

**St. Patrick's Junior School
Skerries**

Religious Education Policy

Introduction

St. Patrick's Junior School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Diarmuid Martin. 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 sets out school policy in regard to the teaching of religious education in the school, its relationship with the school ethos, procedures in relation to the teaching of religious education and procedures in place where children of other faiths or none attend the school, Catholic feasts and liturgies celebrated, responsibilities of parents, parish and teachers in the teaching of religious education, and success criteria for the teaching of religious education in our school.

Relationship to school ethos

This school enrolls pupils of all faiths or no faith in the school subject to our enrolment criteria as approved by the Patron and in accordance with relevant legislation, and respects their beliefs and practices in accordance with the school ethos of inclusivity.

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. The school also teaches and practices meditation based prayer using resources provided by the Christian Meditation for Children programme. Children of other faiths who do not wish to participate in the RE class of the day or in meditation will be assigned work to do in the classroom for the duration of the class.

All Catholic feasts are celebrated:

- Christmas –Crib, Stories, Carol services, Church Pageant and Christmas tree
- Feast of St. Brigid – making traditional crosses.
- Feast of St. Patrick – depiction of story and shamrock, St. Patrick's Day Cards
- Lent – Symbols of repentance, Trócaire boxes, Bóthar, Vita etc.
- Easter – Easter cards, story of the death and resurrection of Jesus, artwork and workbooks.
- Observance of Holy Days of Obligation.
- Celebration of Prayer Services throughout the school year.
- Practice of prayer through Meditation in all classes throughout the year.
- Participation in Family masses throughout the year.

Liturgical Celebrations

The whole school celebrates the sacraments of First Penance and First Holy Communion. Children make their First Penance and receive their First Holy Communion in St. Patrick'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.

Teacher input

In this school the following areas are covered.

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

Success Criteria

- An acknowledged sense of God, Faith, Prayer and Worship within the school community.
- Respect for all within the school community.
- Parental interest & involvement
- Recognisable links between home, school and parish.

Rules 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.
- Do This In Memory Programme

Principal:

- Facilitates supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the programme.

Board of Management:

- Members attend training as requested and organized by Archbishop's House
- Facilitates supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the programme

Reflective Process for Catholic Schools:

- The whole school community took part in the Reflective Process for Catholic Schools during the 2013 - 2014 school year. All parties committed to continuing the reflective process and to maintaining a particular focus on one aspect of our Catholic Ethos each year.

This policy reviewed by all staff and approved by the Board of Management in 2013