

Principal: Mr. John O'Donovan
Deputy Principal: Ms. Anne Cummins



Ballybunion, Co. Kerry.
Telephone: 068 27205 Fax: 068 27511
Mobile: 086 269 0621
Email: sjsb@ireland.com

MEÁN SCOIL NAOMH IOSAIF

ST. JOSEPH'S
SECONDARY SCHOOL

Policy on Religious Education

Date staff consulted:	August 2021
Date parents consulted:	
Date students consulted:	
Date ratified at B.O.M. meeting:	
Date for Review:	September 2023

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

A school, as part of its mission of the Church, should always allow its policies, its priorities and purposes, to be illuminated, inspired, guided and challenged by the teaching of the gospel (Sullivan, 2000)

The objectives of the policy

- *To ensure the status of RE in the school.*
- *To promote the religious and overall development of the students. - To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to provide a framework 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 One

As a CEIST school, 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 CEIST school, the hope is that the whole staff embraces and safeguards the ethos of the school and supports the cross-curricular nature of Religious Education.

Teachers of Religious Education *To implement and review the policy.*

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

Pastoral Care Personnel (Class Tutors / Guidance Counsellor)

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.

Parishes and Communities

To include as far as possible the surrounding parishes and communities in the faith life of the school.

The Mission Statement of Our School

The mission statement as displayed publicly in the school states that:

- St. Joseph's is a Secondary School, under the trusteeship of CEIST, that welcomes all students.
- Catholic Christian principles underline the philosophy of education in the School.
- Our school is a community seeking to develop the full potential of each student-intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social, cultural and religious.

To achieve this, the School seeks:

- To recognise and affirm individual skills and abilities through curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- To encourage positive interaction and good communication among students, staff, parents and the wider community.

- To provide a framework of support and care, which meets the needs of individual students and staff.

We dedicate ourselves to the ongoing development of our School.

Religious Education in the Whole School Community/Life/Day

St. Joseph's is a Catholic Secondary School, under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education - an Irish Schools Trust), formerly the Sisters of Mercy, that welcomes all students.

Catholic Christian principles underline the philosophy of education in the school. Personal attention is given to each student in the school. At the heart of our policies is a concern for the welfare, happiness and success of each student who is entrusted in our care - by challenging those that are gifted to reach their full potential and encouraging those who need extra support.

The School aims to provide all students with an intimate knowledge and understanding of their religion through:

- Class work
- Discussion
- Prayer services
- Music
- School retreats
- Class Masses
- Promoting a culture of prayer and sacramental life in the school
- Prayer before class
- Masses for beginning of school year, graduation etc.
- Observance of holy days through prayer service/masses
- Retreats for students
- A day of reflection for Leaving Certificate.

Aims of Religious Education

- To foster an awareness that the human search for meaning is common to all people of all ages and at all times.
- Exploring how this search for meaning has found and continued to find expression in religion.
- Identifying how understanding of God, religious traditions, and in particular the Christian religious tradition, has contributed to the culture in which we live.
- Appreciating the richness of religious traditions and acknowledging the non-religious interpretation of life.
- Contributing to the spiritual and moral development of the student.
- Exploring students own personal faith.

Religious Education Objectives

- Through the study of comparative religions, that the students would gain an appreciation of the human search for meaning common to all.
- That the students would recognise and identify the common elements of the search for meaning and values in ancient societies and in contemporary context.
- That the students would come to an understanding and appreciation of why people believe, as well as tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of all.
- By providing a variety of practical experiences, the students would come to a better understanding of their own spiritual and moral development.

Section Two

Staffing, Curriculum and Resources

We consider Religious Education to be such an integral part of our school ethos and school community that it is imperative that we give it a status on a par with other subjects. That means looking at the appointment and selection of qualified teachers, the provision of a set curriculum, its place on the school timetable, the allocation of class periods and the allocation of appropriate resources.

The religious identity of the school (school environment, eg: religious symbols and the palpable Catholic ethos of the school) is not something that happens by accident. It is an identity that has evolved over time and is sustained by careful planning and the allocation of appropriate resources.

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. We continually endeavour to promote a Christian spirituality in our school.

Parental and Parish Involvement

At St Joseph's we are conscious of the strong links forged in the past when our founding sisters lived as neighbours to the people of Doon Road. We regularly use the old Convent Chapel for services when we invite in parents and friends of the school. We also take part in liturgies in the parish church, recently restored beautifully. At various times during the year we visit the Active Retirement group and also invite in speakers from groups such as St Vincent de Paul, Dónal Walsh Foundation and other organisations with community links.

Inclusion

How we respond to students of various faiths reflects our understanding of what it means to be a Catholic, CEIST School.

We are aware that not all of the students/staff are practising Catholics and therefore we try to create situations where everyone is included (e.g. prayer services in place of mass on occasion).

- Class activities are organised to promote tolerance at a local and international level.

- Inclusion of Major World Religions and Humanism is part of subject content.

Pupils opting out of RE class

Pupils whose parents request that their children do not receive instruction in RE or who are non-Catholics or of no denomination, are exempted from participation in RE classes but are required to stay in the room under teacher supervision. Students are not permitted to do homework or other school work at that time as to do so would give them an unfair educational advantage.

Section Three

Monitoring and Review of Policy

At the end of each year, the RE department meet to evaluate the success of the policy implementation.

This policy came into effect at the start of school year 2017/2018.

It will be reviewed bi-annually.