
Scoil Mharcas Naofa Sóirsearach
Achadh an Tobair
Tamhlacht
Baile Atha Cliath 24
Fón: 4512076
Fax 4523658
U.R. 19472W



St. Mark's Junior School
Springfield
Tallaght, Dublin 24.
Phone: 4512076
Fax: 4523658
Email: principal@stmarksjs.ie
Roll No: 19472W

RELIGION

POLICY



St Mark's Junior School Religion Policy

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

- This policy was drafted and then discussed, amended and ratified by the Board of Management, Teachers, Priest/Moderator and Parents.

1.RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SCHOOL ETHOS

- The Schedule for the Catholic School is displayed in the Lobby.
(See Board of Management Handbook, page 5-9, 15)
- Our Vision Statement is on display
- Our Mission Statement is on display

2.AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

- The Aim of Religious education is to foster and deepen the children's faith.
- The Aim of our Policy is to state how we do this.

3.GENERAL INFORMATION

a) Diocesan Information

- **Name of Diocese:** Dublin Archdiocese
- **Name of Patron/Archbishop:** Dr. Diarmuid Martin
- **Name of Director of Education:** ??

a) Parish Information

- **Name of Parish:** St. Mark's
- **Name of Parish Priest/Moderator:** Fr. Pat McKinley
- **Name of Chairperson of Pastoral Council:** *****

b) School Information

- **Name of School:** St. Mark's Junior National School
- **Name of Chaplain:** Fr. Pat McKinley
- **Names of Board of Management members:**

Patrons Nominees: Don Harper

	Fr. Pat McKinley
Parents Nominees:	Kozeta Memetaj David Fletcher
Community Nominees:	Siobhán O’Leary Charlie O’ Connor
Teacher Nominees:	Ciara O’ Reilly Ann Ryan

Name of Religious Education Coordinator: Aoife Reilly

ENROLLMENT/PUPILS OF OTHER RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

When enrolling, all Parents/Guardians are given a form (please see attached).

Three options are available:

Option 1

Parents/Guardians signing this option **give permission for their child to be instructed in the Catholic faith.**

Option 2

If a Parent/Guardian signs this option they are making it **clear that they do not want their child to be instructed in the Catholic faith;** they understand that there is no compulsion for their child to take part in classes.

However, **they are aware that due to lack of supervision resources it is impossible for the child to be removed from the classroom during R.E. lessons.**

They undertake to ensure that their child will do nothing to undermine the right to religious instruction of others. Their child will quietly do another activity while R.E is going on.

Option 3

Finally if a Parent/Guardian signs the third option they are making it clear that they **do not want** their child to be instructed in the Catholic faith; furthermore they undertake that **they will collect their child from school every day and return them after Religious Education is completed.**

PLEASE NOTE

St. Mark’s JNS prohibits all children, whatever their creed, from visibly wearing any type of clothing or jewellery that has a religious intonation.

This includes all types of head dress.

4. MATERIALS

- The Alive-O programme is the only programme used in every class.
- The kit of the Alive-O programme is used in each class

- Each teacher has his/her own complete kit.
- Children use the textbooks from Alive-O programme
- Home Links and communication are encouraged.
- The school has a set of approved Bibles.
- There is a set of Alive-O posters available to each class teacher.
- Additional Religious Education resources and information are distributed by the Religion Post holder, Principal and Parish Team

5. SYMBOLS

- A bronze image of St. Mark is displayed on the front of the school
- There is a Crucifix and Sacred Space in the Lobby.

6. SACRED SPACE

- There is a Sacred Space in each classroom.
- The Sacred Spaces change in accordance with the Liturgical Year.
- The Sacred Space reflects the children's work on the current themes in Alive-O.

7. DOCTRINE

- We teach Catholic doctrine in St. Mark's JNS.
- The Questions & Answers and 'To be Learned' sections of the Alive O Programme are revisited and where appropriate memorised.
- We also promote and expect from our pupils a tolerance of those with different religious beliefs, and of those with no religious beliefs.

8. SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

A. **General**

Catholic Sacramental preparation is facilitated by the school in co-operation with parents / parish.

- At least one parent must be (verifiably) Roman Catholic for children to receive sacraments.
- School collects Baptismal Certificates. All other enquiries regarding sacraments to the Parish Secretary.
- Parents are helped towards a deeper understanding of the sacraments through meetings organised by the school and Parish. They are made aware of the supports that are available to them and of **their responsibilities** as parents in sacramental preparation.
- Parents are encouraged to guide their children on their faith journey through regular prayer, attendance at Mass on Sundays, informal visits to the church and through the living of the Christian message. If Parents want support they can contact Fr. Pat McKinley.

- Teachers ensure that sacramental preparation is an ongoing process from Junior Infants to 2nd class by means of our spiral R.E curriculum, the Alive O programme, the Liturgical year and by fostering the Christian message in all that we do and all that we are.
- The school supports and encourages the ongoing reception of the sacraments by working closely with the Parish team and through taking guidance from the Diocesan Advisors for R.E. in primary education.
- The policy concerning student dress at the **celebration of First Penance is the wearing of full school uniform.**
- The policy concerning student dress at the **celebration of First Holy Communion is a matter for the Parents but simplicity and practicality is encouraged.**

B. First Confession and First Holy Communion

- 2nd Class children prepare for the Sacrament of Confession and Holy Communion – though good habits and attitudes are informally built up from the first day in school.
- At the start of each school year the Principal together with the Parish Moderator decides and sets a date for both First Confession and First Holy Communion.
- A Parents Meeting is held around October/November when the Moderator, Principal and Teachers give a detailed account of what happens in First Confession and Holy Communion and outline what is expected of parents in terms of preparation for the Sacraments.
- Once a week the children of 2nd class attend the Parish Mass at 10 o'clock .
- The specific prayers, responses and hymns are taught from September of 2nd class onwards

C. Sacrament of First Holy Communion, part of an ongoing journey of faith in the person of Jesus and his teachings.

- It is highlighted to parents that preparation for First Holy Communion is not a sudden thing but is on a continuum – this is done from 1st class on at all meetings.
- The values of love and forgiveness are highlighted – the ability to say sorry and to forgive is stressed.

9. IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR

- Religion is generally taught through out the school from 12.20 – 12.50 each day
- Each member of staff has a Certificate in Religious Studies.
- Religious Education and a Catholic/ Christian values are woven in to the school day by the rituals and prayers and also by the encouragement of gentleness, kindness, friendliness and respect.
- 2nd Class children prepare for the Sacrament of Confession and Holy Communion.
- At the start of each school year the Principal together with the Parish Moderator decides and sets a date for both First Confession and Holy.
- A Parents Meeting is held around October/November when the Moderator, Principal and Teachers give a detailed account of what happens in First Confession and Holy Communion and outline what is expected of parents.
- Once a week the children of 2nd class attend the Parish Mass at 10 o'clock .
- **The prayers learned are:**
Morning Prayer /Prayer circle
Grace Before/After Meal.
Evening Prayer at home time.
Our Father.
Hail Mary.
Glory Be.
O Angel of God.
Sign of the Cross.

Each class teacher displays these prayers and has a sacred space in their classroom.

(For a list of formal prayers to be learned cf. Appendix 1: Formal Prayers)

- Children learn the ritual format of the Mass by attending once a week from 2nd class onwards
- The various feast days are celebrated throughout the year and a variety of resources are made available to the teachers through the Diocesan website and from in school team planning.
- Newly qualified teachers teaching sacramental classes are always mentored and supported by experienced staff and the R.E coordinator and Principal.
- Support is available to the teachers of sacramental classes in this way also.

- The Chaplain and Parish worker are made welcome at all times and visits to the school are encouraged – particularly around special religious occasions in the Liturgical year.
- Trócaire and Children Helping Children are the charities we support and in this way heighten the plight of less well off third world communities. **A spirit of connectedness is fostered.**
- A spirit of social justice awareness is highlighted, through charities such as Vincent de Paul, Focus Ireland etc.

11. PARTNERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A. Home/School

- Parents are kept involved in their children's Religious Education through regular updates in Newsletter and through meetings and gatherings in the school and Church
- Parents are encouraged to check R.E. homework through Home school link pages and through taking responsibility for helping in the teaching of the prayers and words of hymns.

B. School/Parish

- There is a monthly family Mass which all families are given notice of through the school texting service.

12. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Principal in communication with the R.E co-ordinator will draft the Religion Policy.
- It will then be shown to staff and Board Of Management for discussion and amendment.

Check List

- There is an acknowledged sense of God, faith, prayer and worship within the school community.
- There is a respect for all within the school community
- There is parental interest in religious education
- There are recognisable links between home, school and parish.

- There is an outward-looking care for those in particular need in our society.

REVIEW

- The Religious Education Policy will be reviewed every 1-2 years.

13.RATIFICATION & COMMUNICATION

- The Religious Education Policy be presented to the Board of Management and Staff.
- The Religious Education Policy be communicated to all the partners involved if requested or as necessary

REVIEWED JUNE 2014

RATIFIED AND SIGNED BY BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:

CHAIRPERSON:



DATE June 2014



FROM DIOCESAN WEBSITE

APPENDIX 2: THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR IN THE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Principal of a Catholic school has overall responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic ethos of the school.

A Religious Education Co-ordinator should be appointed to support the principal in this role.

The aim is that the Religious Education Co-ordinator will facilitate the work of the principal and the staff as they strive to enhance the Catholic ethos and charism of the school.

The role of the Religious Education Co-ordinator should be informed by the fundamental tasks of catechesis (General Directory for Catechesis, 85–86):

- Promoting knowledge of the Catholic faith
- Liturgical education
- Moral formation
- Teaching to pray
- Education for community life
- Missionary initiation

Suggested Role:

- To facilitate the formulation of the Religious Education Policy
- To organise the distribution and collection of all necessary resources, e.g. full Alive-O kit, Bibles for senior classes etc....
- To facilitate the prayer life of the school throughout the liturgical year, e.g. prayer at assemblies, special feast days etc....
- To encourage the use of sacred spaces in classrooms and in school common areas, and to ensure the prominence of religious symbols and icons.
- To provide input on religious education at staff meetings, in order to maintain a conscious profile of the subject
- To facilitate links with chaplains and parish personnel
- To enable parents to take an active role in the religious education and formation of their children, e.g. use of home links in Alive-O
- To liaise with Diocesan Advisers
- To distribute resources, e.g. Lenten and Advent resources, Bible Society material, Trócaire boxes etc....

