

EDMONDSTOWN NATIONAL SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY 2018



Edmondstown National School is a Co-educational primary school, under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Dublin. It is a “vertical” mainstream Primary School, catering for a full cross section of children.

This policy has been formulated following discussions with the Principal, Chairperson of the Board of Management, Parents’ Association, Teachers, Religious Education Co-ordinator and School Chaplain.

The ethos of the school is one of mutual respect and friendliness. Our Religious Education seeks to foster and deepen the children’s faith and it permeates all aspects of our work. The Schedule for the Catholic School is displayed in our welcome space and it serves as a guiding principle for all.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Edmondstown National School is a Roman Catholic, Co-Educational Primary School operating in the Parish of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Ballyboden, Dublin 16. The school is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and operates under the guidelines of the Department of Education and Skills.

In Edmondstown National School, we aspire to cater for the individual learning/educational needs of the child in a caring collaborative environment where the contributions of all the partners in our school community are valued.

Edmondstown National School is situated in the foothills of the Dublin Mountains in a rural setting. The children come from a mixture of backgrounds, both rural and urban. It is a six-teacher school, comprising of four classroom teachers (including a teaching Principal), a Resource Teacher for Special Needs, a shared Learning Support Teacher, who is based in our school, and two Special Needs Assistants. In Edmondstown National School, we encourage equality of participation in all school activities.

AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY:

Our vision for our children is that they will be “the best that they can be”, utilising to the full the gifts that God has bestowed on them. We aim to develop all aspects of the pupil and promote a living relationship with God and with other people.

We hope that they will leave our care, secure in the knowledge of their inherent goodness and potential, and go out into the world as agents of change.

Our new motto: “Creideamh, cairdeas, crógacht” encompasses our aims and vision i.e. that the children will be grounded in their Faith, that they will be good Friends to themselves and others and that they will be Fearless in standing up for justice and truth.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

DIOCESAN INFORMATION:

Diocese:	Dublin Archdiocese
Patron:	Archbishop Diarmuid Martin
Director of Education:	Monsignor Dan O'Connor

PARISH INFORMATION:

Parish:	Our Lady of Good Counsel
Chairperson of Pastoral Council:	Ms Mary Higgins

SCHOOL INFORMATION:

Name of School:	Edmondstown National School
Chaplain:	Fr. Richard Lyng, O. S. A.
Board of Management:	Fr. Richard Lyng, O.S.A.; Mrs Philomena Cleary Ms Marie Thérèse Wallnutt Mrs Breda Heavey Mr Dermot Keating Ms Linda Molloy Mrs Joanne McGrath Mr Justin Morton
Religious Education Co-Ordinator:	Mrs Philomena Cleary

MATERIALS:

The “Grow in Love” programme is taught from Junior Infants to sixth Class. The text book is sent home for weekly homework. Each teacher has their own kit containing Teacher’s book, pupil’s text book and pupil’s workbook (if applicable). The children use the textbook and the workbook and both are brought home as required, usually on a Thursday. Teachers make extensive use of the wonderful on-line resources.

The Junior/Senior Infant teacher has a child-friendly bible for use with their class. There is a set of Bibles: “Read with me Bible” (Candle Books) which is shared among all classes. Every class teacher has an individual Bible also. Class groupings engage in buddy reading using the bible on occasion.

Monthly Diocesan Planning Sheets are distributed to teachers. Diocesan Advent and Lenten resources are distributed annually or details regarding appropriate Diocesan web site. Trócaire boxes are distributed annually.

Child-friendly reference books on Saints are available for the use of the Confirmation classes. Trócaire, Concern and Irish Aid packs which explore areas of social justice, are also available for use by all classes.

SYMBOLS:

A cross is displayed in our entrance hall along with the Schedule for the Catholic School and our Mission Statement. There is a “Conversation Coaxer”/ Sacred Space table in our entrance hall and this reflects the Liturgical Year with various symbols, prayers and pictures displayed. Each classroom has a hand painted cross or a crucifix. Various prayer plaques are placed along the corridors. At Christmas, a crib is erected.

SACRED SPACE:

Each classroom in our school has an area dedicated to a Sacred Space in which there is a candle, some religious images and a class Bible. We endeavour to adapt the Sacred Space in accordance with the Liturgical year. Children’s work on various themes in “Grow In Love” are displayed frequently. Every teacher has an individual “Prayer Space” box of resources.

DOCTRINE:

The school follows the Diocesan Religion Curriculum. The children memorise, where possible, the “Questions and Answers” and “To be Learned” sections of the curriculum.

In the senior classes, the modern format of The Ten Commandments (as outlined in the old “Alive-0”) is used. Prayers are taught, at each class level, in line with the Religion Curriculum.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION:

Parents are helped towards a deeper understanding of the sacraments through the “Do This In Memory” programme for Communion and “You Shall Be My Witness” programme for Confirmation. We are very fortunate to have Sr. Anna and a local parish worker – Ms Bernadette Toal, who supplement class teaching by engaging the children in various workshops.

Parents are encouraged to guide their children in their faith journey through discussions on various worksheets in the workbook, which are sent home every week. Parent information sheets are sent home as needed.

Mass is celebrated with the sacramental classes each month where the children take responsibility for the Readings and Prayers of the Faithful and the singing of hymns. This takes place in the local Parish Church.

SACRAMENT OF FIRST CONFESSION:

The terms “First Confession” and “First Penance” are interchangeable and will be used throughout the school.

The prayers of Forgiveness are taught in accordance with the schedule for formal prayers (see Appendix 1).

The children will learn the following format for Rite 1 of the Sacrament of Confession/Penance:

“Bless me Father for I have sinned, this is my first Confession.
I did not show love when For these and all my sins I am sorry”.

SACRAMENT OF FIRST HOLY COMMUNION:

Parents will be helped to an awareness that preparation for the sacrament of First Holy Communion is a two-year programme, through the children’s workbook, the parent information sheets and also through the “Do This In Memory” programme.

The values of honesty, forgiveness, caring for others, joy, peace, community and family and the sacredness of the sacrament of the Eucharist will be emphasised for the celebration of First Holy Communion.

The prayers and responses for the Mass are taught in accordance with the schedule for Formal Prayers (see appendix 1).

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION:

The values of Faith, Justice, Peace and Tolerance will be emphasised in the preparation for Confirmation along with a particular emphasis on Creative Relationships.

The children will be able to name the Gifts, Fruits and Symbols of the Holy Spirit.

Links are made, in a natural way, with the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Penance. Children bring in Baptismal photos and research some information. They write about their memories of First Communion.

Children use their religion copies as a method of recording their faith journey.

Children have discussions on the importance of caring for our bodies and of having respect for ourselves. Cross curricular links are made with the “Walk Tall” programme. The pledge is an integral part of our preparation for Confirmation as it is seen as a major decision-making moment. The children decorate a pledge certificate which is placed in a pledge book.

Following Confirmation, the children are encouraged to donate a percentage of their money to a charity of their choice such as Bóthar or the Children’s Hospital, etc. There is no pressure placed on them to do this but the school facilitates the collection of money.

A Graduation ceremony is held at the end of sixth class to mark the children’s transition to secondary school. At the ceremony, the children are presented with a candle, which we encourage them to continue to light at special moments in their lives. This makes the link with their baptismal candle.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR:

Where possible, formal Religion class is taught during the morning and each lesson lasts at least half an hour. However, the Catholic ethos permeates all areas of our curriculum work and is brought in naturally in an informal way.

Feast days such as All Saints Day, Feast of the Immaculate Conception and Ash Wednesday, are celebrated with either Mass or a prayer service. At Christmas, there is a Nativity Enactment. Parents are encouraged to attend. Children receive the Sacrament of Confession during Advent and Lent.

Morning and evening prayers are recited during the school day and also grace before and after meals. Teaching of other formal prayers is undertaken by the class teacher as it arises in the “Grow In Love” programme. Copies of relevant prayers are sent home to parents.

New teachers of Sacramental classes have the support of an experienced teacher for guidance and the backup of enthusiastic colleagues. In general, most teachers attend both

the Communion and Confirmation ceremony and they help out with the various tasks that need to be undertaken.

Our school has an open-door policy for visits by our Chaplain and Parish Priest and they visit on a regular basis.

Awareness of global issues of Social Justice is highlighted through liaising with N.G.Os such as Trócaire, Concern and Irish Aid. The school often sends proceeds of fundraising to various charities. The children enter various competitions such as “Our World Irish Aid Awards”.

Any Diocesan events such as Retreats or Masses are published on the Staff Noticeboard in the Staffroom. Notice regarding the Annual School Mass organised by the Deanery is placed on the public Noticeboard so that all the partners in education are encouraged to attend.

PARTNERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Home / School

Parents are involved in their children’s Religious Education through the use of the “Grow In Love” workbook and through the learning of various prayers. Their importance as the most important link in the “triangle of influence” is emphasised at every opportunity. The “Grow In Love” programme has a ‘home link’ page and so the workbook is sent home every week.

School / Parish

The parish implements the “Do This In Memory” programme for First Communion and “You Shall Be My Witness” for Confirmation. The school facilitates these programmes by sending home information letters to the parents and work sheets, such as commitment letters, are displayed in the classroom. The school choir sings at these Masses.

PUPILS OF OTHER RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS:

Our school is an inclusive school where people of all religions are made welcome. Children who are non-Catholic are not expected to participate in the “Grow In Love” programme and are given other work to do within the classroom, during formal religion lessons. In practice, (in the junior classes particularly), children like to be involved in the lively songs and stories and often participate with the actions etc. This is not discouraged unless a formal request has been received from the parents. Children are given opportunities to explore other world religions (especially in older classes). This makes children of those faiths feel valued and fosters respect for other beliefs.

OTHER PASTORAL LINKS:

There is a student council in operation in our school with pupils drawn from first to sixth class. The council is actively involved in the liturgical year by giving announcements / reflections on the items in the Sacred Place during assembly. The student council leads the annual "Grandparents' Day" celebrations.

- ❖ The Parish Pastoral Worker leads the various classes from first to sixth in a weekly meditation class.
- ❖ Sr. Anna Hennessey attends several times throughout the year and delivers religious lessons on various topics such as St. Brigid, fruits of the spirit etc. She also teaches the children how to make St. Brigid's Crosses.
- ❖ The school celebrates "Catholic Schools Week" every year. A prayer assembly is held each day and a "Grandparents' Day" is held to celebrate the contribution that grandparents make to their grandchildren's faith journey.
- ❖ The school took part in the Laudate Festival in 2018 and is currently rehearsing for the 2019 concert.
- ❖ An external facilitator delivers lessons on The Old Testament and The New Testament to fifth and sixth class on an annual basis.

RESPONSIBILITIES & REVIEW:

The responsibility for writing / collating this policy has been undertaken by the Religious Co-ordinator in the school. A draft policy was presented to the teachers at a staff meeting and input gleaned from all the partners in Education.

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

The policy was originally ratified by the Board of Management in February 2017 and the current policy was ratified by the Board on 20th November 2018. It is available on our website.

REVIEWS

Next Review: 2020

Signed: _____
Fr. Richard Lyng OSA

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Philomena Cleary

Date: _____

