

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

*An Mhodhscoil is a non-denominational school* under the patronage of the Minister of Education & Skills

The Board of Management and the teachers have adopted the *Alive –O Catechetical Programme* approved and recommended by the Irish Hierarchy for use in Catholic Schools.

The teachers are expected and required to teach the Alive-O programme. The programme incorporates the recommended approach to religious education for the reception of the sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

The programme is studied each day for one half-hour. A Christian ethos however permeates the school day and the life of the school.

Teachers who have a difficulty/conflict with this may opt out of teaching Religion by arranging to teach an alternative subject to another class while that class teacher provides Religious Education for his/her class.

Subject to the terms of the Admission Policy we enrol pupils of other faiths or no faith in the school and respect their beliefs and practices. Consultation with parents of these pupils takes place on enrolment. Each child is welcome to attend and benefit from the Catholic religious education programme. If parents have difficulty with this the Principal shall meet with them to see if an accommodation can be reached. Parents are welcome to view the Religious programme taught – at its core is the commandment ‘Love God and love your neighbour’.

Sensitivity will always be shown when pupils cannot participate in RE lessons/liturgical celebrations by allowing:

- Pupils to read/colour and do project work
- Scheduling religion at different times in two adjoining classrooms
- Pupils to visit other classrooms during RE lessons/liturgical celebrations

The school cannot, however, formally undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith, but will facilitate parents/religious instructors if so requested.

### **Whole School Dimension:**

Meaningful pictures and artworks are on display throughout the school building.

The major Catholic and local feasts are celebrated. They are marked with the aid of signs and symbols displayed throughout the school

- Advent – the Advent wreath and Jesse tree
- Christmas – tree and crib
- Feast of St. Brigid – traditional crosses
- Feast of St. Patrick – depiction of story and shamrock
- Lent – symbols of repentance and ashes
- Easter – symbols of the new life of resurrection, the empty tomb
- Pentecost – artistic depiction of the coming of the Holy Spirit

### **Liturgical celebrations are held on some occasions e.g.**

- Aifreann Scoile
- Feasts
- Carol service at Christmas
- Blessing of Ashes
- Times of trauma or crisis and for other occasions which from time to time are considered appropriate to celebrate or to mark.

**The pupils of the school join:**

- At the celebration of First Communion and Confirmation
- School Mass in December
- Other liturgical celebrations in cooperation with the parish.

The catholic education offered in An Mhodhscoil is conducted in collaboration with the children's parents and the local parish. We see our role as being supportive of the role of parents and parishes.

**Teaching Methodologies Used To Achieve Aims**

- Study of the *Alive – O* Teacher's Guide
- Interactive learning
- Giving children prayer experiences that are meaningful
- Sacramental and non-sacramental liturgies
- Use of imagination in prayer
- Drama and role play on the theme of Christian Values
- Questions and answers helping children to use their own words
- Vocal prayer

**Success Criteria**

We will know this policy is working in our school if:

- There is an ordered community where respect for all is evident at all times
- There is an outward-looking care for the less fortunate in society
- There are recognisable links between parish/home/school
- Children can speak confidently of their faith

**Responsibility For Implementing This Policy**

The Board of Management in consultation with the Principal and the teachers & staff are responsible for facilitating the smooth implementation of the policy. The teachers teach the programme appropriate to their class.

**Teachers and Staff:**

- Inform themselves through studying the *Alive – O* teacher's manual
- Deliver and teach the *Alive – O* programme appropriate to their class
- Cooperate with the Chaplains to the school
- Avail themselves of in-service support provided.
- Actively support the spirit and ethos of the school remembering that Religion is not taught but caught!

**Parents:**

- Co-operate and support the school in its effort, especially at times of sacramental preparation and at other school events to which they are invited. They are also asked to help with religious education homework and to read the parts of the *Alive-O* programme that are intended for them.

**Principal:**

- Takes an active role in encouraging the whole school aspects of the programme and monitors progress throughout the school
- Liaises with the chaplains in defining the role of the chaplaincy in the life of the school
- Helps to facilitate supportive interaction of all parties in implementing the programme.