



# Religious Education Policy

Coláiste Muire, Cobh

Coláiste Muire is a Catholic co-educational school, under the trusteeship of the PBST, which seeks to reflect the vision of Edmund Ignatius Rice and Catherine McCauley founders of the Presentation Brothers and the Mercy Sisters.

The policy envisages and expects the following members of the school community to:

## **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 Presentation Brothers Schools Trust School, the intention 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 Teachers/ 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 children.

## **Students**

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

## **Parish and Communities**

To include as far, as possible the surrounding parish and community in the faith life of the school.

## **Mission Statement:**

The trustees of Coláiste Muire are the Presentation Brothers Schools Trust (PBST). The mission of the trust is "We are committed to working together to make Christ's Gospel of love known and relevant to each succeeding generation". All are welcome, all are included, all are enriched.

Our school is a Christian community of students, staff, parents, chaplaincy and management who work together towards the common goal of preparing young people for living life to the full, as committed Christians, as concerned and loving people and as responsible members of society.

Coláiste Muire is a faith community and so aspires to live out the Gospel values. We believe in the intrinsic values of broad education, therefore we provide a wide range of subjects and create opportunities for pupils to develop activities which will prepare them for leisure time. Our school recognises that each person is unique and has different gifts and talents. We ensure that there is an atmosphere of care and acceptance.

**Vision of Colaiste Muire Cobh as a PBST school:**

Colaiste Muire Cobh is under the the trusteeship of the PBST. The Board of Management upholds the characterisitic spirit as articulated by our patrons.

**Aims of Religious Education:**

1. To foster awareness that the human search for meaning is common to all peoples, of all ages and at all times.
2. To explore how this search for meaning has found and continues to find, expression in religion.
3. To identify how understandings of God, religious traditions, and in particular the Christian tradition, have contributed to the culture in which we live and continue to have an impact on personal lifestyles, interpersonal relationships and relationships between individuals and their communities and contexts.
4. To foster an understanding of the differences and similarities of World Religions represented within the school community.
5. To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretation of life.
6. To contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the students.
7. To prepare the pupils for the Junior Cycle Religious Education State Exam.

**The goals or objectives of the policy:**

- To secure the status of Religious Education in the school.
- To promote the religious and overall wellbeing-development of 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.

**Staffing-**Religious Education is considered to be such an integral part of our school ethos and school community that it is imperative that we give it the status it deserves. That means looking at the

appointment and selection of qualified teachers and its place on the school timetable and allocation of class periods.

- At present there are four fully qualified RE Teachers on the CM Staff
- A School Chaplain- a member of the clerical community, courtesy of Cobh Parish

#### **Curriculum, Timetable, Resources and Budget:**

Religious Education in our school is taught in accordance with the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Programmes.

**Junior Cycle Programme-** Junior Certificate Religious Education is offered as an exam subject. There are nine periods of RE per class per week over the 3 year duration of the Junior Cycle.

**Transition Year Programme:** Two timetabled class periods per week, when averaged out throughout the year.

**Senior Cycle Programme:** Two or three timetabled class periods per week with the inclusion of our school RSE programme in each year. (Refer to RSE Policy).

#### **The Assessment Techniques used include:**

**Junior Cycle Programme-** First and Second Year students are graded by examination and by their subject teacher. Third year students are graded at Christmas with their State Exam in June.

**Senior Cycle Programme:** Each student has a folder to collate the work they have completed throughout each school year.

**Funding and Resources:** These are made available where possible.

#### **Textbook and Reference books:**

- 'Inspire'-Junior Cycle Religion Textbook-Dr Ailis Travers
- 'The Challenge of God'
- The Bible, The Quran
- 'Tweeting with God'-Rev. Michael Remery
- Trust RSE Pack

**Facilities and Resources available for the Teaching of RE in Colaiste Muire Cobh-** Prayer Room, Trocaire/Lenten Packs, LEAF Magazine, Diocesan Search Publication, Bible Garden, St Colman's Cathedral, Parish Centre for Retreats.

**Non Participation** – Parental requests for non-participation will be dealt by the Principal following the AMCSS publication "Guidelines on the Inclusion of Students of Other Faiths in Catholic Secondary Schools." Students are not allowed to sit out RE Classes. The Education Act (1998) states that the Board of Management is obliged to discharge its duty to "provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, it shall use its available resources to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school".

**Timetable-** Possibilities for flexibility as catered for, as so far as it is possible-Team Teaching or module teaching-flexibility is key for this.

**Staff Support and Development:**

Religious Education permeates and pervades the atmosphere of Coláiste Muire Cobh. It does not just happen spontaneously or accidentally. There is some interaction from other subject departments at different times of the year where by staff contribute in various ways through their subjects to enhance the religious festivals celebrated throughout the school year.

**Practical Support by Management:**

Through finance, in-service, Chaplain, Diocesan Advisor, school participation in liturgies, justice programmes and provision of a physical space for Religious Education.

**In-Service:**

Religious Education staff are freed-up to attend PBST RE Teachers meetings, Diocesan In Service, this complements the JCT Religious Education in service provided by the Dept of Education, PDST Senior SPHE Training.

**Finance:**

There is a fixed annual budget for the Religious Education Department, to be agreed in advance during last term of the school year.

**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. Liturgical seasons and religious festivals- including-Opening of the school year, Remembering the Dead during November, Advent, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Easter, Exam Time, End of Year Graduations.

Whole School Liturgy occurs through our Annual School Mass (Sept/Oct). The School Staff are always represented in Liturgical celebrations.

**Retreats:**

Transition Year students take part in annual retreats. The Retreats are funded by the school as part of the TY fee.

**Bereavement Response:**

In the event of the sudden death of a student or staff member, there is a 'Critical Response Team' in place. In such circumstances, the Chaplain will conduct an appropriate prayer service with assistance from the Religious Education Department.

**Outreach Programmes:**

- Social Justice Extra Curricular Programme
- Working with Cork Simon Community and Cork Penny Dinners
- Christmas Food Appeal
- Local St Vincent de Paul

**Parental and Parish Involvement:**

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

Parents/Guardians are informed of the aims, objectives and content of our Religious Education Programmes at PT Meetings, Open Night, and it is contained in our information for incoming First Year Parents.

The Parish Priest/School Chaplain visits the school and our school also participates in the Pastoral Council events relevant to our students. These links are maintained through staff members and our school chaplain.

**Inclusion/Catering for the needs of students from other faiths:**

Our school recognises that each person is unique and has different gifts and needs. We believe in the intrinsic value of a broad education, so we foster in our pupils' attitudes, beliefs and skills which may help them to cope more effectively with change and challenge in society. We also cherish our own Irish traditions & heritage and look forward to broadening our consciousness of European culture.

Every student is encouraged to take part in all the activities of the school, including those of a charitable nature. The ethos of the school hopefully influences them in a positive way contributing to their moral and social development.

**Monitoring and Review of Policy:**

- The Religious Education Department will monitor the implementation of this policy.
- Good communication between the Religious Education Department and the school management.
- At the end of the year the Religious Department meet to evaluate the success of the policy implementation.

**Time Frame:**

Apart from the usual on-going informal monitoring that would occur with every area of policy, informal monitoring would be appropriate at least twice in the first year and at least once during each subsequent year.

Approved by the Board of Management 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021