

Religious Education Policy

Mission Statement

“Scoil Mhuire seeks to provide a quality education for all its students, in a challenging and positive environment. We are committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised”.

Aims of Religious Education in Scoil Mhuire:

The general aim of Religious Education is to awaken people to faith and help students to appreciate the value of deepening one’s understanding and knowledge of their faith. It is our hope and privilege to harness the religious development of our students and to provide opportunities for them to know their God.

The faith formation of our students takes place within the wider context of the whole school environment. In keeping with the spirit of Catholic education the potential of the students will be attained in such personal, social and spiritual values as honesty, justice, peace, truth, respect, compassion, love and mercy.

In accordance with the Ethos of the school, we regard our staff as a major resource in the promotion of Religious Education.

Curriculum

The Junior Cycle Religious Education Programme is a core subject at 1st, 2nd and 3rd Year levels but currently is not an examination subject.

Transition Year students will follow a programme which has been formulated by the Religious Education department.

The Senior Cycle Religious Education Programme is a core subject at 5th and 6th year, but at present is not an examination subject.

The textbook used at Junior Cycle is the Linda Quigley series “Community of Faith, Hope and Love”. In conjunction with textbooks, a variety of additional resources are used. Because of the evolving nature of Religious Education at Junior Cycle, textbooks are constantly being reviewed and upgraded.

No formal textbook is used in Transition Year but resource materials are provided by teachers. A modular system is in operation.

The textbooks used at Senior Cycle are "The Challenge of God" by Niall & Ann Boyle along with "The Inner Place" by Tom Gunning.

Guest speakers are invited to the school to share their personal experiences on a variety of social topics, thus providing students understanding of their Christian education for students.

The Syllabus:

At Junior Cycle the following sections are studied:

Communities of Faith,
Foundations of Religion – Christianity
Foundations of Major World Religions
The Question of Faith
The Celebration of Faith
The Moral Challenge

At Senior Cycle the following sections are studied:

The Search for Meaning and Values
Christianity: Origins and Contemporary Expressions
World Religions
Moral Decision – Making
Religion and Gender
Issues of Justice and Peace
Worship, Prayer and Ritual
The Bible; Film and other Sacred Literature
Religion: The Celtic Experience
Religion and Science
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Faith, Liturgy, Prayer and Ritual

Students are given every opportunity to actively participate in liturgical worship which takes place in our school throughout the academic year. We, as educators, try to evoke in young people, attending our school, a deeper understanding of faith, worship and a true meaning of the importance of prayer and communication with God.

We invite all our students to fully and actively participate in the Eucharistic liturgy and opportunities are provided when possible. We stress that Liturgy is for celebration and open our academic year with Mass for all students attending our school. We also provide:

- Prayer services are held for all students which enable them to explore the nature and meaning of worship and to find expression in prayer, dance, song and liturgical symbols.

- Sixth Year students find empowerment in their expression of faith and draw strength from the liturgical service provided at the end of their school years.
- These students, in conjunction with their teachers, provide the theme for then of year Mass and develop ideas from their own experience of worship and prayer. This is one of the memorable highlights of their secondary school years.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is encouraged and available prior to major liturgical feasts e.g. Christmas and Easter.
- Advent and Lenten services and class liturgies are encouraged.
- Students are constantly invited to explore the nature and meaning of life, worship and prayer and to identify with the various forms of expression within the life of the Church.
- All teachers take an active role in sustaining the spiritual, moral and personal growth of our students.
- Students are given an understanding of other religions, their rituals and traditions and how they contribute to our living reality.
- Students are encouraged on their journey of faith through daily prayer, mediation and silence thus enabling them to become a loving, giving Christian community.

Facilities and Resources

A variety of resources can be availed of by teachers within the school. These include newspaper articles, magazines (Face Up, Reality), and photocopiers, audio visual materials (D.V.D.'s, Videos and appropriate I.T. sites). There are also full class sets of Bibles for scripture studies and reflection.

Resources are stored in the Religion room and are available to relevant teachers. These resources are updated by the Religious Education Department on a continuous basis.

The Oratory is centrally located in the school and accessible to all staff and students throughout the school. Religion classes may be timetabled for meditation, class mass, etc. in the Oratory. Other activities take place in both classroom and Oratory including prayer and reflection, liturgical services and experiential learning.

Social Awareness and Justice

Social awareness is very much to the forefront in the ethos of Scoil Mhuire. Both management and teachers promote awareness of social justice amongst the student body.

Students are encouraged, through active participation, to become involved in the local community, helping St. Vincent De Paul, fund-raising for Trocaire, Bothar, helping the elderly and many other organisations within the wider community.

Students are made aware that the things they do have consequences not only for themselves but also for others. They are greatly encouraged to promote human rights and become good stewards of the environment, also to build bridges of understanding and friendship between those of diverse viewpoints.

Parents and Guardian

Parents are informed of the aims, objectives and content of the Religious programme by means of Information Nights. Participation by Religious Education teachers at the Parent/Teacher meetings helps to keep parents informed. On the Open Night parents are invited to ask questions, view the oratory, religion room and some of the students work. Parents are invited to attend the Leaving Certificate Graduation Mass.

Religious Education classes are compulsory for all students and active participation is encouraged. Exclusion is only allowed with permission from the school management upon written parental request. An opportunity is provided for the class teacher to meet with parents, if they so wish, to discuss any concerns they may have in relation to their daughter's participation in religion class.

Children of other faith traditions are welcome to participate in the RE programme. In the event of a parent of another faith wishing to have a child exempted from Religious Education classes and school liturgies, a request must be made to the Principal in writing. If the exemption is granted a suitable arrangement is agreed between the parent and Principal for the supervision of the child.

Parish/Diocese

The school is situated in the parish of Trim, in the diocese of Meath. The school chaplain is a priest from the local parish. Links with the parish actively encouraged by the chaplain and other priests of the diocese. The parish welcomes requests from the school for the use of the Parish Church for school masses and for liturgical services. Students may be requested to form a Guard of Honour at funerals connected to past or present teachers or pupils in Scoil Mhuire.

For Review: Academic Year 2017-2018