

## ***Scoil Naomh Áine*** ***Religious Education Policy***

### **Aim of Religious Education**

The aim of the Religious Education curriculum is to help children mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives, through their encounter with, exploration and celebration of the Catholic faith.<sup>1</sup>

The curriculum distinguishes four interrelated strands of Christian Faith, The Word of God, Liturgy/Prayer and Christian Morality. The strands overlap and interact to form a holistic learning experience for the child.

Christian Faith: Teaching and learning in this strand assists children to become religiously literate in key truths, doctrines and practices of the Catholic religious tradition.

The Word of God: In this strand children are introduced to an age-appropriate way to Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church.

Liturgy and Prayer: Children are encouraged to engage with liturgical signs, symbols and rituals which nurture their relationship with God as Father, Son and Spirit, and to develop their capacity for personal prayer and for participation in the liturgy of the Church.

Christian Morality: The teaching and learning in this strand helps children to grow in awareness of their identity as persons created in the image and likeness of God and called to live in loving, respectful, relationship with God, other human persons and the whole of creation. The children are introduced to Jesus as the example for living an ethical life and are formed in gospel values and in love of God and neighbour.<sup>2</sup>

### **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

Scoil Naomh Áine is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

Scoil Áine's Religious Education Policy was formulated by the RE Co-ordinator in consultation with school staff, chaplain and B.O.M. This policy represents an updating of the previous school policy for Religious Education.

### **The Mission Statement of the School**

*Scoil Naomh Áine Clondalkin is a Catholic Presentation School which aims:*

- *To create a caring and supportive atmosphere for the whole school community.*
- *Following in the tradition of Nano Nagle, to foster respect for self and others and to be sensitive to individual needs.*
- *To secure a broad and balanced Curriculum and wide range of experiences.*
- *To work in partnership with parents to give each child the knowledge, skills, motivation and confidence to make the most of future opportunities.*

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<sup>1</sup> Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland, Irish Episcopal Conference, p.31

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 34-35

## History

Scoil Naomh Áine is a former Presentation primary school catering for girls from Junior Infants to 6th Class and boys from Junior Infants to 1<sup>st</sup> Class, with an enrolment of approximately 245 pupils. The school was founded in 1969 and is located in the parish of Clondalkin in the Dublin Diocese. The school Patron is the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dermot Farrell.

The school is located adjacent to the grounds of the Church of the Immaculate Conception and the Presentation Sisters Convent. The Presentation Sisters were Trustees of the school until 2019. The school maintains strong links with the Presentation Community. Fr. Kieran Coghlan is the current parish moderator and Christina Malone (Parish Worker) is the school Chaplain. Sr. Stasia, a Presentation Sister, serves on the current school Board of Management. (November 2019-2023).

We place particular emphasis on

- ❖ respecting the dignity of each pupil, staff member and parent
- ❖ cultivating good relationships
- ❖ being inclusive and being especially mindful of the disadvantaged and those with special needs
- ❖ striving for excellence in all aspects of school life
- ❖ promoting justice and care for the earth and all of God's creation.

The school provides Religious Education for Catholic pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church.

Teachers employed by the Board of Management hold a Diploma in Catholic & Religious Education or equivalent, and are committed to implementing the Religious Education Programme in the school. Teachers strive to model the Gospel values of truth, freedom, compassion, justice, love, tolerance and forgiveness in their relationships with management, other staff, pupils and parents.

## **SYMBOLS**

- The school reception area has a religious themed noticeboard for displaying work by classes throughout the year to reflect the Liturgical Year and events specific to our school.
- The school reception area and second building lobby both have Sacred Spaces that are updated to reflect the Liturgical Year.
- The staffroom has a crucifix on display.
- Every classroom and common areas have a holy water font.
- Our school crest has Nano Nagle's lantern at its centre, signifying our status as a former Presentation Sisters school.
- Nano Nagle imagery is visible around the school-icon, pop-up banner, pictures
- Religious statues and pictures are displayed in the stairwells and corridors throughout the school.
- There are two religious murals in the yard.
- Official school headed notepaper contains images of the school crest and the Presentation Sisters logo.

### **1. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND PRIMARY EDUCATION**

- A Schedule for Catholic Schools is displayed in the reception area and in the second building lobby. The Mission Statement of the school is also displayed.
- Religious Education is taught for 30 minutes daily at a time that suits the classroom teacher's schedule. This time is included on their Classroom Timetable.

## 2. AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

The aim of Religious Education is to foster and deepen the children's faith through teaching the Catholic RE programme and through the cultivation of the Catholic Ethos of the school. In Scoil Naomh Áine, pupils are helped to understand that the world is infused with the loving presence of God. Throughout the RE curriculum and the 'Grow in Love' programme pupils are given an opportunity to notice, accept and celebrate the loving presence of God in their lives. The pedagogical style that is followed in the 'Grow in Love' programme is characterised by three qualities: respect, invitation and conversation.

## 3. GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Diocesan Information</b>	Archdiocese: Archdiocese of Dublin Patron: Archbishop of Dublin Director of Education: Department of Education
<b>Parish Information</b>	Parish: Clondalkin Village Parish Church: Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Killian Parish Moderator: Rev. Kieran Coghlan Chairperson of Pastoral Council: Jacqueline Connolly Pastoral Workers: Christina Malone
<b>School Information</b>	Chaplain: Christina Malone Patron representatives on Board of Management: Ronan Leydon, Joseph Leonard Religious Education Coordinator: Karen McKeivitt

## 4. MATERIALS

- The *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* is the foundation document for all Religious Education in Catholic primary schools.
- The *Grow in Love* is the programme approved for use in Catholic primary schools in Ireland.
- Each classroom has a *Grow in Love Teacher Resource Kit*, ie. Teacher manual, CD and poster set. Each teacher is registered with a login code for the *Grow in Love* programme using their school email address.
- Children have access to the *Grow in Love* book appropriate to their own level.
- Children at all class levels bring home materials from the *Grow in Love* programme according to the class teacher's plan.
- State whether children have journals/copies designated for RE only from third class up.
- There is a set of Good News Bibles in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class and additional copies are available in the Religion Resources area. Each classroom has an age appropriate Bible in their Sacred Space. There is also a Children's Illustrated Bible in the school Sacred Space.
- The Principal circulates the *monthly memos* sent out by the Education Secretariat to all class teachers by email.
- There is a selection of resources specific to the Presentation Order and Nano Nagle. Each class except Infants has a set of magazines about Nano Nagle. There are various books, booklets and DVDS in the Religious Resources area.
- There are many books about Saints in the Senior Classes and in the Religious Resources area.
- Additional Religious Education resources are placed in the Religious Resources area, e.g. books, DVDS, posters. These can be borrowed and returned by individual classes as necessary.

- Resources for Catholic Schools Week (CWS) from the Diocesan Education Office are available to the school each January and are accessible for teachers to support RE and CSW events.
- Resources for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc. are gathered in the Religious Resources area or on the School Server for Computer based resources which are sourced mainly from the Diocese education website.

## 5. **PRAYER SPACE**

Each class has a designated prayer space which changes in accordance with the liturgical cycle and the *Grow in Love* programme recommendations. Each classroom has a Sacred Space Kit which includes a display platform, coloured cloths for the Liturgical Year, posters reflective of the year, crucifix, statues of saints, nativity scene/crib, holy water, rosary beads, pictures of the Pope, Sacred Heart, Mary.

## 6. **PRAYER**

Participation in experiences of prayer (formal and informal), silence and meditation develops children's capacity for personal prayer.

*Pupils' faith in Scoil Áine is supported by prayers as follows:*

- Formal Prayers are recited in the morning and evening and before/after lunch – See Appendix 1
- As pupils progress through the class levels teachers encourage different forms of prayer ie vocal prayer word, meditative prayer and contemplative prayer.
- Each class level has a list of formal prayers to be learned in each class, cf. Appendix 1: Formal Prayers.
- Teachers seek to create a prayerful atmosphere in class for prayer ie a candle may be lit, a hymn sung or meditative music played.
- Teachers encourage pupils to focus on their breathing, to be in a relaxed posture & to respect and enjoy prayerful silences.
- Teachers have a document of common Mass Responses which they review with pupils before attending school Mass.
- Prayer is a core element of Advent, Catholic School's Week and Lent. The Principal and pupils share prayers and readings via the school intercom system. Whole school assemblies are held in the Hall with a small Sacred Space set up as a focal point.
- The Stations of the Cross are dramatized at assembly.
- Our Chaplain attends our Prayer Services whenever possible.
- The school community comes together to celebrate Mass at the beginning and end of the school year and at Christmas.
- A prayer service is held in the Church on Presentation Day in conjunction with the adjoining Presentation Schools.
- If the school is open on a Holy Day of Obligation, classes from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> attend public Mass.

Sacrament classes attend Mass fortnightly as part of their preparation.

## 7. **ARRANGEMENT FOR SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION BETWEENHOME/PARISH/SCHOOL**

Sacramental preparation is a collaborative process with home, school and parish working together to prepare pupils for the sacraments. First Penance and First Communion preparation is undertaken in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class with Confirmation Preparation undertaken in 6<sup>th</sup> Class. The schedule for the celebration of the sacraments is as follows:

(2<sup>nd</sup> Class) First Penance in March /April & First Communion in May.

(6<sup>th</sup> Class) Ceremony of Light in March/April & Confirmation in May.

**SCHOOL BASED PREPARATION:** In Scoil Naomh Áine pupils are prepared thoroughly for the Sacraments of Penance & First Holy Communion (2nd Class) & Confirmation (6th Class) by their teachers in association with the school chaplain and the parish sacramental teams. Teachers and pupils follow the preparation lessons as presented in the Grow in Love programme. Parents are notified of the dates of the sacraments early in the school year once the dates are agreed between the school and the parish.

**PARISH BASED PREPARATION:** The “Do this in Memory” programme assists in the parish based preparation of pupils in 2nd class for First Communion. This is facilitated by parent volunteers and organised through the parish. The 6th class girls attend a retreat in the weeks leading to their Confirmation in the Parish Centre. The priest visits the school during the year to visit the classes preparing for the Sacraments.

## **8. IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR**

- Feast Days are celebrated usually by a Prayer Service or by attendance at Mass – specifically on Presentation Day, 8th December, 6th January and during Lent. Pupils receive Blessed Ashes in the school on Ash Wednesday.
- The Junior Classes perform Nativity plays at Christmas and older classes may be involved in Carol Services.
- The Chaplain visits classes, particularly Sacramental classes.
- Missionary awareness is highlighted through Trócaire and “Children Helping Children” activities.
- Social justice awareness is highlighted through Charities such as St. Vincent de Paul, participation in the Shoebox Appeal, topical fundraising initiatives and involvement in the annual Presentation Order/Irish Aid Challenge to Change Project. A group of pupils attend the Challenge to Change conference in Kilkenny every year.
- The 6th classes attend a retreat in the weeks prior to Confirmation in the Parish Centre.
- Teachers engaged in CPD prior to the introduction of the Grow in Love programme. Diocesan Advisers regularly visit the school to offer support. A monthly liturgical planning guide is e-mailed internally to all teachers from the Diocesan Office
- School Staff & BOM are notified of the date of the annual Diocesan School Mass organised by the Archdiocese.
- The school fully participates in Catholic Schools' Week with a daily plan of activities, prayer service and Grandparents Day celebrations.
- Catholic pupils in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> class at present provide the choir for the Confirmation ceremony on a rota basis with the adjoining schools and are prepared by their teachers.

## **9. PARTNERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The pivotal role of parents as primary educators of their children is recognised. The Grow in Love RE Programme provides at-home pages to be completed which link directly with the weekly themes taught to the pupils, new prayers and memorisation. Parents are invited to attend school masses. The school newsletter and school website provides regular updates on aspects of R.E. Education and sacramental preparation in the school. We celebrate Grandparents' Day during Catholic School's Week.

We are involved in the “Do This in Memory” programme in the Parish. This involves the parish and parents directly in Sacrament preparation. Sacrament classes attend the 10 o'clock Mass as part of their preparations, which is attended by parishioners. That is something the parishioners welcome.

## **9. PUPILS OF OTHER TRADITIONS**

Scoil Naomh Áine, as a Catholic school, is open and inclusive to those of other traditions. Children who are not of the Catholic faith are invited to participate in and engage with the religious education classes as much or as little as they would like.

Children of any faith or no faith are welcome to the school. When parents are enrolling their children, it is emphasised that our school is a Catholic school. Each child is welcome to attend and benefit from the Catholic religious education programme.

However, if parents have difficulty with the children attending the religious education programme in the class, the teacher will assign another activity to the child during that time. When a class is attending a Mass or a Prayer Service, and if parents object to their child being present at these events, parents may collect their child before the event if they wish, by prior arrangement. If the parents prefer their children to remain in the school, it is our practice that the children are supervised by a teacher in one of the classrooms. The children engage in activities such as reading, art etc whilst their friends attend the religious service. All pupils have a right to appropriate religious instruction as part of their holistic development. The school will be happy to engage, wherever possible, with parents of children of other denominations with a view to facilitating appropriate arrangements that they may wish to make.

Pupils of other faiths and none who are in the sacramental classes are invited to attend the Communion & Confirmation ceremonies to celebrate with their friends. These pupils are also invited to be photographed with the other pupils in their classes who have celebrated the sacraments.

Inter-Religious links are a welcome part of the Grow in Love programme. Such links provide information for teachers on festivals and celebrations from other religions. This provides an opportunity to include pupil/s from other religious traditions or life stance in our school.

## **11. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS**

The Grow in Love programme allows for the differentiation of the material given in each theme for SEN pupils or children who are gifted and talented.

## **12. ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR**

The Board of Management, through the Principal, has overall responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic ethos of the school. The Religious Education Coordinator supports the principal in this role. The RE Coordinator is a member of the Leadership and Management Team. The BOM supports the assignment of RE duties as an area of responsibility within the L&M team. The Religious Education Coordinator supports the work of the principal and the staff in the implementation of the RE Programme and supports the continual fostering of the Catholic ethos of the school.

The RE Co-ordinator Role includes:

- To facilitate the formulation and updating of the Religious Education Policy
- To organise the distribution and collection of all necessary RE resources, e.g. Grow in Love Teacher Resource Packs, Bibles for senior classes etc...
- To share and advise on online resources with the staff
- To support the prayer life of the school throughout the liturgical year,
- To encourage the use of prayer spaces in classrooms and in school common areas, and to ensure the prominence of religious symbols and icons.
- To provide input on Religious Education at staff meetings, in order to maintain a conscious profile of this area of the school curriculum.

- To facilitate links with the parish, school chaplain and parish personnel.
- To support parents to take an active role in the Religious Education and formation of their children, e.g. use of home links in Grow in Love
- To liaise with Diocesan Advisers and Education Office
- To distribute RE resources throughout the Liturgical Year.

### **REVIEW**

Our aim is that this policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

### **RATIFICATION & COMMUNICATION**

This Policy was approved and ratified by the Board of Management on

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Copies are available in the office and in each classroom.  
The parents will be informed via newsletter and can obtain copies from the office by request.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ronan Leydon, Chairperson

## **Useful Religious Education Websites :**

Education Secretariat

[www.education.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie)

Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education for Primary Schools in Ireland.

[www.veritasbooksonline.com/religious-education/re-curriculum-for-ireland.html](http://www.veritasbooksonline.com/religious-education/re-curriculum-for-ireland.html)

Grow in Love

[www.growinlove.ie](http://www.growinlove.ie)

Termly overview (theme, scripture, prayers, songs and doctrine)

[www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2015/06/26/grow-in-love/](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2015/06/26/grow-in-love/)

[www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2014/12/15/alive-o/](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2014/12/15/alive-o/)

Monthly Planning Guides (ideas for prayer spaces, liturgical feasts, prayers, lesson themes)

[www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2014/06/19/monthly-planning-guidelines/](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2014/06/19/monthly-planning-guidelines/)

Prayer Postcards

[www.education.dublindiocese.ie/prayerpaidreacha/](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/prayerpaidreacha/)

Catholic Schools Week

[www.education.dublindiocese.ie/catholic-schools-week/](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/catholic-schools-week/)

Catholic Schools Partnership

[www.catholicschools.ie](http://www.catholicschools.ie)

Liturgical Calendar

[www.marypages.com/LiturgicalCalendar.htm](http://www.marypages.com/LiturgicalCalendar.htm)

A daily prayer online

[www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie)

A three minute retreat

[www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer.html](http://www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer.html)

Pray as you Go

[www.pray-as-you-go.org/70/](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/70/)

[www.ignationspirituality.com](http://www.ignationspirituality.com)

Spirit Radio

[www.spiritradio.ie/listen-now](http://www.spiritradio.ie/listen-now)

Trocáire

[www.trocaire.org/education](http://www.trocaire.org/education)

Daily Meditation for Teachers:

Richard Rohr (Centre for Action & Contemplation)

[www.cac.org/2016-daily-meditation-overview/](http://www.cac.org/2016-daily-meditation-overview/)