



Portmarnock Community School

Policy for Religious Education

2012

NAME:

Policy for Religious Education in Portmarnock Community School

Scope of the Policy

In Portmarnock Community School, the religious education policy will impact on the whole school community. The scope of this policy will involve:

Board of Management

To approve the policy and ensure its implementation.

Principal and Deputy Principal

To support the procedures of the policy and ensure its effective implementation.

School Staff

As teachers in Portmarnock Community School, the hope is that the whole staff embraces and safeguards the ethos of the school and support the cross-curricular nature of Religious Education.

Teachers of Religious Education

To implement and review the policy.

To ensure a high standard and effective delivery of Religious Education.

The Teachers of R.E. formally meet approximately four times a year. These meetings are convened by the Co-coordinator. Informal meetings occur on a regular basis.

Chaplain

To role of the chaplain is to assist in the faith development of the students, and to be available to Students, Staff and Parents alike. The chaplain meets students on a one-one/communal basis. He/She works mainly from referrals by Year Heads, Tutors, Principal, Deputy Principals and Subject Teachers. The chaplain co-ordinates all liturgical events in the school, and is responsible for organising guest speakers especially in the area of Justice and Peace.

Pastoral Care Personnel

Year Heads, Class Tutors, Guidance Counsellors

To monitor the effects of the policy and to provide support and guidance to the students.

Parents / Guardians

To support the RE Programme in the school and facilitate the faith formation of their children.

Students' Council

To provide feedback when requested from staff and support and guidance to the students.

Students

To participate in the RE programme.

School Mission Statement

To instill a spirit of intellectual enquiry
and academic endeavour,
to foster the desire for participation and
challenge, and to build
individual and compassionate
men and women of character

Portmarnock Community School is under the Trusteeship of the Loreto Sisters, the Archdiocese of Dublin and Co. Dublin V.E.C. The Board of Management upholds the “characteristic spirit” as articulated by the joint patron.

The school is Multidenominational. However, the vast majority of our student population is of the Roman Catholic Tradition, and it is from this background that our ethos is influenced.

We therefore:

- Endeavour to live by Gospel values
- Recognise the dignity of each individual
- Challenge to develop a curriculum that promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person
- Contribute to the building up of the local community
- Work for peace and justice in society

The school promotes both the spiritual and human values of its trustees, which are grounded in sound moral principles.

Aims of Religious Education:

- To contribute to the educational, moral, religious and spiritual development of our students.
- To develop care for the weak, co-operation between pupils, justice and fair play towards all.
- To deepen a respect for truth, a passion for the environment and a love for learning.
- To provide opportunities for our students to live their lives based on a spiritual awareness.
- To encourage our students to ask and seek answers to important questions
- To promote an understanding and acceptance of other religious traditions.

GOALS:

- -To secure the status of RE in the school.
- To promote the religious and overall development of the students.
- To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to provide a framework to encounter these traditions.
- To lead to a greater degree of clarity in respect of aims, procedures and roles for RE in the school.

Section Two

- Staffing
- Curriculum and Resources
- Staff Support and Development
- Faith Formation and the Liturgical Year
- Outreach Programmes
- Parental and Parish Involvement

Staffing

Religious Education is considered to be such an integral part of our school ethos and school community that it is imperative that we give it the status it deserves. That means looking at the appointment and selection of qualified teachers and its place on the school timetable and the allocation of class periods.

- At present there are seven fully qualified Religious Education teachers.
- The role of R.E. coordinator is part of a Special Duties Post.
- The school has a full time Chaplain
- Visits are encouraged from the local Catholic priests and the Church of Ireland minister

Curriculum, Timetable, Resources and Budget

Religious Education in our school is taught in accordance with the Junior and Leaving Certificate Programmes.

There are three periods of R.E. per class per week.

The Junior Cycle Programme:

- Community,
- Christianity,
- World Religions,
- Moral Decisions,
- Ritual
- Religion in a Cultural Context

The Senior Cycle Programme :

- The Search for Meaning
- Christianity: Origins and Contemporary Expressions
- World Religions
- Moral Decision-Making
- Religion and Gender
- Issues of Justice and Peace
- Worship, Prayer and Ritual,
- The Bible: Literature and Sacred Text
- Religion: The Irish Experience
- Religion and Science

The Assessment Techniques used include:

Junior Certificate Level: First and Second Year students are graded - by examination and continuous assessment.

Leaving Certificate Level: Fifth year students are awarded an assessment grade based on participation in class.

Transition Year: Fourth year students are graded by teacher assessment.

Funding of Resources is made available where possible.

Text books and Reference books

Junior Cycle: A Question of Faith by Lori Whelan and Niamh McDermott

Senior Cycle: The Inner Place by Tom Gunning

Facilities and Resources available for the teaching of R.E in PCS.

Oratory, RE News, Trócaire/Lenten Packs, DVDs, Face Up Magazine, Gate Magazine, the World Wide Web.

Full participation in Religious Education class

As stated in the Education Act of 1998, Section 15. 2(b), the school is obliged to provide students of all faiths and none with the opportunity to develop both morally and spiritually.

Therefore, pupils whose parents express a desire for their son/daughter not to participate in formal RE class, will be provided with philosophical/ethical material to study during RE time.

This material will be provided by the school.

Timetable

Possibilities for flexibility are catered for in so far as it is possible – team-teaching etc. There are however timetable restrictions due to the size of the school.

Staff Support and Development

Religious Education permeates and pervades the atmosphere of Portmarnock Community School. There is a quite a bit of interaction from teachers of other subject areas at different times throughout the year. E.g. English, Art, Music and Irish Department teachers contribute in various ways through their subjects to enhance the seasonal liturgies held during the academic year.

The Teachers of Religious Education avail of any opportunities made available to upgrade and enhance their teaching skills and resources.

Practical support by Management

Through finance, in-service, school participation in liturgies, justice programmes and provision of physical space for RE.

Support Services

Support services that we currently avail of include: the Diocesan Advisor, Chaplains' Association, Northside Chaplaincy Cluster and the Loreto Education Centre.

In-service

RE staff members are encouraged and freed up to attend in-service. A representative group of Portmarnock Community School RE teachers attend the annual in-service and training day provided for Loreto schools and Loreto associated community schools.

Finance

There is no fixed annual budget for the RE Department. However, money is available, where possible, when requested.

Faith Experience and the Liturgical Year

Liturgical seasons in Portmarnock Community School

The Liturgical Seasons are highlighted with the following liturgies:

- Thought for the Day each morning over intercom
- Blessing to mark the Opening of School Year
- Remembrance of the dead during November
- Advent/Christmas
- Carol Service
- Mary Ward Week (celebrated in Loreto and Loreto associated schools)
- St. Brigid
- St. Valentine
- Prayer Service and distribution of Ashes on Ash Wednesday
- Lent

- St. Patrick
- Easter
- Prayer for Exam time
- Prayer time to mark End of School Year
- Graduation
- Whole school Liturgy occurs only through the medium of the intercom with students and staff participating in each class room. Smaller groups (average class size) celebrate liturgies at different times during the year in the Oratory. The school staff is always represented in Liturgical celebrations.

Retreats

First, Third, and Sixth Year students take part in annual retreats/reflection days. These occasions are funded by the students and any shortfall that should occur is met by the school.

Bereavement Response

In the event of the sudden death of a student or staff member, there is a Critical Incident Response Team in place. In such circumstances, the Chaplain will conduct an appropriate prayer service with assistance from the RE department.

Outreach Programmes

Reflection on local and global problems in Portmarnock Community School is encouraged through:

Participation in Trócaire and Concern 24 hour Fasts and accompanying class programmes, Flag days for various charities and local fundraisers, Samaritans' Purse (Shoeboxes to Orphanages in Eastern European Orphanages), Annual Whole School charity event in aid of St. Vincent de Paul, Arch Club volunteers, and visits to St. Rosalie's Home for Physically and Mentally challenged Women through Fourth Year modules, Shared Reading in St. Helen's Primary School, St. Michael's House.

Immersion Experience

The school facilitates a development programme in Lesotho, Africa, for sustainable development in local communities. The areas worked on include the following: health care, education, music, culture and infrastructure. This programme works in solidarity

with the local people and is delivered by parents, teachers and students. This project is organised by the registered charity, Action Ireland Trust.

Parental and Parish Involvement

Schools are most successful in achieving their religious goals when the school, home and parish mutually reinforce each other.

Parents are informed of the aims, objectives and content of R.E. programmes at PT meetings, Open Night, and Information Evening for First year parents.

Inclusion

The school is open to collaboration with and visits from ministers from other faith traditions as appropriate to the school community/population.

Section Three

Success Criteria

Monitoring and Review of Policy

- The RE department will monitor the implementation of this policy.
- Good communication between the RE Department and school management.
- At the end of each year, the RE department meet to evaluate the success of the implementation of the policy.

Timeframe

This policy will be reviewed after two years

