

ETHOS AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

ETHOS

St. Marys Primary School is a Catholic co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath. The school models and promotes a philosophy inspired by the belief in God and traditional Catholic values. We promote religious education for the pupils of our school in accordance with the doctrines, practices and ethos of the Catholic Church.

The school welcomes children from all denominations, a manifestation of the vision set out by the Irish Episcopal Conference in Vision '08, that *'the presence of children from other denominations is seen as an enrichment of the educational experience offered by the school and as a practical expression of our commitment to inclusivity'*.

The Schedule for Catholic Schools is displayed in the school foyer.

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.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary's is a Catholic Primary School which strives to provide a well ordered, happy and secure atmosphere where the self esteem of each child will be enhanced and the educational, spiritual, moral and cultural needs of each child will be identified and developed with compassion, enthusiasm and due regard for the child's individuality. St. Mary's promotes excellence in teaching and learning.




Aims of Religious Education.

- To foster and deepen the Faith of the children in St Marys. and to develop this active Faith.

- To enable the children in St Marys to be aware of the wonder and presence of God around them and to respond to this awareness.
- To enable a sense of God, Worship and Prayer within the school community.
- To help parents towards a deeper understanding of Religious Education and the Sacraments.
- To develop a respect for all in the whole school community.

Religious Education Materials

The Grow in Love Programme is the primary resources to assist the teachers in their planning for religious education. Each class is equipped with a kit containing:

-  teacher's manual and pupil's book/workbook
-  posters
-  access to online resources.

Each child in Junior/Senior Infants has a copy of the textbook while pupils in 1st class to 6th class have a religion copy/workbook. Each class can access a set of bibles.

Each class also has a Sacred Space and religious symbols are displayed in each room. Advent, Catholic Schools Week and Lenten resources are also distributed, at the appropriate time, to assist with planning of lessons and sharing of resources.

SYMBOLS and SACRED SPACE

Each classroom also has its own sacred space, which changes according to the Liturgical Year.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

During their time in St. Marys Primary School, the children are prepared for First Confession (1st Class), First Communion (2nd Class) and Confirmation (6th Class) in cooperation with the school chaplain and the parish. Parents are encouraged to actively participate in and guide their children on their faith journey through the Grow in Love Programme, through engagement with the programme and through example and practice.

As part of the "Do this In Memory Parish Programme", children and their families are encouraged to attend a number of masses during the year to assist with their preparation for the sacrament of First Communion.

A meeting is held for the parents of children preparing for First Communion and Confirmation where they are informed about the sacrament, special masses etc.

A prayer service of commitment and light is held in the school for pupils and parents preparing for Confirmation.

Pupils from St. Marys wear their uniform at the celebration of First Confession and Confirmation.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SUPPORTS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR

As a Catholic school, Religious Education and Catholic ethos permeate all areas of the curriculum, especially SPHE, SESE, Art, Music, Drama and literacy both English and Gaeilge. The teachers choose the formal prayers, which are recited during the school day, from the list of prayers for their class group detailed in the Grow in Love Programmes. Children from 2nd class to 6th class attend Mass in the Cathedral once per week/fortnight as part of the Religious Programme provided by the school.

The major Catholic feasts are celebrated. They are marked with the aid of signs and symbols displayed in the school and integrated into the curriculum. Examples of such celebrations include:

Advent – The Advent wreath is displayed in the welcome area.

Christmas – A *Christmas Tree* and *Crib* are displayed and classes take part in activities such as school Mass, nativity plays, music, carols and explanations of some of the different traditions associated with Christmas. Children/Parents of other and no faiths are invited to join in this celebration.

St Brigid's Day – Traditional crosses are made by some classes and the story of St Brigid is studied.

Ash Wednesday: Ashes may be distributed in the school.

During **Catholic Schools' Week** the children take part in activities celebrating our Catholic ethos.

Charity Work

St Marys Primary School staff and children support a number of charities as a means of encouraging the children to give tangible expression to the 'value-system' that underpins the ethos of our school. Charities supported include Trócaire, Concern, Bumblance, Make a Wish, Goal etc.

PUPILS OF OTHER RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

It is clearly recognised and acknowledged that parents are the primary educators of their children. In accordance with Rules 54 and 69 *Rules for National Schools* (1965), religious education is provided in St Mary's for 30 minutes daily. All pupils are welcome to take part in the religious education programme in St. Mary's regardless of religious belief or tradition.

With regard to provision for pupils who are not of the Catholic faith, every reasonable effort is made to accommodate requests from parents/guardians to have their child excluded from participation in religious instruction.

Options include undertaking alternative work during religious instruction. Due to restricted space and non-availability of staff members to provide supervision, it may not be possible to have a child removed

from a classroom, when religious instruction is taking place. Separate religious instruction or separate prayer space is not available for children of other faiths in the classrooms or school building.

This policy statement will be reviewed regularly and amendments will be ratified by the Board of Management.

Ratified by the Board of Management 9th September 2019. This policy was reviewed through consultation with all partners in September 2023 and was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 27th September 2023

Barbara-Lene O'Callaghan Chairperson
Bernell Keir Principal

27/9/23