RE class

Age-appropriate reflectional texts may be provided by the teacher, if the students does not have a spiritual/religious/humanist text for class

There is no other on school site facility to supervise students at the RE class times

Should a student not wish to attend a Liturgical Service in consultation with the school management, parents must complete the necessary documentation at the start of the Academic Year.

Inclusion of students of different faiths is promoted in various ways, for example;

- Promoting retreats as a spiritual experience for all and seeking to include all students.
- Acknowledging some of the major feasts of other traditions.
- Inviting students of all faiths to attend the school masses & share their knowledge/experience of their tradition.
- Providing opportunities for students of different faiths to share their experience.

***Parents**

Parents are the primary educators of their daughter. This includes religious education. Parents or guardians of all incoming students are informed about the Catholic identity of the school, its Mission Statement and the CEIST Charter outlining the ethos, values and expectations of the school. They are also advised of the Religious Education Policy. Parents of students are expected to acknowledge and support the Catholic ethos of the school. This includes promoting their daughter's spiritual development and faith formation in cooperation with the school and the parish. This includes encouraging their daughter to attend RE class and school liturgical events. Parents are informed of the aims, objectives and content of Religious Education Programmes by means of:

- Participation by Religious Education teachers at the parent/teacher meetings. We use these meetings to clarify questions and discuss issues that may arise.
- The school website.
- Parents are invited to attend all school services and have a particular role in the Graduation Mass.

In a case where parents wish their daughter to be exempt from the Religious Education class or the Faith Life of the school, they are asked to contact the Principal to discuss the reason(s) for this. Should parents/guardians wish to withdraw their daughter from the RE class/liturgical event they are asked to make an appointment to see the Principal to discuss this. The Principal and parents will first make an effort to address the reason or difficulty. Efforts will be made to engage in dialogue around the reason(s) for non-participation, while also recognising the constitutional rights of the students/parents.

Planning for Students with Special Needs

Students with special needs are welcomed and facilitated in this subject. SNAs work in some classes with the teacher to facilitate student learning. Learning Support teachers are informed of work that needs to be carried out by the students, and assistance with work is provided.

Textbooks

The textbook used in First, Second and Third Year is Inspire, published by educate.ie.

The book is used to help the pupil understand the truth of the Gospel and the challenge of living it. In conjunction with the textbook, a variety of additional resources are used. Because of the evolving nature of Religious Education at Junior Cycle, textbooks are constantly being reviewed and upgraded in conjunction with the schoolbook scheme.

No formal textbook is used in Transition Year, but resource materials are provided by teachers to pupils. These resources include Searching and St Vincent de Paul resource, Nano 300 resources- link with Nano Centre; Resource on Gratitude; The Pursuit of Happiness.

The textbook used in Fifth Year and Sixth year is Pathways to Purpose by educate.ie. This resource is used to help students to understand how the search for God arises out of the struggle of life and the pursuit of meaning. Another key area pursued through such books is the area of relationships with God, society, others and self.

Guest speakers are invited to the school to share their personal experiences on a variety of social topics, thus providing students understanding of their Christian education for students.

Class Periods:

In First, Second and Third year there are two 58-minute class periods per week.

TY have one 58-minute classes per week.

Senior Cycle religion classes take place twice a week for 58-minutes.

Grouping of pupils:

Mixed ability is preferred and is the norm in all year groups for Religious Education.

Cross-Curricular Links:

We engage with the History Department in relation to the Holocaust Memorial Day Service and the SHPE Department in relation to Sexuality Education, we work with the Career Guidance Department in the area of Work and Senior RSE.

We collaborate with the Guidance Department in the area of referrals and students' support.

Provision for Health and Safety Requirements

The school policy on Health and Safety exists within this subject. Teachers have attended fire safety workshops.

Facilities and Resources

A variety of resources can be availed of by teachers within the school. These include newspaper articles, magazines (Face Up), photocopies, audiovisual materials (DVD's, NUA, appropriate websites, music).

Resources are stored in the classrooms of the Religion teachers and in an RE Store and are available to relevant teachers. These resources are updated by the Religious Education Department on a continuous basis. The use of IT facilities is fully available to all in the Department with each classroom having internet and data projectors.

We, at Presentation Secondary School, Waterford, encourage students to participate in experiential learning through areas such as Community Placement in Transition Year, Concern Debates, The Belmont Sports Partnership Project and The Gaisce Awards and the Social Justice Group. The students engage in a variety of charitable works, for

example, St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Food Appeal, Concern Fast, Hospice Foundation, Goal and Trócaire, Carol singing in The Holy Ghosts Care Centre.

Because of the Ethos of the school, we regard our staff as a major resource in the promotion of Religious Education.

Content and Assessment Techniques

Consistent with other subjects students are assessed regularly on an informal basis. As with all subjects, reports are completed twice a year for all students.

Feedback to parents on student progress is offered at parent teacher meetings

Communication

Activities and features pertinent to the Religious Education Programme are communicated to students in classes, on the Religious Education notice board and in the school newsletter/Website.

Budget

The Board of Management decides on the Religious Education Budget annually.

Chaplaincy Services

The school has the active support of the priests of St. Paul's Parish, but we currently do not have the services of a Chaplain. The local priests are always also accessible when required and are greatly supportive of the work of the RE Department and in the implementation of the curriculum.

Retreats

It is school policy that retreats are encouraged and promoted. The Religious Education Programme supports retreats insofar as they meet the needs of the students and subject to availability. The Board of Management supports this by contributing towards the cost of the retreats. The cost of retreats for senior students is currently built into the book rental scheme.

Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer:

Prayer is an integral part of Religious Education in the school. Religion classes may often begin with a short prayer. Similarly other meetings in the school commence with a prayer, for example, staff meetings. Prayers are also said on the Intercom.

Students are given the opportunity to actively participate in prayer, meditation and reflection in the prayer room which is on the 2nd floor of the school.

Liturgy:

A variety of liturgical and Para-liturgical worship take place throughout the year.

For many of our students school is their only experience of a praying Christian Community. Liturgical celebrations take place throughout the year and are prepared by the students assisted by the RE team and the Music Department.

We aim to involve as many students as possible in our celebrations. Attendance at all services is obligatory, and they take place during class time. Some services such as the mass to open the Academic year, the Christmas Service and the End of Year Mass take place in the presence of the whole school community and in the local church of St. Paul's.

A Liturgical calendar is prepared for the year. There are additional liturgies of key events that may take place in any year such as deaths. These rituals are regarded as key responses in traumatic times and form a key position in the school's critical incident policy. Good catechesis at this time makes provision for prayer, meditation, reflection, a listening ear, sensitivity, silence and above all gives witness to the love of Christ. Christian signs and symbols are displayed throughout the school.

Date	Service
September	Mass to open the Academic Year
November 21st	Presentation Day Service
December	Christmas Carol Service
February	Ash Wednesday
May	Graduation Mass for Sixth Years
May	Mass to end the Academic Year

Religious Imagery

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

Crucifix, Bible, Art/icons of other faith traditions, Pictures of different major festivals, candles, Advent wreath, Lenten, Holy Week and Easter display and a crib.

Social Awareness

Over the years, the school has had an amicable relationship with the local parish and community as well as surrounding parishes. As part of the Transition Year Community Work Programme many of our students are actively involved with local community organisations, which promotes awareness of social justice amongst the student body.

The Community Work Programme which takes place during Transition Year plays an important role in making students aware of the social problems that exist within the local community such as St. Patrick's Nursing Home, Mowlam Hospital, Lady Lane Men's Hostel, Care of the Aged, Brothers of Charity, to name a few.

Students are actively involved in fundraising and other charitable works which benefits the under privileged in our own society.

Parish

The school is situated in St. Paul's Parish, Lisduggan and as already mentioned links with the parish are actively encouraged. We collaborated with the Diocesan Advisor in the running of senior retreats. Students from other parishes, who attend the school, are encouraged to participate in their own parish activities.

In-Service

Teachers are facilitated in order to attend meetings with Diocesan advisors, the Presentation Sisters Religion Support Service and other related meetings as they arise. This is currently very difficult as supervision and substitution restricts teacher availability to attend courses.

Roles and Responsibilities

The development of the Religious Education Policy was delegated for development by the Board of Management to the Religious Education Department. This policy was then presented in draft form to the Parents' Council, the Students' Council and to the Staff for discussion. It was then brought to the Board of Management for ratification. This policy is a working document and is subject to ongoing review.

The Policy is implemented by the Religious Education Department.

The monitoring and reviewing of the Religious Education Policy will be carried out by the Board of Management.

Support Systems

A system of support is in place in the school. This consists of the Ceist Trustee body, Presentation Education Office, Board of Management, the Diocesan advisor and priests in the Parish.

Ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Chairperson of the Board _____

Principal _____

Ratified by the Board of Management on 15/06/2026

Chairperson of the Board Klaire Sheridan

Principal SALLY ANNE RONAYNE