



## Religious Education Policy

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### Introductory Statement

St. Mochta's National School's *Religious Education Policy* was formulated by the R.E. post holder and the Principal in consultation with school staff, the Parents' Association and the Board of Management. This policy is an updated version of the previous school policy for Religious Education and integrates the revised R.E. programme '*Grow in Love*' which has now been rolled out from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

St. Mochta's National School is a co-educational primary school with 32 classes from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. The original structure of the school was built in 1853 and officially opened in January 1854. St. Mochta's N.S. is located in the parish of Porterstown in the Dublin Diocese. The school Patron is the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin. St. Mochta's Parish Church is within short proximity of the school. Fr. Paul Ward is the current parish priest. Two patron nominees sit on the Board of Management.

St. Mochta's National School provides Religious Education for Catholic pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Non-Catholic pupils are welcomed into our school community and respect for all religions and for people of no faith is an important part of the life of the school. Non-Catholic pupils may be exempted from the Religious Education programme at the request of their parents.

### The Catholic Church and Primary Education

A certificate in Religious Education, or its equivalent, is a condition for employment as a teacher in St. Mochta's N.S. Teaching staff are assisted in their teaching of Religious Education through the provision of continuous professional development programmes. *The Schedule of a Catholic School* is displayed in the reception area of our school and referred to regularly. St. Mochta's National School's Mission Statement is also in place.

### Aim of Religious Education in St. Mochta's National School

The aim of Religious Education is to foster and deepen the children's faith through teaching the Catholic R.E. programme and through the cultivation of the Catholic Ethos of the school.

From the outset, the experience of a pupil in a Catholic school is characterised by respect for both faith and reason. In St. Mochta's N.S. we teach children all aspects of the curriculum. This is all part of what we do at school. In all of this, we want to cherish each person as Christ would do, and we seek to support parents in their task of nurturing their children toward fulfilment in life and of preparing them to take their place in the world according to the gifts they have been given.

In St. Mochta's N.S. pupils are helped to understand that the world is infused with the loving presence of God. Throughout the R.E. 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.

### Religious Education Resources used in St Mochta's National School

- The *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* is the foundation document for all Religious Education. There are various copies of this document throughout the school.
- From September 2019 the '*Grow in Love*' Programme has been rolled out across the school and has replaced the '*Alive-O*' programme. Each of our thirty two mainstream classrooms

have a 'Grow in Love Teacher Resource Kit' which includes a teacher's manual, CD, a set of lesson specific posters and access to all 'Grow in Love' online/interactive resources.

- The 'Grow in Love' programme allows for the differentiation of the material given in each theme for pupils with SEN or children who are gifted and talented.
- All classes will bring home the 'Grow in Love Pupil Book' on a weekly basis and complete the 'At Home' page with parents/guardians.
- There is a set of Bibles which are available for Fifth and Sixth Classes to use.
- The R.E. co-ordinator provides teaching staff with relevant resources which are relevant to the liturgical year.
- Resources for Catholic Schools Week (CSW) from the Diocesan Education Office are available to the school each January and are accessible for teachers to support R.E. and C.S.W. events.

### **Religious Symbols in St. Mochta's National School**

- A 'Schedule for Catholic Schools' is displayed in the reception area and in the Principal's Office.
- A Sacred Space has been developed in a central area of the school for all classes to visit and have prayerful reflection. There is a Crucifix, Catholic Children's Bible, Holy Water Font and a Statue of Our Lady in this area. Other symbols pertaining to the Liturgical year are also displayed, for example an Advent wreath, a Crib and a St. Brigid's Cross.

### **Classroom Prayer Space**

Each class has its own designated Sacred Space arranged by the class teacher with symbols and pictures to reflect the Liturgical year and the themes of the R.E. programme being taught. Pupils are encouraged to pray during the school day and to add relevant symbols and prayers etc. to the class Sacred Space.

The pupil's faith in St. Mochta's N.S. is supported by prayers as follows:

- As pupils progress through the class levels teachers encourage prayer.
- Each class level has a list of formal prayers to be learnt in each class. \*Please see 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.
- As part of the annual Catholic Schools' Week in January classes are led in a daily reflective prayer over the school intercom system.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

Sacramental preparation is a collaborative process with home, school and parish working together to prepare pupils for the sacraments. First Penance and First Holy Communion preparation is undertaken in Second Class with Confirmation Preparation undertaken in Sixth Class.

A general guide of the schedule for the celebration of the sacraments is as follows:

Second Class: First Penance in March /April & First Communion in May

Sixth Class: Enrolment Ceremony in November, Service of Light in March & Confirmation in April /May.

#### **1. School Based Preparation:**

In St. Mochta's N.S. pupils are prepared thoroughly for the Sacraments of Penance and First Holy Communion (Second Class) and Confirmation (Sixth Class) by their teachers in association with the parish sacramental team. Teachers and pupils follow the preparation

lessons as presented in the R.E. programme. Parents are notified of the dates of the sacraments early in the school year, once the dates have been agreed.

## 2. Parish Based Preparation:

'Faith Friends' assists in the parish based preparation of pupils in Sixth Class for Confirmation. This is facilitated by parent volunteers and organised through the parish. Confirmation pupils wear white robes for the Confirmation Ceremony and the distribution of robes is arranged by the Parents' Association in advance of the Confirmation Ceremony.

## **Implementation of Religious Education during the School Year**

- Daily classes commence with a morning prayer and also a prayer before home time.
- St. Mochta's N.S. supports the annual Catholic Bishops' Trocáire campaign and teachers have access to the cross curricular links on the education section of its website.
- In early September a meeting is held between the Principal, Deputy Principal and R.E. Co-ordinator to schedule all religious celebrations in the coming year including:
  1. Setting a date for the beginning of year Prayer Service/Assembly for Senior Infants to Sixth Classes.
  2. Catholic Schools' week is celebrated each year at the end of January with whole school meditative prayer. The role of grandparents as passers on of the faith is acknowledged when Junior Infant classes invite in their grandparents to visit their classroom during Catholic Schools' Week.

### **Other Religious Education Related Activities:**

- Sixth Classes attend a religious retreat prior to Confirmation in the Parish Centre.
- Social justice awareness is highlighted through participation in the collection of food for charity.
- C.P.D. is being offered to teachers for the introduction and effective implementation of the 'Grow in Love' programme.
- School Staff & BOM are notified of the date of the annual Diocesan School Mass organised by the Archdiocese.
- The school choir provides the music for the First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies.
- An annual Christmas Carol Service is held in the school hall prior to the Christmas holidays with classes participating.
- A monthly liturgical planning guide from the Diocesan Office is made available via Aladdin to all teachers.

### **Partners in Religious Education**

**Home/School:** The pivotal role of parents as primary educators of their children is recognised. The '*Grow in Love*' Programme provides weekly *At Home* pages to be completed which link directly with the themes taught to the pupils. The school communicates updates on aspects of Religious Education and sacramental preparation in the school.

**School/Parish:** The school has access to the Parish Pastoral Co-ordinator who facilitates and supports Sacramental preparation in the school.

**Parents' Association:** The Parents' Association of St. Mochta's N.S. kindly organise receptions in the Parish Centre after the First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies for the families and pupils involved.

### **Accommodation of Pupils of Other Faiths and None:**

- St. Mochta's National School welcomes pupils of other faiths and none. Pupils whose parents do not wish them to participate in the Religion Education classes must remain in the classroom and work quietly and independently during religious instruction time.
- The school arranges for the supervision of pupils not partaking in Sacramental preparation etc. by other teachers during church visits.
- Pupils of other faiths and none who are in the sacramental classes are invited to attend the reception held after the First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies.
- Graduation Ceremonies in St. Mochta's N.S. include a prayer for other faiths.
- Inter –Religious links are a welcome part of the 'Grow in Love' programme. Such links provide information for teachers and pupils on festivals and celebrations from other religions. This provides further opportunity to include pupils from other religious traditions or life stances in our school.

### **The Role of the Religious Education Co-ordinator in St. Mochta's National School**

The B.O.M. of St. Mochta's National School and the Principal have overall responsibility for maintaining and supporting the Catholic ethos of the school. The Religious Education Co-ordinator supports the principal in this role. The B.O.M. supports the assignment of R.E. duties as an area of responsibility within the Leadership and Management team in St. Mochta's.

The Religious Education Coordinator supports the work of the principal and the staff in the implementation of the current R.E. Programme and supports the continual fostering of the Catholic ethos of the school.

The R.E. Co-ordinator Role includes:

- To facilitate the formulation and updating of the Religious Education Policy
- To organise the distribution and management of all necessary R.E. resources, (e.g.) '*Grow in Love*' *Teacher Resource Packs*, *Sacred Space* resources, Bibles for senior classes etc.
- To share and advise on online resources with the staff (\*see list below)
- To distribute R.E. resources throughout the Liturgical Year
- To support the prayer life of the school throughout the liturgical year
- To encourage the use of prayer spaces in classrooms and in communal areas of the school, 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 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 the '*Grow in Love*' Programme.
- To liaise with Diocesan Advisers and Education Office.

This policy is open to review by the Board of Management.

Ratified and signed on behalf of the Board of Management of St. Mochta's National School.

**Tony Rock**  
**Chairperson**

**Margaret O'Boyce**  
**Acting Principal**

19<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Date**

## Useful Religious Education Websites

Education Secretariat

<http://education.dublindiocese.ie/>

Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education for Primary Schools in Ireland (2015)

<https://www.veritasbooksonline.com/RECurriculum/fileseng/Primary%20RE%20Curriculum%202015-for%20ebook.pdf>

Grow in Love

<https://www.growinlove.ie/en/growinlove/>

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)

(good guide to praying the Rosary)

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/)

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/)

**APPENDIX 1: FORMAL PRAYERS**

| <b>Title of Prayer</b>    | <b>J. Inf</b> | <b>S. Inf</b> | <b>1st</b> | <b>2<sup>nd</sup></b> | <b>3<sup>rd</sup></b> | <b>4<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>5<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>6<sup>th</sup></b> |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Sign of the Cross         | ✓             | ✓             | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Glory be to the Father    | ✓             | ✓             | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Morning Prayer            | ✓             | ✓             | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Night Prayer              | ✓             | ✓             | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Grace Before Meals        | ✓             | ✓             | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Grace After Meals         | ✓             | ✓             | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Prayer to Guardian Angel  |               | ✓             | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| St. Patrick's Breastplate |               |               | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Hail Holy Queen           |               |               |            |                       | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Prayer to Mary            |               |               |            |                       | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Our Father                |               | ✓             | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Hail Mary                 |               | ✓             | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Prayer to Jesus           |               |               | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Confiteor                 |               |               | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
|                           |               |               |            |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
| <b>Title of Prayer</b>    | <b>J. Inf</b> | <b>S. Inf</b> | <b>1st</b> | <b>2<sup>nd</sup></b> | <b>3<sup>rd</sup></b> | <b>4<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>5<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>6<sup>th</sup></b> |
| Act of Sorrow             |               |               | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Prayer for Forgiveness    |               |               |            | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Prayer after Forgiveness  |               |               |            | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Mass Responses            |               |               | Some       | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Gloria                    |               |               |            | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Prayers before Communion  |               |               |            | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Prayers after Communion   |               |               |            | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Comhartha na Croise       |               |               | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| An Paidir                 |               |               | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| 'Sé do Bheatha a Mhuire   |               |               | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Glóir don Athair          |               |               | ✓          | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| The Angelus (old version) |               |               |            |                       | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| The Apostles Creed        |               |               |            |                       | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| The Memorare              |               |               |            | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| The Magnificat            |               |               |            | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Mysteries of the Rosary   |               |               |            | Some                  | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     | ✓                     |
| Nicene Creed              |               |               |            |                       |                       |                       | ✓                     | ✓                     |