

Scoil Náisiúnta Chuilinn Uí Chaoimh, Mullachrua,

Cuilinn Uí Chaoimh, Magh Ealla Co.Chorcaí.

Cullen NS, Mullaghroe, Cullen, Mallow Co.Cork. P51TK70

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Charity Regulatory Authority Registered Number 20113407



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Diocese of Kerry

Catholic School Ethos

Introduction

The Catholic school offers a distinctive vision of life, and corresponding philosophy of education, based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel values define its educational ethos. The school is a faith school that expresses a set of core values that can be described as human, religious, Christian and Catholic. The educational vision which flows from these values is one which promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each pupil.

The school provides an education based on a living faith together tradition. Such a Catholic educational vision is inclusive and respectful of all and respectfully engages with pupils committed to other religious traditions and none.

The Catholic school enables children to develop to their full and unique potential as human beings, made in the image and likeness of God. It seeks to form pupils who will unselfishly use their gifts for the common good and are committed to work for a more just and caring society.

The school works in partnership with parents and the parish community to keep the light of faith received at baptism burning brightly. It provides opportunities for prayer, the celebration of liturgy and the sacraments.

Together, the Board of Management, the Principal and the teaching staff, working with the patron, the parents and the parish, model a Catholic education tradition, to nurture the faith of Catholic pupils.

The task of the school and the Board of Management is sharing responsibility for maintaining the catholic ethos of the school. The catholic ethos within the school ensures the ongoing faith development and well-being of all pupils within the school community.

Catholic Ethos

A Catholic ethos permeates the life of the whole school. It is evident in the characteristic spirit within the school, springing from belief in the Holy Spirit active within each person. It is expressed in and through the interaction of the school staff, in the school's values, attitudes, beliefs, approaches, practices and decision-making. It is evident in the acceptance, respect, care, support, understanding and encouragement of each individual within the school. This ethos is rooted in the Gospel values of respect for life, love, justice, peace, solidarity and outreach to the needy.

The Catholic School

- a) The school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of a pupil's being: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, encompassing a living relationship with God and with other people. A Catholic school offers a distinctive vision of life, and corresponding philosophy of education; based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- b) The school strives to create a learning environment within which every child is encouraged and enabled to develop to his/her full and unique potential as a human being, created in the image and likeness of God. The school seeks to form pupils who will use their gifts for the common good and are committed to work for a more compassionate, just and caring society.
- c) The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The three partners, home, school and the parish working well together, model a living, human-religious-Christian educational tradition. This nurtures the faith of Catholic pupils in a manner that is welcoming to and inclusive of pupils committed to other religious traditions.

The Board of Management

The Board of Management and the teachers have adopted the Grow in Love Catechetical programme approved and recommended by the Irish Hierarchy for use in Catholic Schools. The programme incorporates the recommended approach to religious education for the reception of the sacraments i.e. First Reconciliation/Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

Staff

Each member of staff is expected to contribute to the Catholic Ethos of the school.

Parents

Parents are their children's primary educators and the school strives to empower and encourage parents to be actively involved in their children's education and in the life of the local school. Schools value their relationship with their parents and the local community. Schools actively promote pupils' involvement in their parish/community. The school ethos aims at helping the children to grow in appreciation, respect and love for self, others and God.

Reflection for the Staff

- 1) How would you describe the characteristic spirit within the school?
- 2) How do people experience the school?
- 3) What do people experience within the school?
- 4) In what ways do you notice, experience and promote the values of the school?
- 5) What one thing can you as a staff, agree to do in the coming year to make the Ethos Statement a living reality?

Ethos Statement

1. As a school community, we endeavour to provide a holistic Catholic education for each child, where the core values are respect and care for all.
2. The values of the Gospel inspire the policies, practices and attitudes of the school.
3. At the heart of the school is our relationship with the person of Jesus Christ.
4. The school works towards developing a sense of awe and wonder and gratitude to God for creation.
5. Prayer and reflection are regular features of the school day. We thus nurture in the children a living relationship with God.
6. The school is a faith community of people who respect, support and empower each other.
7. The school is a learning, teaching community which is based on high professional standards and ethics.
8. Teachers and staff are sensitive to the needs and circumstances of each child.
9. The school promotes inclusiveness and respects cultural and religious diversity.
10. The school fosters an active partnership with the parents/guardians and the wider community, a partnership which contributes to the positive learning experience of the children in our care.
11. The school creates an awareness of the suffering of others by learning about charities such as Trócaire, Vincent de Paul, Children Helping Children and encourages a generous and caring response.
12. Reflection on Ethos for the Staff

Diocese of Kerry: Religious Education Policy for Primary Schools

Cullen NS: Principal: Eibhlín Ní Mhathúna

Chairperson of the Board of Management: Mr.Derry Morley

School Chaplain: Patron Nominee: Canon John Fitzgerald P.P. Millstreet

Mission Statement:

Roman Catholic School Schedule

A Roman Catholic school

*(which is established in connection with the Minister)
aims at promoting the full and harmonious development
of all aspects of the person of the pupil:*

*intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual,
including a living relationship with God and with other people.*

*The school models and promotes a philosophy of life
inspired by belief in God and
in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

*The Catholic school provides religious education for the pupils
in accordance with the
doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and
promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.*

Our School Ethos in Cullen NS

Cullen NS is a co-educational Roman Catholic Primary School,
in the Parish of Millstreet, in the Duhallow - Sliabh Luachra Pastoral Area
in the Diocese of Kerry.

The Bishop of Kerry, as Trustee of the school on behalf of the local Roman Catholic
community, is recognised as the Patron of Cullen NS.

A spirit of mutual respect is promoted within the school community and due
recognition is given to people of different religious affiliations.

Cullen NS will encourage parental involvement through
home/school contact and through their participation in the
Cullen NS's Board of Management.

Cullen NS will promote gender equity amongst the teachers and pupils.
Teachers are encouraged to develop their personal and professional talents.
Cullen NS aims to create a happy secure and supportive
environment where each child will grow to his/her full potential and
where the self-esteem of everyone in the school community will be enhanced.

Introduction

The Catholic vision of education is rooted in its Christian concept of life centred on Jesus Christ. "He is the One who ennobles people, gives meaning to human life, and is the model which the Catholic school offers its pupils" (CS 33-37)

Pope Francis says "faith is perhaps the most beautiful heritage we can give because it makes you grow. To help children boys and girls to know and to love the Lord ever more is one of the most beautiful educational adventures, for it comprises the Church"

(Address to International Catechetical Congress 27 September 2013)

Pope Francis expresses his gratitude to teachers for their dedication in passing on the faith to young people. "Let us thank all those who teach in Catholic schools. Educating is an act of love, it is like growing life". Catholic teachers are people who keep the memory of God alive; they keep it alive in themselves and they are able to nourish it in others.

Catholic schools carry a great mission to serve God by introducing children to His love for them and nourishing their desire to follow in His footsteps. The Grow in Love programme is the recognized Religious Education series for primary schools. The First Letter of St. John states this very clearly: 'God is Love' (1 John 4:8)

Therefore, where there is love, there is God. Children experience the love of God through the love of their parents, families and others. They will come to know that God loves them unconditionally and that human love is only a hint of what God's love is like. Teachers help children to be attentive to their lives and to the beauty of nature around them, so that they can find in them the presence and action of God. They are encouraged to celebrate God's constant presence in their lives.

This Religious Education Policy will enhance the faith formation and faith experience of the children within the school.

A school, as part of its mission of the Church, should always allow its policies, its priorities and purposes, to be illuminated, inspired, guided and challenged by the teaching of the Gospel" (Sullivan, 2000)

Our school is a Catholic School under the patronage of the Bishop of Kerry.

1.Aim of Religious Education in a Primary 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 and exploration and celebration of their Catholic faith"

(pg.31 Catholic Pre-School and Primary Religious education Curriculum for Ireland 2015)

2. The Vision for Religious Education in a Catholic School

"The Catholic vision of education is rooted in its 'Christian concept of life centred on Jesus Christ: he is the One who ennobles people, gives meaning to human life, and is the model which the Catholic school offers to its pupils'

(pg.12 Catholic Pre-School and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland 2015)

Religious Education in the Catholic primary school has two distinct but complimentary dimensions: the education dimension and the faith formation dimension.

- 1) The educational dimension teaches the children the skills of spiritual, moral and religious literacy.
- 2) The faith-formation dimension helps form the children's characters in the values of Jesus Christ. It nurtures and supports their faith development. They begin to experience a sense of belonging to a Faith Community. (Religious Education Curriculum)

Religious Education

Seeks to focus on Gospel values and the teachings of the Church

Teaches skills of spiritual, moral and religious literacy

Contributes to the building of the faith community

Helps pupils develop a living relationship with God and with other people

Provides a place where all are respected and valued

Promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person

Works for peace and justice

Offers outreach to the poor and needy

Seeks to care for creation

Helps children appreciate and respect the religious traditions within the school

Acknowledges the different roles at home, school and parish in the faith formation of the children.

The *General Catechetical Directory* 1971 states religious education "must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge."

This Religious Education Policy provides the mechanism whereby the values expressed in the Mission and Ethos Statements are implemented. In a structured way, these statements help

and support all in the school to actively engage with the values. These values are expressed in attitudes, behaviour, beliefs, practice, teaching and decision-making within the school.

3. The Aims of a Religious Education Policy

- a) To provide greater clarity in respect of aims, procedures, understanding and delivery of religious education.
- b) To ensure that religious education is not "just another subject", but continues to be the inspiration and foundation of the entire education process.
- c) To help class teachers in their approach to the different levels of faith-commitment and knowledge which they encounter in their classrooms.

4. The Principal and Religious Education

- a) The Principal ensures the Religious Education policy is implemented.
- b) The Principal ensures Religious Education is timetabled in each classroom for the designated time of 30 minutes daily.
- c) The Principal encourages and supports the teachers who are preparing children for the Sacraments.
- d) The Principal checks that all teachers have the relevant *Grow in Love* material needed for classroom teaching.
- e) The Principal maintains a good working relationship with the Parish.
- f) The Principal offers opportunities for in-service and faith development.

5. Catholic School Environment

"Our faith challenges us to work for a better world, and to allow God to bring about the 'reign' or 'kingdom' of God through us. As children hear stories about Jesus and gradually understand the things he did and said, they will be encouraged to think like him, to judge like him and to live as he lived".

(General Directory for Catechesis, number 53)

The Catholic School Environment consists of the following:

- a) The Schedule for the Catholic School is clearly visible to those working in and those who visit the school

- b) The school's Mission Statement is prominently displayed
- c) A Prayer Space that reflects the Liturgical Seasons is obvious when entering the school
- d) Religious symbols are on display and utilised in the school as visible signs of our Catholic faith.
- e) School Prayer Services take place to mark Church feasts
- f) Outreach to foreign Missions and awareness of Social Justice is evident in the school through engagement with Children Helping Children (the society of Missionary Children is Pope Francis' charity - www.wmi.ie) along with support for Trócaire and Vincent de Paul etc.
- g) Staff meetings in school begin with a prayer.

6. Classroom Environment

"As teachers in Catholic schools, we have a responsibility to teach children about God's Revelation and how they can respond to it" (Grow in Love, primary 7 pg.6)

- a) There is a Prayer Space in each classroom. It reflects the current Liturgical Season.
- b) The Prayer Space contains the Catholic Bible and faith symbols such as holy water, a crucifix or statue.
- c) Children's work from a current Grow in Love lesson is displayed in the Prayer Space.
- d) The Grow in Love series aims to help children to see how they respond to God's love through love: by doing acts of love that mirror the actions of Jesus.

7. Prayer in the Classroom

There is designated time for prayer in every classroom

- a) At the beginning of the day, before and after lunch and before the children leave for home in the evening. The Angelus is said by the senior classes.
- b) Children are taught their prayers in accordance with the Grow in Love series.
- c) Children learn by heart traditional prayers and Mass responses in accordance with the Grow in Love series and in preparation for the Sacraments
- d) Children have the opportunity to experience different forms of prayer i.e. spontaneous prayer, guided meditation, reflection on a Gospel story etc.

8. Liturgical Celebrations

Observance of Holydays of Obligation

September: prayer Service or School Mass

October: Missionary-awareness is highlighted through the school's engagement with missionaries abroad. The children engage with Children Helping Children etc.

November: Prayer Service for the holy souls. A Remembrance Tree.

Advent and Christmas: The Advent Wreath marks the four weeks of preparation and waiting for the birth of Jesus. The crib takes central place in the school. Nativity Play. Carol Service.

January: Celebration of Catholic Schools Week

February: St. Brigid's Day. The story of St. Brigid and the making of crosses.

Lent: Ash Wednesday, the blessing of Ashes. The children are encouraged to learn about the good work that Trócaire does to help people in need and where possible make a contribution to the Trócaire box.

March: Feast of St. Patrick. Children learn about St. Patrick. Explanation of the symbolism of the Shamrock.

Holy Week: The children learn about the events of Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

Easter: The Easter Story - the Resurrection of Jesus.

May: The school celebrates Mary, the mother of Jesus, by saying the rosary and singing hymns.

Pentecost: The story of Pentecost, Symbols of the Holy Spirit a link is made with Confirmation.

Graduation: Prayer Service.

June: End of year Prayer Service or Mass.

9. Sacramental Preparation and Celebration:

a) In school, the children are prepared for the sacraments in partnership with home and the parish.

b) The school and parish engage with parents to plan for sacramental preparation.

c) The school supports the Diocesan guidelines on how best to prepare for and celebrate the sacraments of First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

d) Parents and children are encouraged to engage in the parish-based programme provided for their preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation, such as *Do This in Memory and You Shall Be My Witnesses*.

e) The celebration of First Penance takes place in the local Church. Parents are invited to participate in the Sacrament with their children.

f) In preparation for the sacraments, the children learn and memorise the relevant prayers.

10. Parish Link

a) At the beginning of the school year, the school plans a number of liturgical celebrations with their local priest, eg. a *School Mass/Prayer Service* to mark the beginning of the school year, a *Carol Service*, *Catholic Schools Week*, *Ash Wednesday* and an end of School Year liturgy etc.

b) The school and parish priest plan for Sacramental celebrations - First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

11. Home Link

The school encourages parental involvement in the following ways

- a) Religious Education is included in Parent-Teacher Meetings and reports.
- b) Parents are encouraged to engage with their child and the *Grow in Love* weekly lesson on Thursday night.
- c) Attendance at Sacramental Preparation Meetings is encouraged.
- d) Parents are informed about which prayers the children are currently learning at school.
- e) The school recommends parents to pray with their children at home.
- f) The parents are invited to attend the *Nativity Play* or *Carol Service*, school Masses, etc.
- g) All are encouraged to support *Catholic Schools Week*.

12. Pupils of Different Faiths and Traditions

Our school is a welcoming, inclusive school. Children of all faiths and no faith are welcome.

- a) The Admissions Policy clearly states that the school is a Catholic School.
- b) The Admissions Policy makes clear that we welcome diversity and inclusion.
- c) Parents are made aware that the Catholic ethos of our school is not confined to the religion class only; but permeates the whole school day.
- d) The class teacher and pupils show interest in any pupil marking a special feast in his/her own tradition while attending school.
- e) Children are helped to recognise that everyone, regardless of their ethnic origin, colour or faith, is created in God's image and is precious in God's eyes.

13. Success Criteria

An acknowledged sense of God, prayer and worship within the school community

Evidence of family engagement with the Grow in Love programme

Respect for the dignity of each person in the school community

Concern for the environment and creation

Active outreach to those in need

Evidence of mutually supportive partnership between school, parish and home.

14. Policy Mentoring

This Religious Education Policy requires ongoing mentoring and regular evaluation to ensure successful implementation and to review whether any adjustments are necessary at any given time.

This policy will come into effect and was formally adopted on: Year: **14 December 2023**

It will be reviewed every 3 years. To be reviewed in **December 2026**

This Religion Education Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on **14/12/23** and will be reviewed and updated, as the need arises / on 14/12/2026.

Signed: *Derry Morley* _____ Date: **14/12/23** _____

Chairperson: for and on behalf of the Board of Management Cullen NS

Signed: *Eileen O'Mahony* _____ Date: **14/12/23** _____

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management Cullen NS