

Religion Policy

Assumption Senior Girls National School



School Address: Walkinstown, Dublin 12

Roll number: 18170B

School Patron: Archdiocese of Dublin

Introduction:

Assumption SGNS is a catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school models and promotes a philosophy inspired by belief in God and traditional Catholic values. We promote religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and ethos of the Catholic Church.

Rationale:

This policy has been implemented in response to the necessity to accommodate the likely influx of 'new Irish' of other faiths into the school community over the coming years.

Relationship to school ethos:

This school enrolls pupils of the faiths or no faith in the school subject to full enrolment criteria and respects their beliefs and practices in accordance with the school ethos of inclusivity. Our vision statement is Mól an Oige agus Tiocfaidh Siad and we actively encourage all in our school community to encourage and support each other positively.

Aim of Religious Education Policy:

At Assumption SGNS we follow the aims of the schedule for Catholic schools that state 'A Roman Catholic school (which is established in connection with the Minister) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person 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 Christ. The Catholic school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.'

General Information:

- a) Diocesan Information Diocese: Dublin
- b) Archbishop: Archbishop Diarmuid Martin
- c) Diocesan Advisers: - Sr. Maureen Matthews

Parish Information Parish: Walkinstown

Parish Priest: Fr. Paul St. John

Teacher input: In this school the following areas are covered;

- . In-service on delivering Grow in Love Programme
- . Study of Grow in Love Programme
- . Prayer Services
- . Nativity plays

- . Carol Services Materials

The Board of Management and teachers have adopted the Grow in Love Programme approved and recommended by the Irish hierarchy for use in Catholic schools.

A full outline of the religious programme can be found at;

<http://education.dublindiocese.ie/primary/>

All teachers have a Grow in Love kit for their class. Each child has access to a Grow in Love textbook. Confirmation pupils use worksheets from the Confirmation workbook from Veritas.

School Procedures:

Every child is welcome into the school having satisfied enrolment procedures, but the school cannot undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith. The Board of Management and teachers have adopted the Grow in Love Programme approved and recommended by the Irish hierarchy for use in Catholic schools. This programme is delivered each day for the recommended 30 minutes. The programme is taught to each class.

All Catholic feasts are celebrated.

- Christmas – tree and cribs, Christmas Stories, Carol services, Nativity play, visit to local nursing homes to entertain patients
- Feast of St. Brigid – making traditional crosses
- Feast of St. Patrick – depiction of story and shamrock, St. Patrick's Day Cards
- Lent – Symbols of repentance, visit of local clergy to school to school to distribute ashes
- Easter – Easter cards, story of the death of Jesus and resurrection, artwork and workbooks
- May alters to celebrate Mary
- Observance of Holy Days of Obligation
- Celebration of the opening and closing of school year with school mass
- Family masses throughout the year

Sacred Space and Symbols:

Each classroom has a Sacred Space set up which is used during Prayer services, daily prayers and moments of reflection. This space also displays the children's work on current themes of the Grow in Love Programme and changes throughout the Liturgical Year. Each classroom has a crucifix while around the school symbols of our faith communicate our school's catholic ethos. A statue of our Lady adorns the Welcome Area as well as the upstairs foyer. At Christmas an Advent wreath and crib are displayed in the Welcome Area.

Doctrine Prayers recited throughout the day include;

- The Sign of the Cross
- Morning Prayer
- Evening Prayer
- Grace Before Meal
- Grace after Meals
- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory be to the Father (Senior classes will recite prayers in Irish.)

Special emphasis is put on hymns for Christmas and liturgical & sacramental ceremonies.

Liturgical Celebrations:

Highlights of the liturgical year are embraced and celebrated including advent, Christmas, Lent, & Easter. Children are also brought to mass in the local church to celebrate Holy days of Obligation. Children receive ashes in school each Ash Wednesday from the school chaplain. A mass/service is held in June in the school to celebrate 6th class graduation. This mass takes place in the evening for pupils, parents and staff, may also take place in the school.

Sacramental Preparation:

Preparation for the sacraments begins in Third Class and continues throughout the school. The whole school celebrates the specific sacrament of Confirmation each year. Pupils in 6th class attend mass with the community in the local church in preparation for their specific sacrament.

Sacrament of Confirmation

6th class pupils celebrate the Ceremony of Light and Confirmation in Walkinstown Parish Church. Children are prepared thoroughly in all aspects of these sacraments by the individual class teachers in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school. Parents of children preparing for Confirmation are invited to participate in the Confirming Our Children programme including three community masses during the year run by the parish coordinator. Meetings are held during the liturgical year which parents are invited to attend. All 6th class pupils attend a Confirmation retreat in the second term organised by the parish priest and school chaplain. The school chaplain also arranges confession for 6th class pupils in the school before Confirmation.

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. Morning and evening prayers are recited in all classes with specific prayers chosen by the class teacher. A variety of feast days are celebrated in school such as Christmas, Easter, Lent, Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, St. Brigid's Day and our patron saint, St. Patrick.

Every effort is made that newly qualified teachers do not teach a sacramental class. All staff support the class teacher of each sacrament whether it is assisting in art work, supervising trips to the church, preparing booklets, practising prayers & hymns, preparing the school choir and supporting the teacher with questions and queries. Each sacrament is a whole school celebration and some staff attend the actual sacrament celebration in the church.

Missionary awareness and charity support is actively encouraged in Assumption SGNS. Every Christmas we have a present giving event for ShoeBox Appeal. The children from 6th make

a donation to a chosen charity each year from their Confirmation money. Often when a tragedy or natural disaster occurs the school organise a fundraising event. These have included a Day for Haiti and Tsunami collection. These are usually organised by the senior pupils for all others to participate. We also include speakers to come and speak to senior children every year.

Fr. Paul visits the school regularly. No specific arrangements are in place he is welcome at all times to come in and chat. Fr. Paul visits very regularly. He visits all classes and the staff room but spends additional time with the sacrament classes.

Partners in Religious Education:

Home/School Parents are encouraged to support their child's religious education through the following;

- prayer at home
- homework
- curriculum meeting at beginning of the school year
- parent/teacher meetings
- sacrament preparation meetings
- sacrament celebrations
- school mass at beginning and end of school year
- joining community at mass on holy days of obligation
- 6th class graduation mass/service in classroom
- supporting the Catholic ethos of the school

School/Parish The following programmes are implemented in our parish;

- Baptismal programme
- Do this in memory programme

- Confirming our Children programme

Pupils of Other Religious Traditions:

Pupils of other faiths are very welcome at Assumption SGNS. When they enrol it is clearly stated that they are enrolling in a school with a strong Catholic ethos and that this ethos of caring and consideration for others permeates all in the community. Children are not removed from class during the religion lesson but can work at other curricular tasks. Children of other faiths and their families are most welcome to join their class at any sacramental or liturgical celebration.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Staff

- Deliver the Grow in Love Programme
- Cooperate with Chaplain/Parish and diocesan advisers
- Avail of In-Service support
- Actively support the ethos of the school Parents
- Support the school during times of sacramental preparation and assist at home with Religious Education homework
- Avail of support at information meetings throughout the year
- Actively support the ethos of the school Principal
- Overall responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic ethos in the school
- Facilitate supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the programme
- Facilitate the formulation of the Religious Education Policy
- Facilitate the prayer life of the school throughout the liturgical year, e.g prayer at assemblies, special feast days etc...

- Encourage the use of sacred spaces in classrooms and in school common areas, and to ensure the prominence of religious symbols and icons.
- Provide input on religious education at staff meetings, in order to maintain a conscious profile of the subject
- Facilitate links with chaplains and parish personnel
- 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 and Grow in Love.
- Liaise with Diocesan Advisers
- Distribute resources, e.g. Lenten and Advent resources, Bible Society material, Trócaire boxes etc

Success Criteria:

- An acknowledged sense of God, Faith prayer and worship within the school community
- Respect for all within the school community
- Parental interest
- Recognisable links between home, school and parish
- An outward-looking care for those less fortunate in society

Review:

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as issues arise.