

Yellow Furze National School
Beauparc, Navan, Co Meath

Religious Education Policy

Introduction:

Yellow Furze N.S. is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath, Most Rev. Bishop Tom Deenihan. Our school is in the parish of Beauparc/Kentstown with Rev. Fr. Jim Lynch as Parish Priest and Fr. Peter Farrelly, Retired P.P. 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.

Aim:

Our aim is to help children to mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives through their encounter with, exploration of and celebration of their catholic faith.

This school enrolls pupils of all faiths or no faith in accordance with our Enrolment Policy and respects their beliefs and practices in accordance with the school ethos of inclusivity. Visitors, parents and children know that we are a Catholic school. In our classrooms and corridors, we display religious symbols and art – visible signs of our Catholic faith.

School Procedures:

Every child is welcomed into our school, having satisfied our enrolment policy criteria, 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 in our school and may include some or all of the activities as outlined below:

- Feast of All Saints/ Holy Souls – sacramental classes reflect on these Feasts.
- Christmas – tree and cribs, Christmas stories, Carol services, visit to local nursing homes to entertain patients, carol singing.
- 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, attendance at Mass on Ash Wednesday where the pupils can receive ashes on foreheads, decade of rosary over intercom, Trócaire – concern for those suffering from disadvantage.
- Easter – (*reflect on the death and resurrection of Jesus*) Easter cards, story of the death of Jesus and resurrection, artwork and workbooks.
- Observance of Holy Days of Obligation (Mass on December 8th , January 6th ,Ash Wednesday)
- Celebration of closing of school year with school mass.

Liturgical Celebrations:

The whole school celebrates the sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion. Confirmation is celebrated in the Church of the Assumption, Beauparc annually. Both schools (Yellow Furze NS and Kentstown NS) come together for the ceremony – each school leads on alternate years.

Children in second class receive their First Holy Communion in the Church in Beauparc during the 10.30am Sunday mass usually in late April or early May of each year.

Children are prepared thoroughly in all aspects of these sacraments by the individual class teachers in keeping with the Catholic ethos of our school. The Parish, together with a team of parents/guardians,

implements the 'Do This in Memory' programme to prepare pupils for first Communion & First Penance and the 'You shall be my Witness' programme for Confirmation candidates.

Parents/Guardians of pupils of other faiths and none in Confirmation and First Communion classes are given several options with regard to participation in sacramental ceremonies, depending on their own personal preference. These include:

- participation with the class and receiving a blessing
- participation in the general Church congregation
- participation in the choir
- non attendance on the day.

All such families will be contacted in advance of the ceremony to outline the options. Every effort will be made to make these pupils feel part of the class group while also respecting their own religious identity.

Withdrawal from Religious Education

Yellow Furze N.S. respects and acknowledges the right of parents/guardians who wish that their child be excluded from Religious Education. The manner in which an opt-out is facilitated depends on available resources within the school and complies with the school's policy on curriculum, supervision and child safeguarding.

We can provide two options for pupils when a request to opt out of Religious education is presented. These include:

1. Staying within the classroom following an educationally appropriate activity such as reading a library book, using an educational app on a school iPad, completing a worksheet or artwork. Homework cannot be completed at this time.
2. Parents remove their children from the school premises for the duration of the Religious education.

Procedure to Facilitate non-Catholic children:

- **A meeting will be convened between the parents and the principal at the start of the year.**
- **From this, a written agreement will evolve, signed by both parents and the principal. This will detail the child's activities during religious instruction (if not partaking in class).**
- **This agreement will be reviewed each year, informally, by means of a phone call to parents, and formally at the beginning of sacramental preparation years (2nd class and 6th class).**
- **These formal meetings will also include the relevant class teacher and will list, in detail, the level of participation (if any) by the child / children (may include preparation of artwork for preparatory Masses, participation in choir/music, receiving a blessing during the ceremony, inclusion of child's name on class list on mass booklets/photos etc.)**
- **A record will be kept of the initial meeting, informal follow up calls and the formal sacramental meetings and arrangements made.**
- **Parents can request a meeting to review matters in the event of a change in circumstances.**

It is the duty of a parent to inform the school if circumstances/religious beliefs change, so that clear, unambiguous practices are in place, to the satisfaction of all parties, to be implemented by the class teachers.

Teacher Input

In this school, the following areas are covered:

- In-service on delivering Grow in Love programme.
- Study of Grow in Love Teachers' Guide.
- Prayer services.

- Nativity services
- Carol services.
- Assemblies with religious themes.

Success Criteria:

- An acknowledged sense of God, faith, prayer and worship within the school community.
- Respect for all within the school community.
- A sense of concern and care for those who are disadvantaged.
- Parental interest.
- Recognisable links between home, school and parish.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Staff:

- Deliver Grow in Love programme.
- Co-operate with Chaplain / Parish and diocesan advisors.
- Sacramental class teachers work with parish teams on the 'Do this in Memory and 'You shall be my Witness' programmes.
- 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

Principal:

- Facilitates supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the programme.

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Ratified by BOM on _____

Signed _____