



SCOIL CARMEL JNS

Religion Education Policy

www.scoilcarmeljns.com

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1. Aim of Religious Education

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.¹

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 a 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.²

2. Introductory Statement

Scoil Carmel JNS (hereafter known as the school) is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

Mission Statement

We promote the Christian values of respect, honesty, courtesy and tolerance, while appreciating the needs and rights of individuals and being socially and culturally inclusive. We nurture an environment of development, both spiritually and morally with particular emphasis on Pastoral care. We aspire to realise the educational, emotional, social and physical potential of all children and encourage them to develop active and creative minds. We promote healthy friendships and relationships and endeavour to equip all children with strong social skills and an eagerness to continue into further education

A brief history of the school

Scoil Carmel JNS was founded in 1869 and initially served the substantially rural and agricultural community of the parish of Bohernabreena. The school, situated at the foothills of the Dublin Mountains and backed by the green belt on the banks of the River Dodder also served a large area of Rathfarnham, Templeogue, Tallaght and Glenasmole. Scoil Carmel has always been a mixed school. The school was originally housed in the grounds of the Carmelite Convent.

Scoil Carmel JNS moved to its current grounds in 1954. This building was extended in 1975 and, in 1977, due to a large increase in young families in the area, the school was divided and Scoil Carmel became a Junior School serving children from Junior Infants to Second Class. A new senior school, Scoil Treasa, was built for children from 3rd to 6th

¹ Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland, Irish Episcopal Conference, p.31

² Ibid, pp. 34-35



Class.

On completion of Second Class, the children transfer to Scoil Treasa, Firhouse's senior primary school. The two schools work together to ensure the happy, smooth transition through primary school for all children through synchronisation of holidays and school times and through teacher contact and collaboration. At present, we have 317 pupils.

Schedule for Catholic Schools

Scoil Carmel JNS, as a Roman Catholic School (established in connection with the Minister for Education), aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil; intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Throughout the school, symbols of our faith communicate the school's Catholic ethos. On entering the school in the foyer, a sacred space is visible to coincide with different Catholic celebrations such as Advent (wreath), Christmas (crib), May (altar). Each classroom has a permanent Sacred Space which changes throughout the Liturgical year. The space displays the children's work, a crucifix, holy water, children's bible, rosary beads and a coloured cloth.

3. The Catholic Church and Primary Education

The Principal (Irene Quinn)

- Coordinates the implementation of the Religious Education Policy in the school in conjunction with the Religious Education Coordinator (Orla Ryan).
- Facilitates the attendance of staff at Religious Education CPD courses.
- Disseminates information in relation to Religious Education.
- Ensures that Religious Education is timetabled in each classroom for the designated time.
- Encourages and supports teachers who are preparing children for the Sacraments.

Religious Education Coordinator (Orla Ryan)

- Supports the principal who has overall responsibility.
- Ensures that every class has the Grow in Love programme kit, creates a sacred space and has relevant resources for their sacred space.
- Ensures that each teacher has login codes to access additional materials online for the Grow in Love programme.
- Coordinates Catholic Schools Week.

All teaching staff

- Inform themselves of the Religious Education programme in place by consulting the Grow in Love manual.
- Deliver and teach the Grow in Love programme appropriate to their class level.
- Cooperate with the chaplain and the Diocesan Advisors.
- Actively support the spirit and ethos of the school.

Religious Education is timetabled in each classroom for the designated time at each class level:



Junior and Senior Infants	One hour forty minutes per week
First and Second class	Two hours per week

4. **Aim of Religious Education Policy**

1. To ensure that we strive to understand and promote religious education in a Catholic primary school as never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process
2. To ensure that formal teaching in matters of belief, values and practice that equip children for a free and intelligent expression of personal faith within the family, Church and wider society is provided. (based on Share the Good News 39)
3. To lead to a greater degree of clarity in respect of aims, procedures and roles for RE in the school
4. To assist all members of staff in the teaching of Religion
5. To consider strategies that respond to the needs of children of different faiths and other stances for living in terms of religious education

5. **General Information**

a) **Diocesan Information**

- Name of Archdiocese: Dublin
- Name of Patron/Archbishop: Archbishop Dermot Farrell
- Diocesan advisors: Sr. Anne Neylon, Sr. Maureen Matthews

b) **Parish Information**

- Name of Parish: Lady of Mount Carmel, Firhouse
- Name of Parish Priest: Fr Peter Reilly

c) **School Information**

- Name of Chaplain: Fr Peter Reilly
- Names of Board of Management members:

Martina O' Keefe	Chairperson
Irene Quinn	Principal
Ciara Forrester	Community Nominee
Andy O' Byrne	Patron's Nominee
Lisa Costello	Teachers' Nominee
Ross Phibbs	Parents' Nominee
Louise Power	Parents' Nominee
- Name of Religious Education Coordinator: Orla Ryan

6. **School Environment**

Visitors, parents and children know that we are a Catholic School:

- The Schedule for the Catholic School is on display and visible to all visitors to the school (A copy is attached to this policy)



- The Mission Statement for our school has been developed, is included with all welcome information for parents and staff, is on our school website and is regularly reviewed
- Throughout the school, symbols of our faith communicate the school's Catholic ethos
- On entering the school in the foyer, a sacred space is visible to coincide with different Catholic celebrations such as Advent (wreath), Christmas (crib), May (altar). Each classroom has a permanent Sacred Space which changes throughout the Liturgical year. The space displays the children's work, a crucifix, holy water, children's bible, rosary beads and a coloured cloth.

Materials

- The *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* is the foundation document for all Religious Education in Catholic primary schools. This document is available for all teachers to access on our school G-Drive (Religion folder).
- The Grow in Love programme is used in our school. Each teacher has his/her own Grow in Love manual and poster set. Each teacher has registered with the login code for the Grow in Love programme and using the school email address. Online access enables teachers to access visual supports, videos, songs and printable materials.
- Each child has access to the Grow in Love book appropriate to the child's own level and all class levels bring home materials from the Grow in Love programme on a weekly basis.
- Each class has a Sacred Space box which contains all materials (holy water, crucifix, coloured cloths, rosary beads and children's bible) that are relevant to their class level
- Monthly memos sent out by the Education Secretariat are received and circulated via email to all staff

7. Prayer Space

- Each class has a designated prayer space which changes in accordance with the liturgical cycle as explained in the Grow in Love programme
- Each class has a 'Prayer Space' box which contains cloths, rosary beads, holy water, crucifix and children's bible
- Artwork on display celebrate Catholic and local feasts:
 - November: In November, we remember
 - December: Advent and Christmas (wreaths, tree, crib)
 - January: Catholic school week, Grandparents Day
 - February: St Brigid's Day (traditional crosses)
 - March: Lent, Shrove Tuesday
 - Easter: New life
 - May: Mary's Month

8. Prayer

- There is designated time for prayer in every classroom. Prayers that are recited throughout the day in class include:
 - The sign of the cross
 - Morning prayer
 - Evening prayer
 - Grace before meals



- Grace after meals
- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory be to the Father
- The pupils pray as a whole school community at celebrations throughout the school year. Each class level will meet for a Prayer Service on a monthly basis. The following prayer services may take place:
 - November: In November, we remember.
 - November: The Annunciation
 - December: Advent
 - January: The Epiphany, Celebrating Our Grandparents
 - February: St Brigid's Day
 - March: Lent
 - March: St Patrick's day
 - April: Easter
 - May: Celebrating Mary
- Children are taught their formal prayers and Mass responses as indicated by the curriculum. The progression of formal prayers taught at each class level is recorded in each teacher's Grow in Love manual.
- Children have the opportunity to experience different forms of prayer i.e. spontaneous prayer and meditation

9. Sacramental Preparation and Celebration

- a. In school the children are prepared for the sacraments of First Penance and Communion in partnership with home and parish
- b. The school and parish engage with parents to plan for sacramental preparation
- c. The school supports the Diocesan guidelines on how best to prepare for and celebrate the sacraments of First Penance and Communion
- d. The celebration of First Penance takes place in the local church during the school day. Parents are invited to participate in the sacrament with their children
- e. In preparation for the sacraments, the children learn and memorise the relevant prayers, songs and mass responses

The parish priest, teachers and parents have a meeting at the beginning of the school year. A teacher will inform parents about the content of the Grow in Love programme.

For the First Communion Mass, each family is issued with a blank sheet. Parents are encouraged to work with their child on creating a family poster. This artwork is displayed in the Church.

In the event of an inexperienced teacher taking a sacramental class, arrangements will be put in place to team this teacher with a more experienced colleague. There is support from the resource teachers regarding the sacramental preparation. This can take the form of input at the practices, practical advice for teachers and sharing of knowledge.

10. Implementation of Religious Education Throughout the School Year

- Religious Education is integrated with all aspects of the curriculum especially the Arts, English, Gaeilge and SPHE



- Prayers are recited daily in all classes specific prayers taught at each class level in accordance with the Grow in Love curriculum. There is a progression of formal prayers at each class level
- A variety of feast days are celebrated in school such as Advent, Christmas, St Brigid's Day, St Patrick's Day and The Month of May
- Prayer services take place throughout the school year at each class level
- Nativity plays and carol services take place during the month of December and parents are invited
- To celebrate children's achievements in our school, a graduation ceremony takes place for students in second class. Their parents are invited.
- Missionary awareness and charity support is actively encouraged in Scoil Carmel JNS
- The whole school supports GOAL Jersey Day
- Food or monetary collections are made for the local St Vincent de Paul
- Trocaire Lenten boxes are distributed to all children annually
- When a tragedy or natural disaster occurs, the school organises a fundraising event
- Fr Peter visits the school and spends additional time with the sacrament classes
- All staff are informed of the annual school Mass organised by the Archdiocese by a poster which is clearly displayed in the staffroom. Details are also emailed to staff.
- Catholic School Week is a pivotal event in our school. Parents are informed of the week's celebration through the school newsletter and on the school website. Teachers are provided with resources on the theme each year and these resources are shared on the school G-Drive. Grandparents Day is celebrated and links are made with home on this day. A prayer service takes place at each class level.
- The Religious Education coordinator will inform the staff of any relevant CPD courses

11. Partners in Religious Education

Home Link

The school encourages parental involvement in the following ways:

- a. Parents are encouraged to engage with their child and the Grow in Love weekly lesson
- b. Attendance at Sacramental Preparation meetings is encouraged
- c. Parents are informed about which prayers the children are currently learning at school
- d. The school recommends parents to pray at home with their children
- e. Parents are invited to attend Nativity plays, carol services or school masses
- f. All are encouraged to support Catholic Schools Week
- g. Grandparents are invited to the school to celebrate Grandparents Day
- h. Religious education is included in end of year school reports

Parish Link

- a. The school and parish priest plan together for Sacramental celebrations- First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Graduation Ceremony
- b. Children of all class levels will have the opportunity to visit our local Church
- c. Father Peter visits the school during the school year.

12. Pupils of Other Traditions

Our school is a welcoming, inclusive school. Children of all faiths and no faiths are



welcome.

- a. The Admission Policy clearly states that the school is a Catholic School
- b. The Admission Policy makes clear that we welcome diversity and inclusion
- c. Parents are made aware that the Catholic ethos of our school is not confined to the religion class only, but permeates the whole school day
- d. If parents do not wish for their child to participate in religion lessons or celebrations, they must inform the principal by contacting the school via Aladdin
- e. Children of other faiths and their families will be invited to attend all Catholic religious celebrations in the school or Church. However, if a parent requests, a child will not be brought to the church and will be supervised in the school by a teacher.
- f. Children are not removed from the classroom during the religion lesson but can work on other curricular tasks

13. Children with Special Educational Needs

Provision for Religious Education is made for children with Special Educational Needs as indicated by the Special Education Curriculum Guidelines (page 146-154 of the Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Guidelines for Ireland).

It is envisaged that teachers will engage in a planning process and adapt and interpret the curriculum guidelines to take account of the diversity, interests and learning styles among these students. These pupils have very individual learning needs. The Special Religious Education Curriculum is aimed at meeting the needs of these pupils.

Provision for Religious Education is made for children with general learning disabilities and developmental delays as indicated by The Special Education Curriculum Guidelines of the Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Guidelines for Ireland.

While these students may have complex learning needs it is important that we ensure in Scoil Carmel that the learning these pupils receive in Religious Education matches that afforded to their peers.

14. Role of the Religious Education Coordinator

The Religious Education Coordinator (Orla Ryan) supports the principal who has overall responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic ethos of the school.

15. Review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Board of Management on an annual basis or when the need arises. Staff will be required on a regular basis to review the school policy in this area and every effort will be made to ensure that the attention of all new staff is drawn to the school Religion Policy. The Board of Management will ensure that adequate training and support is provided for all staff.

The Board of Management in consultation with the Principal, Irene Quinn and the Religious Education coordinator, Orla Ryan are responsible for the smooth implementation of the policy.

16. Ratification and Communication

This Religious Education Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Carmel,



Firhouse at its meeting on 9th June 2026 and subsequently communicated to the staff via the school's website.

Signed: Maura O'Keefe (Chairperson B.O.M.)

Signed: Irene Quinn (Principal)

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