



St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark

RN: 19259W

Religious Education Policy

Policy ratified: April 2022

Review date: April 2025

Signed: *Arthur Hutchinson*

Chairperson BOM

At the time of drawing up this policy, all details and the enclosed information are correct. It is possible that between now and the review date, changes may have to be made to the provisions, policies and procedures of the school. This may be due to external changes required by the Department of Education, the school patron or other agencies. Mandatory policies will be available on the school website and up to date information will be posted regularly.

Contents

Introduction	3
General Information	3
Diocesan Information	3
Parish Information	3
School Information	3
History of St Patrick’s GNS, Hollypark.....	3
Rationale & School Ethos.....	3
The Catholic Church and Primary Education	4
Aims of RE in the school.....	4
Materials	5
Prayer Space	6
Prayer.....	6
Children of Other Faiths and No Faith	6
Children with Additional Needs	7
Arrangements for Sacramental Preparation between Home, Parish & School.....	7
Integration of Religious Education in other areas of the Curriculum	7
Implementation of Religious Education Throughout the School Year	8
Feast Days	8
Liturgical Celebrations	8
Catholic Schools Week.....	8
Roles and Responsibilities.....	9
Staff.....	9
Parents	9
Principal	9
Success criteria.....	10

Introduction

St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dermot Farrell.

This policy was developed by the staff in consultation with the Board of Management and parents.

General Information

Diocesan Information

- Name of Archdiocese: Archdiocese of Dublin
- Name of Patron/Archbishop: Dermot Farrell
- Name of Director of Education: Dr Cora O'Farrell

Parish Information

- Name of Parish: Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Foxrock
- Name of Parish Priest: Fr Gerry Kane
- Name of Chairperson of Parish Pastoral Council: Mr Paul Markey
- Name of Parish Pastoral Worker: n/a

School Information

- Name of Patron of School: Archbishop Dermot Farrell
- Name of Chaplain: n/a
- Names of Board of Management members: Mr Arthur Hutchinson, Mr Kieran Carrick, Mr Tom Leahy, Ms Julie Anne Byrne, Mr Paul Close, Ms Mary Merriman, Ms Ceara Belton, Ms Bernadette Gunning
- Name of Religious Education Coordinator: Ms Bernadette Gunning

History of St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark

St Patrick's GNS Hollypark was established in 1966. It is a single sex school which serves the needs of the girls of the Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Foxrock and the local community of Hollypark. Our school works closely with St Patrick's BNS, Hollypark, which is also a parish school serving the boys of our local community.

Rationale & School Ethos

St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark is dedicated to providing a caring and supportive environment for all its pupils through positive affirmation, clear communication and a genuine partnership between the home, the school and the community.

Our school enrolls pupils of other faiths or no faith in the school, subject to the enrolment criteria, and respects their beliefs and practices in accordance with the school ethos of inclusivity.

St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark is committed to helping its pupils grow and mature towards self-discipline and good behaviour and the pursuit of excellence in education within a supportive Christian environment.

Home and school both play essential roles in the development of the spiritual, moral and emotional development of each child; hence co-operation between parents and teachers is vital. This Religious Education Policy focuses on Catholic faith, belief and teaching, and it aspires to continue to develop and deepen this awareness for the Catholic pupils enrolled at the school.

As a Catholic school religious education is provided for pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church. Catholic children will be provided with religious experiences that will help them to develop their faith, such as prayer and sacramental preparation. In addition to these activities, all children will also learn about and from the beliefs, teachings and practices of the great religious traditions of the world, with a particular focus on Christianity. This type of learning is open to, and inclusive of, all children, regardless of their faith background. Children from all faith traditions and none are therefore welcome to participate in the religious education that the school provides.

Symbols of our Catholic faith are evident throughout the school. We have statues of Our Lady and St Patrick and a picture of St Joseph in the lobby, along with the Schedule for Catholic Schools. All classes have a Sacred Space which are regularly updated to reflect the Liturgical Calendar and Grow in Love Programme.

The Catholic Church and Primary Education

Staff are led and supported by the Principal in the teaching of Religious Education.

The Principal

- Facilitates supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the programmes.
- Co-ordinates Catholic Schools Week, incorporating Grandparents' Day and Laudate Festival
- Co-ordinates the compiling and implementation of the Religious Education Policy in the school.
- Disseminates information relating to Religious Education.
- Facilitates the attendance of staff at Religious Education CPD courses.
- Ensures that every class has the Grow in Love Class Kit, Catholic symbols, creates a sacred space and has a classroom Bible.
- Ensures that Religion is timetabled daily in every classroom.

Aims of RE in the school

The aim of the Religious Education curriculum is to help children mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives, through their encounter with, exploration and celebration of the Catholic faith.

The curriculum distinguishes four interrelated strands of Christian Faith, The Word of God, Liturgy/Prayer and Christian Morality. The strands overlap and interact to form a holistic learning experience for the child.

Christian Faith: Teaching and learning in this strand assists children to become religiously literate in key truths, doctrines and practices of the Catholic religious tradition.

The Word of God: In this strand children are introduced to an age-appropriate way to Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church.

Liturgy and Prayer: Children are encouraged to engage with liturgical signs, symbols and rituals which nurture their relationship with God as Father, Son and Spirit, and to develop their capacity for personal prayer and for participation in the liturgy of the Church.

Christian Morality: The teaching and learning in this strand helps children to grow in awareness of their identity as persons created in the image and likeness of God and called to live in loving, respectful, relationship with God, other human persons and the whole of creation. The children are introduced to Jesus as the example for living an ethical life and are formed in gospel values and in love of God and neighbour.

In our school we aim

1. To reflect a distinctive vision of life and a corresponding philosophy of education
2. To create an open, happy, stimulating and mutually respectful community environment
3. To worship God through prayer and the celebration of liturgy and the sacraments
4. To be inspired by the Gospel
5. To respect the freedom, attitudes and dignity of all other people, religions and creeds.
6. To deepen the appreciation and understanding of the Catholic Tradition within the child.
7. To foster and deepen the child's faith
8. To contribute to the child's religious and moral development
9. To promote open, mutually respectful and inclusive attitudes
10. To value and uphold the partnership between the home, the school and the parish.

Materials

The Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland is the foundation document for all Religious Education in Catholic primary schools. 'Grow in Love' is the programme approved for use in Catholic primary schools in Ireland.

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. Each class kit consists of a teacher's manual, pupils' workbooks, a CD and online resources.

- Each teacher has his/her own Grow in Love manual, CD and poster set. Each teacher has registered with the login code for the Grow in Love programme using their school email address.

-
- Each child has access to the Grow in Love book appropriate to the child's own level
 - Children at all class levels bring home materials from the Grow in Love programme every week.
 - Children have copies designated for RE only from third class up.
 - Our school uses The Catholic Children's Bible (Saint Mary's Press) and Catholic Good News Bible (veritas/Collins)
 - Monthly Memos sent out by the Education Secretariat are disseminated via Aladdin and stored on the school's Communications Site.

Prayer Space

Each class has a designated prayer space which changes in accordance with the liturgical cycle and/or 'Grow in Love' programme.

Prayer

Children are encouraged to participate in prayer experiences, both formal and informal, recognising the importance of silence and meditation in developing children's capacity for personal prayer.

Children participate in daily class prayers throughout the school day. Children participate in prayer at regular school assemblies and prayer services are held in the school throughout the year.

Children from 2nd Class upwards are brought to Mass as a whole school community at the start and finish of the school year and also on or about St Patrick's Day (St Patrick is the Patron Saint of our school).

Children in 6th Class engage in weekly meditation with a member of the Parish Sacramental Team through the parish webcam.

Children of Other Faiths and No Faith

Every child is welcome into the school having satisfied the enrolment procedures. However, the school cannot undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith. The Catholic ethos of our school underpins all aspects of school life, both interpersonal and curricular.

As per our Admissions Policy, the following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, who has requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction of the school day of such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) or the student, as the case may be, to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

Parents/guardians should understand that there may be prayers at assembly and at other moments throughout the day. For children of other faiths and none these times should be used for reflection. Parents should also be aware that Catholic children prepare for the sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation.

Children of other faiths will be invited to attend all Catholic religious celebrations in the school.

The school will endeavour to notify parents/guardians of any such celebrations or visits to the church. Parents/guardians may decide to excuse their child from school for the duration of any of these celebrations. The school will not be responsible for a child during such a period of exclusion. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide alternative supervision at those times.

Children with Additional Needs

Children with additional needs are included in all aspects of Religious Education. Where necessary a differentiated programme will be developed by the Class Teacher in conjunction with the parents, SEN Team and SNA (if applicable). SNAs will attend at Sacramental Ceremonies to assist children with additional needs. The school uses the 'Adaptive First Eucharist Preparation Kit' developed by Loyola Press (A Jesuit Ministry) for children with autism, Down Syndrome and other additional needs.

Arrangements for Sacramental Preparation between Home, Parish & School

Sacramental Preparation is in line with the recent policy document issued by the Archdiocese '**Accompanying Families - Sacraments of Initiation Policy Dublin 2022**'.

As a parish school, St Patrick's GNS Hollypark works closely with the parents and Parish Sacramental Team and continues to educate children for the sacraments through the promotion of the Catholic ethos and the provision of Religious Education and faith formation informed by The Catholic Preschool and Primary R.E. for Curriculum for Ireland 2015 [CPPRECI 2015], using the '**Grow In Love**' programme, in line with the Schedule for Catholic Schools.

Our partners in education in our school community are informed of the annual school Mass organised by the Archdiocese via Aladdin.

Integration of Religious Education in other areas of the Curriculum

Religious Education is integrated into other areas of the Curriculum:

- **Gaeilge:** na paidreacha as Gaeilge; Aifreann during Seachtain na Gaeilge
- **SESE History:** stories of St Patrick, St Brigid, Early Christian Ireland – the Land of Saints and Scholars
- **SESE Geography:** Glendalough, Where did Catholicism begin; supporting other countries through the Trócaire Programme and other charitable initiatives eg: Mary's Meals

-
- **SESE Science/Green Schools:** awareness of the environment, in caring for the world created by God
 - **Visual Arts:** artwork for Sacraments, the Grow in Love Programme and reflecting the Liturgical Year
 - **Drama:** Christmas Plays and dramatic interpretations of bible stories through the Grow in Love Programme
 - **Music:** songs of the Grow in Love Programme, Laudate Festival, Sacramental Ceremonies, Carol services, school Masses
 - **SPHE:** kindness, sharing, Culture of Respect and RSE programme

Implementation of Religious Education Throughout the School Year

Feast Days

All Catholic feast days are celebrated.

- Christmas – tree and cribs, Christmas stories, Christmas plays, carol services.
- Catholic Schools’ Week – Prayer Services and Grandparents’ Day and Laudate Festival.
- Feast of St Brigid - making traditional crosses, stories of St Brigid.
- Aifreann as Gaeilge – Seachtain na Gaeilge
- Feast of St Patrick – Mass, stories, symbol of shamrock, cards, parade.
- Lent – Symbols of Repentance, distribution of ashes in school, prayer service, Trócaire boxes.
- Easter – Easter cards, story of the death of Jesus and the resurrection, artwork and workbooks.
- Celebration of the opening of the school year with school mass and the graduation of senior pupils with school mass.
- Each class will have a sacred space and there will be a crucifix in each classroom. Other religious symbols ie: statues, pictures, rosary beads, will be displayed in the sacred space.
- The colour of the sacred space will be appropriate to the liturgical cycle.
- Statues are displayed in the entrance hall with the Schedule for Catholic Schools

Liturgical Celebrations

The school celebrates the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation. Children receive the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation in the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Foxrock. Children are prepared for the sacraments through parish programmes and by the individual class teachers in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school.

Confirmation pupils are also prepared for the Ceremony of Light by the class teachers.

Catholic Schools Week

Information regarding Catholic School Week is circulated to the school community early in January to ensure adequate preparation.

A highpoint of our CSW is the celebration of Grandparents Day.

Each year one of our class levels participates in the Laudate Festival. Teachers attend the workshop in September and practices with classes begin shortly thereafter. Parents, grandparents and family are very supportive of this annual event.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

In St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark staff undertake to:

- The teaching of the formal Religious Education curriculum, which is timetabled for two and a half hours per class each week. The Catholic ethos of our school underpins all aspects of school life, both interpersonal and curricular.
- Use the 'Grow in Love' programme
- Co-operate with the Chaplain/Priest and Diocesan Advisors
- Avail of in-service on delivering the relevant religion programmes
- Actively support the ethos of the school
- Teach the recommended prayers for the pupils at the appropriate age level.
- Teach the responses to the mass to the pupils in accordance with the specified responses and prayers suggested in the teacher's manual
- Hold regular prayer services
- Organise Nativity plays
- Organise Carol services
- Celebrate Catholic Schools Week
- Participate in the Laudate Festival
- Prepare choirs for singing at religious celebrations and sacraments
- Develop an awareness of social justice and missionary work, in-class project work, whole school donations to selected charity groups, class donations to selected charity groups

Parents

- Support the school during times of sacramental preparation and assist at home with Religious Education homework
- Parents attend information talks and meetings given by the parish in advance of the preparation of the children for the sacraments
- Parents of pupils of other faiths or no faith to be supportive of the school in its stated procedures recognizing that their school of choice for their child is one of a particular Catholic ethos.

Principal

In St Patrick's GNS, Hollypark, the Principal is also Religion Co-Ordinator. As Principal she has overall responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic ethos of the school.

As Religion Co-Ordinator, the Principal:

- Facilitates supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the programmes.
- Co-ordinates Catholic Schools Week incorporating Grandparents' Day and Laudate Festival

-
- Ensures that a member of staff attends Laudate Training Workshop annually
 - Co-ordinates the compiling and implementation of the Religious Education Policy in the school.
 - Disseminates information relating to Religious Education.
 - Facilitates the attendance of staff at Religious Education CPD courses.
 - Ensures that every class has the Grow in Love Class Kit, Catholic symbols, creates a sacred space and has a classroom Bible.

Success criteria

- An acknowledged sense of God, faith, prayer and worship within the school community
- Respect for all within the school community
- Parental interest and support
- Recognisable links between the home, school and parish.

This policy is published on our school website www.hollyparkgns.ie and uploaded to our internal School Communications Site. It is regularly reviewed by the Board of Management.