De La Salle College Macroom



Religious Education Policy

*‘Towards a Policy on Religious Education in De La Salle College’*

**Section 1:**

 **Scope of the Policy:**

*As a Voluntary Catholic Secondary boys School under the Patronage of the bishop of Cloyne, this religious education policy will impact on the whole school community. The scope will reach:*

**Board of Management:**

*To approve the policy and ensure its implementation.*

**Principal and Deputy Principal:**

*To support the procedures of the policy and ensure its effective implementation.*

**School Staff:**

*As teachers in a Catholic school, the hope is that the whole staff embraces and safeguards the ethos of the school of St. John Baptist de la Salle and support the cross-curricular nature of Religious Education.*

**Teachers of Religious Education:**

*Mr. L. Fleming & Mr. C. Cole*

*To implement and review the policy.*

*To ensure a high standard and effective delivery of Religious Education.*

**Chaplain:**

*Fr. O’ Mahony.*

*To assist in the faith development of students.*

**Pastoral Care Personnel (Class Tutors/Guidance Counsellor):**

*Ms. M. O’ Connor*

*To monitor the effects of the policy and to provide support and guidance to the students.*

**Parents / Guardians:**

*To support the RE Programme in the school and facilitate the faith formation of their children.*

**Students:**

*To participate in the RE programme and to cultivate an openness to other religious traditions.*

**Mission Statement of De La Salle College Macroom:**

*Our community aims to assist our pupils to develop their full potential in a Christian environment.*

*In our school, this vision will be achieved by mutual respect and co-operation amongst all partners in an open, safe and caring atmosphere.*

**Vision of a De La Salle School:**

* *Inspired by the vision of St. John Baptist De La Salle the school seeks to give a human and Christian education to the students in our care with special concern for the disadvantaged.*
* *De La Salle is a Christian Community which shares the mission of the Catholic Church by committing itself to live by Gospel values.*
* *The Lasallian School gives priority to education in a living faith whereby students grow to appreciate the life mission of Jesus Christ.*
* *Acquire skills in critical thinking, which enable them to shape their own future.*
* *Recognises the dignity of each individual;*
* *Has a special concern for the poor and under-privileged;*
* *Is challenged to develop a curriculum which promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person;*
* *Contributes to the building up of the local community;*
* *Works for peace and justice in society.*

**Aims of Religious Education:**

* *To contribute to the religious education and spiritual and moral development of our students.*
* *To develop care for the weak, co-operation between pupils, justice and fair play towards all, respect for truth, a passion for the environment and a love for learning.*
* *To provide opportunities to deepen sacramental awareness.*
* *To identify how understandings of God, religious traditions, and in particular Christian tradition, have contributed to the culture in which we live, and continue to have an impact on personal lifestyle, inter-personal relationships between individuals and their communities and contexts.*
* *To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretation of life.*
* *To encourage our students to ask and seek answers to important questions.*

**RATIONALE:**

*As a De La Salle school we are committed to the importance of formal religious and moral education.  This policy allows us the opportunity to reflect on, explore and articulate what it means to be a Lasallian school.  It is our hope and privilege to harness the religious development of our students and to provide opportunities for them to know their God.  We strive to be faithful to the founding intention of St. John Baptist De La Salle and the implications of what it means to be a Catholic school in this Lasallian tradition in the third millennium Ireland.*

**Objectives of the Policy:**

*- To ensure the status of RE in the school.*

*- To promote the religious, spiritual, moral and overall development of the students.*

*- To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and provide a framework where possible, to encounter these traditions.*

*- To lead to a greater degree of clarity in respect of aims, procedures and roles for RE in the school.*

**Section 2**

**Staffing**

**Curriculum and Resources**

**Staff Support and Development**

**Faith Formation and the Liturgical Year**

**Outreach Programmes**

**Parental and Parish Involvement**

**Inclusion**

**Staffing:**

*A qualified R.E. co-ordinator will oversee the department of Religion in the school.*

*The main role of the co-ordinator will be to provide support/aid to all teachers of Religion in the school.*

*The Religion department will liaise with the Principal/Deputy Principal on a regular basis on related activities pertaining to the teaching of the subject in the school.*

*The R.E. department will meet once a term to co-ordinate the subject in the school as well as organising teaching aids and support for all the teachers.*

**Curriculum and Resources:**

* *The school follows the junior certificate religious education syllabus as laid down by the national council for curriculum and assessment (1999).*
* *The school also follows the Irish catholic bishop’s guidelines for faith formation and development of catholic students. (1999).*
* *The school follows the National council for curriculum and assessment syllabus for Leaving Certificate (2002).*
* *Our Junior Cycle students study Inspire by Purcell & Travers as part of their faith formation.*
* *Our Senior Cycle students study Seek and Find (Broderick, O’Regan, Costelloe & Travers) as part of their faith formation.*
* *All RE classes have access to IT. Technology is available in the school to supplement their understanding of matters pertaining to their religious formation.*
* *The R.E. department liaises regularly with the teachers of wellbeing as well as the Guidance Counsellor on matters of common concern.*
* *There are two 40-minute periods of Religion each week at Junior Cycle.*
* *There is one 40-minute period of Religion each week for TYs & 6th years.*
* *There are two 40-minute periods of Religion each week for 5th years.*
* *Resources in the R.E. department include Junior Cycle RE books and Senior Cycle RE books, desktop, overhead projector, DVDs.*

**Budget:**

* *Like all subjects a budget is available for the teaching of Religion in the school.*
* *The budget is also available to subsidise student activities i.e. school retreats.*
* *Extra funding is available for once off purchases for the RE department.*

**Staff Support and Development:**

*The RE department receives practical and constant support from services outside the school e.g. Diocesan Advisors, De La Salle Order.*

*The school has a policy of facilitating teachers to attend in-service courses which are of benefit to the teaching of R.E.*

**School Chaplain:**

* *The school chaplain plays a central role in the RE department and liaises with the co-ordinator on a regular basis.*
* *The chaplain plays an integral role in the Faith Formation of our students and staff.*

**Faith Formation and the Liturgical Year**

* *It is important that teachers who work in a school participate actively in the liturgical and sacramental life of the school.  Students who witness and experience the concrete involvement of adults in the liturgical and sacramental life of the school will share more readily in the life of the school.  There is a need to promote a Christian spirituality in our schools.*
* *Liturgical seasons are marked in the school where possible.  We have class services in November to remember the deceased.*
* *The beginning of the school year is marked by a mass at which the whole school community attends.*
* *A shoebox appeal and collection takes place in the lead up to Christmas, in which a shoebox with toys and necessities are sent to third world countries and children in need.*
* *A SVP food appeal takes places each December.*
* *We have advent services in class to prepare for Christmas.*
* *A crib is erected in the hall at Christmas time.*
* *Christmas carols.*
* *Class masses for year groups take place throughout the school year.*
* *A Penitential service takes place in the school prior to the celebration of Christmas.*
* *The liturgical season of Lent is marked with weekly masses in which the whole school community is invited to attend.*
* *During Lent we have the distribution of ashes to all students and staff on Ash Wednesday.*
* *The celebration of the feast day of St. John Baptist de la Salle (15 May) has, and always will be, an extremely important event in the life of the school community. A mass celebrating his life and educational ideas takes place in St. Colman’s Church Macroom in which management, teachers, parents and students attend.*
* *Sixth years have a Graduation mass at the end of the academic year.*
* *At the beginning of all staff meetings there is time for prayer/reflection.*
* *Class groups have liturgies, meditations and services .*
* *Provision is made for Reconciliation services in the school community at Advent and Lent.*
* *Emphasis is placed on respect for all religions and ethnic groups within our school community and plays an integral part in the faith formation of our students.*
* *Fundraising for third world development as well as local charities is seen as playing an important part in the religious education of our students.*

*Outreach Programmes*

***The physical expression of the distinctiveness of a school and the importance given to religious education is nowhere more evident and obvious than in its visibility within the school walls.  Religious Education should always seek to be experiential through faith in action.***

*How and where is reflection on local and global problems encouraged?*

E.g. *Developing World Immersion Programme, Sending two students from TY to do voluntary work during the Diocese of Cloyne pilgrimage to Lourdes.*

*Local fundraisers for example Meals on wheels, SVP.*

*Other outreach programmes include Trocaire, The Hope Foundation, The Alzheimer’s Society.*

***Parental and Parish Involvement***

***Schools are most successful in achieving their religious goals when the school, home and parish mutually reinforce each other.***

* ***An information night is held annually for prospective students and their parents, during which the value of the Lasallian ethos is outlined.***
* ***During the scheduled Parent/Teacher meetings, parents have an opportunity to meet the R.E. Teachers and to discuss the content of the R.E. programme.***
* ***In some instances, parents and other adults in the parish and beyond, are involved in facilitating the programmes and activities mentioned in this policy document.***
* ***The Bishop of Cloyne appointed a priest from the local Parish of Macroom as a School Chaplain.  Other clerics may be invited, from time to time, to assist in sacramental activities or to join in for school celebrations.***

***Inclusion***

***How we respond to international students of various faiths and no faiths reflects our understanding of what it means to be a Catholic, De La Salle School. One of the core Lasallian principles is respect for all persons. We honour and respect the dignity of all individuals.***

* *Religious Education (RE) is a core subject in the school curriculum and all students are encouraged to participate in class. The current non-exam syllabi do not have the aim of proselytising; however the subject will be approached from a Catholic perspective. If parents have concerns regarding the teaching of the subject they are welcome to arrange an appointment with the RE teacher or with the principal, preferably before enrolment, to allay fears of indoctrination. Parents are reminded that it is their constitutional right for their child not to receive a religious education in conflict with their beliefs. While the school is willing to accommodate non-participation, withdrawal from RE needs to be negotiated. In the case of withdrawal, parents are reminded that responsibility for supervision of the student lies with them. The College encourages all students to develop their own faith and beliefs.*

**Section 3:**

**Success criteria:**

*Effective policy requires constant monitoring and evaluation to ensure successful implementation and to review what adjustments may be necessary from time to time.*

**Policy Monitoring and Timeframe**

* *The RE department will monitor policy and implementation.*
* *Implementation of the policy is dependent on good communication between the RE department and management.*
* *At the end of each year, the RE department will meet to evaluate the success of the policy implementation.*

**Timeframe**

Sanctioned: 14th Dec 2021

Next Review: 2024

**Signed**

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Chairperson of the board of management



Principal