**Scoil Bhríde Whole School Religious Policy**

**The curriculum states:**

The development and implementation of the curriculum in religious education in primary schools remains the responsibility of the relevant patron bodies.

**1**. **Rationale:**

Scoil Bhríde is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life of Jesus Christ.

It promotes Religious Education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

**2**. **Context:**

There are varying levels of faith experience and faith commitment in our school reflecting the wider cultural context of the Catholic Church in Ireland today.

**3**. **Aims of R.E. in the School:**

The general aim of Religious Education is to continue to awaken people to faith and then to help them throughout their lives to deepen and strengthen that faith. The fundamental principles governing the Religious Education of students in this school may be stated as follows:

Religious Education:

* Contributes to the revelation and communication of God's love.
* Invites the student to respond to God with love and gratitude through a variety of experiences including prayer and liturgy.
* Respects the student as a person.
* Engages with his/her personal and social development.
* Encourages the student to ask the key questions humankind has always asked.
* Deepens the appreciation and understanding of the Catholic tradition.
* Fosters and deepens the student's faith.
* Contributes to the student's religious and moral development.
* Helps the student to tell her own story and the story of her faith community.
* Embraces those with special education needs.
* Facilitates authenticity, commitment and responsibility on the part of the student and the teacher.
* Recognises the whole school, whole community nature of religious education.
* Acknowledges its intergenerational character.
* Values the partnership between home, school, parish tradition.
* Promotes hospitality, generosity, compassion, justice, respect and peace.

In summary, the religious education of students in this school is an interdisciplinary affair, grounded in educational theory and practice and closely but critically connected to the contemporary culture

### Religion Education Faith Development

Our school embraces:

* A sense of fairness and right relationships with all other persons
* Deep respect for all people
* Forgiveness and new beginnings: a place where grudges are not held.
* Respect and dignity: deep intrinsic respect for all others.
* Affirmations and tolerance: that we speak to, react to and act towards others respectful of their dignity.
* Personal faith formation: formal prayer, religion lesson, celebrations of sacraments and the liturgy seasons of the year.
* Belonging: that all experience a sense of belonging and contribute to the promotion of the desired ethos of the school.
* Understanding: teachers and pupils have positive experiences of school and positive relations are fostered.

**B – Curriculum: Content**

The Board of Management and the teachers have adopted the ***Grow in Love 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 of Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

**C –Timetable:**

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

**D –Resources included in the Grow in Love Programme**

* Online interactive resources.
* Videos
* Teacher manual
* Student workbook
* Interactive websites
* Sacred space in classrooms
* Posters

**6.** **Staffing:**

**Responsibility for Implementing This Policy**

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

1. **The Co-ordinator:**

The function of the Co-ordinator is to promote and maintain a spirit of teamwork among the teachers of the subject.

**Responsibilities include:**

* Co-ordination of the programme.
* Maintenance of regular contact with teachers.
* Working in collaboration with the Chaplain.
1. **Teachers and Staff:**
* Inform themselves through studying the *Grow in Love*teacher’s manual
* Deliver and teach the *Grow in Love*programme appropriate to their class
* Cooperate with the Chaplain/ Parish and the Diocesan Advisers
* Avail themselves of in-service support provided.
* Actively support the spirit and ethos of the school.
1. **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 *Grow in Love*programme that are intended for them.
* Parents are welcome to view the Religious programme taught – at its core is the commandment ‘Love God and love your neighbour’. Sensitivity is always shown when pupils cannot participate in liturgical celebrations. The school cannot, however undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith, nor can it provide supervision during the religious education period apart from the class.

**D- Principal:**

* takes an active role in encouraging the whole school aspects of the programme and monitors progress throughout the school
* The Principal time-tables *Faith Development*as a topic for staff and board meetings
* Liaises with the school chaplain in defining the role of the chaplaincy and the parish in the life of the school
* Helps to facilitate supportive interaction of all parties in implementing the programme.

**7.** **Prayer and Ritual:**

**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

 Liturgical celebrations are held on some occasion’s e.g.

* Feasts including the patron feast of the school (St. Bridget’s Day)
* 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
* Family Masses throughout the year
* Other liturgical celebrations in cooperation with the parish.

The catholic education offered in Scoil Bhríde 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 parish.

 **Liturgical Calendar**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Service** |
| November | Remembering the Dead |
| December | Carol Service |
| January | Grandparents day |
| February | St. Brigid Day celebration |
| February | Ash Wednesday |
| February | Catholic Schools week |
| March | Lent: Mass for Seachtain na Gaeilge |
| March | Lent: remembrance for Mothers |
| March/April | Easter Service |
| May  | Month of Mary  |

All liturgical seasons are highlighted with visuals prepared by the students and displayed throughout the school. Icons, Religious Images and Crucifixes are placed in prominent positions in the school. Each classroom has a designated Sacred Space Area in their classroom.

**8- Spiritual Formation of Teachers**

The spiritual nourishment of teachers is understood by the Board of Management to be an integral part of the religious education programme undertaken by the school. To this end the following are organised:

* Prayer and reflection before staff meetings and Board of Management meetings
* In-service on handing on the Grow in Love Programme

**9- Connecting with the Parish:**

The catholic education offered in Scoil Bhríde is conducted in collaboration with the children’s parents and the local parish. We see our role as being a supportive of the role of parents and the parish. The local parish priests occasionally visit the classrooms.

**10- Teaching Methodologies Used To Achieve Aims**

* Study of the *Grow in Love*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

**11- Success Criteria**

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

* There is an acknowledged sense of God, Faith, Prayer and Worship within the school community
* 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 is evidence of parental interest in the religious education programme
* There are recognisable links between parish/home/school
* Children can speak confidently of their faith

**Inclusion of Pupils of Different Faiths and Other Stances for Living**

Children of all faiths and different stances for living are welcome in our school. Our school is hospitable, open and inclusive. We continuously strive to best practice concerning the inclusion of pupils in our school. Our practice is founded on principles of good communication, clarity on rights and responsibilities, right relationships, openness to dialogue and compromise and flexibility.

* Our Admissions Policy and Mission Statement makes clear that we are a Catholic School under the patronage of the local Catholic bishop
* It is clear to parents enrolling their children that the Catholic ethos of our school permeates the whole school day and not just the formal religious education class
* Our Admissions Policy makes clear that we welcome diversity and inclusion and that we believe that the presence of children from diverse backgrounds enhance and enrich our school community.

**Ongoing Communication, Opportunities for Inclusion and Parental Choice**

* Parents whose children are of other faiths or different stances for living are made aware in advance of any religious events or celebrations.
* Children are always invited but not obliged to attend all Catholic religious celebrations in the school
* Individual children, with parental consent, may wish to participate in these celebrations by reading appropriate prayers and texts, participating in art or drama, being part of the choir, playing an instrument, etc.
* Parents are free to absent their child from school for the duration of these events. Consideration is given to the timing of these events.
* Care is taken that the time allotted to religious education is not exceeded during times of sacramental preparation
* Notice boards and school displays are used to make pupils feel welcome
* Celebrations of the different cultures present in the school are scheduled
* Reconciliation is a feature of daily life. Staff and children are encouraged to grow in appreciation of human dignity
* School assemblies acknowledge festivals associated with the other faith traditions present in the school.
* Children of different faiths are given the opportunity to explain their beliefs to other children
* Key materials are translated as resources allow*.*
* Review
* It is important and necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the RE Curriculum in our school. The RE Coordinator has responsibility for co-ordinating the review.

**Board of Management Ratification**

This policy is hereby ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde Primary School.

Signed: Nicola Hogan Date: 08/02/2023

 Ms. Nichola Hogan (Chairperson BOM)