



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

NOVEMBER 2025

INTRODUCTION: This policy was formulated by the staff of Baconstown NS in September 2017 and edited after a consultation process with the parents of the school and the Board of Management. It was updated with new Board members names in February 2024.

THE AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The aim of Religious Education is to help children mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives, through their encounter with, exploration and celebration of their Catholic faith.

THE VISION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

In the Irish context the educational vision of the Church is a pastoral one. It acknowledges the complementary, connected, but different roles of the home, school and parish community in the faith education of children.

In this vision parents are the first and the primary teachers of their children in faith and the home is the first school of faith.

The parish is where children learn to worship, where they meet Jesus Christ in sacramental celebrations and where they experience and share in the mission of the Church.

Religious education in the Catholic primary school has two distinct but complementary dimensions; the educational dimension and the faith formation dimension.

- The educational dimension is centred and founded on the formal curriculum and focuses on the values and teachings of the Catholic Church.



It teaches children the skills of spiritual, moral and religious literacy. The Religious Education outcomes at each level in the curriculum reflect this dimension.

- The faith formation dimension forms the children's characters in the virtues and values of Jesus, supports their faith development and helps them to experience what it means to be a member of the Church. The faith formation goals in the curriculum support and reflect this dimension.
- An important part of this vision is our response to religious and cultural change in our society. Catholic schools are places where all are respected and valued. This includes the many different levels of faith that we will encounter in both our teachers and pupils and non-catholic pupils.

AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

The purpose of this religious education policy is

- To ensure that we strive to understand and promote religious education in a Catholic primary school as never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process.
- To ensure that formal teaching in matters of belief, values and practice that equip children for a free and intelligent expression of personal faith within the family, Church and wider society is provided.
- To appreciate the richness of all religious traditions, especially those present in our school community, and to provide a framework to encounter these traditions.
- To provide appropriate religious education for the different levels of faith commitment that we encounter in our classrooms
- To lead to a greater degree of clarity in respect of aims, procedures and roles for RE in the school.
- To assist all members of staff in the teaching of Religion.
- To consider strategies that respond to the needs of non-catholic children.



ABOUT OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOL:

Our school is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath, the Rev Tom Deenihan. Our school is in the parish of Enfield and Rathmolyon. The priest of the parish: Fr Patrick Donnelly

The chaplain: Fr Patrick Donnelly & Sinéad Griffin (Parish Office)

The Religious Coordinator: Mr Cathal Fenton

The members of the Board of Management:

1. Kevin Griffin (Chair)
2. Fr Patrick
3. Cathal Fenton
4. Marie Ward
5. Barry O Brien
6. Serena Duffy
7. Michael Devine
8. Mary Dorgan

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Visitors, parents and children know that we are a Catholic School:

- The Schedule for the Catholic School is on display and visible to all visitors to the school.
- The Mission Statement for our school has been developed, is included with all welcome information for parents and staff and is regularly reviewed.
- There are religious symbols and visible signs of our Catholic faith in all public areas of our school.
- There is a Prayer Space that reflects the liturgical seasons in the entrance area of our school.
- There is ongoing communication with the local priest or parish worker who acts as chaplain to the school.

PRAYER IN OUR SCHOOL

- Religiously themed assemblies, communal prayer time and liturgical celebrations are timetabled during the school year *e.g. beginning and ending of school year Mass or Prayer Service, Advent and Lent celebrations, Catholic Schools Week celebration*
- Important Feast Days are celebrated throughout the Church Year
- There is time for prayer in every classroom throughout the day
- Children know their formal prayers and Mass responses as indicated by the curriculum.
- Children have the opportunity to experience different forms of prayer

TIMETABLING AND TEACHING STAFF

Our school believes that religious education is a core subject in a Catholic primary school. It is the foundation of the entire educational process. This means that:

- Religious education is timetabled in each classroom for the designated time of 2 ½ hours per week
- Religious education is included in all teachers Fortnightly Notes and Cúntas Míosuil.
- All teachers have access to the Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland.
- All teachers have the relevant *Grow in Love* material needed to teach religious education in their classroom
- The Principal distributes all resources and relevant communication from the Diocesan Advisor's office.
- Opportunities for ongoing professional development are offered to teachers.



CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

- There is a Prayer Space in every classroom. This space reflects the movement of the liturgical seasons. It also contains samples of the children's work, religious symbols and God's creation.
- Every Prayer Space has a Bible.
- There are symbols of the Catholic faith in every classroom e.g. a Holy Water Font, religious icon or picture, cross or crucifix.

CLASSROOM TEACHING

In teaching the approved religious education programme for use in the diocese teachers are enabling children to learn the skills of moral, spiritual and religious literacy so that their understanding of their Christian faith is constantly deepened and they develop a mature and informed response to God's call. The skills of religious literacy as defined by the curriculum are, understanding, communicating, participating, and added to these are the further skills of spiritual literacy and inter-religious literacy. The following will help ensure that this can be achieved

- All teachers have a recognised qualification in religious education (CCRS)

The following approved textbooks/workbooks are in use in the school.

- Junior/Senior Infants: Grow in Love
- First/Second: Grow in Love (Preparation for Penance & Eucharist)
- Third/Fourth: Grow in Love
- Fifth/Sixth: Grow in love (Preparation for Confirmation)

- In order to better help parents, understand what their children are learning in religious education a link with home is made regularly in each class.

This is done by the class teacher.

- Children have an understanding and knowledge of their Christian faith through exploring the mystery of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Church/Kingdom, through learning about creation, Mary, Eternal Life and other Religious Traditions and as indicated by the curriculum. Each senior classroom has access to a set of bibles.
- Children are familiar with bible stories, have an understanding and knowledge of Sacred Scripture, study the structure of the bible, know that Sacred Scripture is the revealed Word of God as indicated by the curriculum.
- Children have an understanding and knowledge of the liturgical life of the Church, the structure of the Mass, the seasons of the liturgical year, the way in which we meet Jesus in liturgy, sacraments and prayer, the seven sacraments of the Church.
- Children have an understanding and knowledge of human dignity, Church social teaching, RSE in a Christian context, the two-fold commandment and the ten commandments, they know that following Jesus is living according to Gospel values, that the Christian moral life is an expression and consequence of relationship with God as indicated by the curriculum.
- The faith formation dimension which forms the children's characters in the virtues and values of Jesus supports their faith development and helps them to experience what it means to be a member of the Church is recognised and supported as an integral part of religious education. The faith formation goals in the curriculum support and reflect this dimension.
- Children are provided with opportunities to learn by heart traditional prayers, Mass responses, hymns, biblical texts, faith words and faith summaries as outlined in the programme of religious education in use in the classroom.

- Provision for Religious Education is made for children with Special Educational Needs as indicated by the Special Education Curriculum Guidelines.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION

GENERAL

- Leadership in the school make a conscious effort to ensure that teachers in sacramental classes are faith filled witnesses to the Christian life.
- Children are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation in partnership with parents and parish.
- It is understood that children's understanding of these sacraments develops throughout their time in primary school and beyond.
- The school supports the ongoing conversation at parish and diocesan level about how best to prepare for and celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation
- The school works together with parents and parish to ensure that sacramental celebrations are authentic, sacred encounters with Jesus Christ
- The school ensures that classes making a sacrament spend the correct amount of time on religion. Over the course of the year this should average two and a half hours a week.

CELEBRATING RECONCILIATION FOR THE FIRST TIME

- The celebration takes place in the local parish church preferably during the Lenten season
- Parents and other family members are invited to celebrate the sacrament with their children

CELEBRATING HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE FIRST TIME

- Parish led preparation for the sacrament is offered. (Do This in Memory Programme & Parish masses)

CONFIRMATION

- Teachers of Confirmation classes are aware of the Diocesan Guidelines for Confirmation and together with school and parish leadership ensure that these guidelines are followed
- Children preparing for Confirmation are offered a retreat experience either before or after celebrating the sacrament
- Parish led preparation for the sacrament is offered.

PARTNERSHIP IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**HOME**

- The school seeks to involve parents in their children's religious education by
 - Regularly making a link with home in religious education
 - Ensuring parents know which prayers their children are learning and encouraging them to pray with their children at home
 - Inviting parents to attend Mass and other religious celebrations

PARISH

- Relationships between school and parish leadership are fostered and encouraged
- The school seeks a meeting with parish leadership at the beginning of each term to plan for visitation of classrooms, visits to the church, celebration of Feast Days, key liturgical celebrations in the school calendar, sacramental preparation and celebration
- The school supports the parish in offering parish led preparation for sacraments

INCLUSION OF NON- CATHOLIC PUPILS

Children of all faiths and none are welcome in our school. Our school is hospitable, open and inclusive. We continuously strive to best practice concerning the inclusion of pupils in our school.

- Our Admissions Policy and Mission Statement makes clear that we are a Catholic School under the patronage of the local Catholic bishop
- It is clear to parents enrolling their children that the Catholic ethos of our school permeates the whole school day and not just the formal religious education class
- Our Admissions Policy makes clear that we welcome diversity and inclusion and that we believe that the presence of children from diverse backgrounds enhance and enrich our school community.

PRE ENROLMENT MEETING

- A pre-enrolment (induction) meeting is held at which issues relating to ethos and formal religious education are discussed with prospective parents
- Parents are aware that there are prayers at assemblies, and at moments during the school day. It is made clear that for non-catholic children that these can be times for personal reflection.
- Parents are given an understanding of the nature of religious education in the Catholic Primary School.
- Parents who have concerns about the content of the religious education programme are invited to meet with the principal

OPT OUT

If parents wish to have their children opt out of formal religious education the school offers the following options:

- If alternative supervision is not possible; staying within the classroom and engaging in an educationally appropriate activity
- Withdrawal by parent of child for the purpose of receiving religious instruction elsewhere
- Supervision of children by a staff member when there is a Mass for the whole school

ONGOING COMMUNICATION, OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCLUSION AND PARENTAL CHOICE

Parents whose children are not catholic are made aware in advance of any religious events or celebrations.

Children are always invited but not obliged to attend all Catholic religious celebrations in the school

Individual children, with parental consent, may wish to participate in these celebrations by reading appropriate prayers and texts, participating in art or drama, being part of the choir, playing an instrument etc

Parents are free to absent their child from school for the duration of these events. Consideration is given to the timing of these events.

Reconciliation is a feature of daily life. Staff and children are encouraged to grow in appreciation of human dignity

Senior Classes are encouraged to learn about other faiths.

Ratified by the Board of Management on 25/Nov/2025

Signed: Kevin A. Griffin Date: 25/Nov/2025
 Kevin Griffin, Chairman of the Board of Management.