



Religious Education Policy
St. Clement's Redemptorist College

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The Scope of the Policy

As a Catholic school the Religious Education Policy impacts the whole school community.

Support for the implementation of the Policy comes from various groups:

Board of Management:

Approves the policy and ensures its implementation and monitors its review.

Principal and Deputy Principal:

Supports the procedures of the policy and ensure its effective implementation.

School Staff:

Embraces and safeguards the Ethos of the school and supports the cross-culture nature of Religious Education.

Teachers of Religious Education:

Implement and review the policy.

Chaplain:

Assists with the implementation and review of the policy and supports the staff and members of the school community.

Pastoral Care Personnel:

(Pastoral Care Team/Class Tutors/year Heads/ Guidance Counsellors)

Monitors the effects of the policy and provide support and guidance to students.

Parent(s) / Guardian(s):

Support the Ethos of the school, the Religious Education programme and facilitate the faith formation of their children.

Students:

Participate in the Religious Education programme and related activities.

Mission Statements

The Redemptorists' Mission

Redemptorists recognise the dignity of each individual. Each person is respected as an individual, and together the faith, hope and love of each person is challenged and deepened through times of sharing and working with each other.

Redemptorists believe in the value of Catholic education. They give priority to education in a living faith whereby young people may be enabled to grow to appreciate the life and mission of Jesus Christ with a view to being committed to the world, as He was.

As education trustees, Redemptorists believe that the values on which their mission is based should be reflected in their schools. For this reason, they practise an active trusteeship, based on the creation of a positive and close relationship between congregation and school.

Redemptorists believe that such a relationship provides the school with a secure basis for the development of a positive school ethos.

School Mission Statement

'The aim of St. Clement's Redemptorist College is to facilitate the development of each student to his full academic, personal, spiritual and social potential in a Catholic, caring, respectful and safe environment.'

Nature of Religious Education

As a Catholic school, Religious Education is a core subject on the school curriculum and an integral part of the ethos of the school. Religious Education has nothing in common with indoctrination that amounts to teaching a student a religious way of behaving and believing or trying to 'convert' to Catholicism. In contrast, Religious Education is about proposing a way of life that allows student to make free consistent choices in a way he/she lives – religious and other commitments. As a school we are committed to the deepest respect for both faith and reason as they contribute significantly to the formation of rational and mature citizens of democratic society.

Three types of learning in Religious Education are evident in our school

1. 'Learning *into* religion'

Catholic Christian Students are provided experiences, such as prayer and sacramental participation that will help them to grow into their faith and in their understanding of the Catholic tradition.

2. 'Learning *about* religion'

All students are exposed to a broad range of religious traditions and to the non-religious interpretation of life. Such a broad exposure seeks to develop in students, powers of tolerance and mutual understanding and the skills needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other, or of no religious traditions.

3. 'Learning *from* religion'

Students evaluate both *what* has been learned and *how* it impacts on their lives. Students are invited to learn from what they are discovering. Religious Education that the school provides is open to, and inclusive of, all students, of all faiths and those of none.

Rationale and Aims

Rationale

In St Clement's College Religious Education (RE) fosters student-centred opportunities for inclusive, experiential, invitational, holistic learning. It promotes critical thinking, personal religious imagination and social engagement through an integrated approach to learners' spiritual, moral, religious, inter-religious and civic education. Students are encouraged to learn about and from the legacy and mission of the Redemptorist Order and to connect their head, heart and hands as young men who care about justice and the environment, are open and respectful toward the rights and lives of others as well as their diverse beliefs, and live their faith by contributing to a fairer, more inclusive world. RE is taught in a manner that is consistent with school ethos and that complements St Clement's Relationship and Sexuality Education based on a positive self-image, an appreciation of the God-given gift of sexuality, the dignity of all human life, the full meaning of consent and the importance of positive, respectful, morally-informed decision-making. In St Clement's RE contributes to this holistic development of pupils by inviting them to engage with the spiritual and religious practices and teachings of the Christian tradition while supporting students' personal search for meaning and dialogue with other religious and belief traditions.

Aims

Together we:

- ★ Recognise the dignity of each individual.
- ★ Share and work with each other
- ★ Embrace those with additional education needs.
- ★ Challenge and deepen the faith, hope and love of each other

Together we:

- ★ Believe in the value of Catholic education.
- ★ Give priority to education in a living faith so that young people may be enabled to grow to appreciate the life and mission of Jesus Christ with a view to being committed to the world as he was.

St. Clement's College seeks to be:

- ★ a Catholic school, embodying a living-faith community founded on Gospel values and expressed in life, prayer and liturgy
- ★ a centre of learning aimed at excellence in education and in the development of students to their fullest potential
- ★ a place of welcome in which there is a fundamental belief in the potential of all young people
- ★ a place where young people may have positive experiences of church, faith and the Gospel.
- ★ a happy, caring and supportive environment, where young people can discover meaning and purpose and are encouraged to explore change and growth
- ★ a place where emphasis is placed on those in greatest need
- ★ a place where true partnership is practised, based on equity
- ★ a place that is inclusive, welcoming and respectful of diversity

The central purpose of the school community is:

- ★ to develop our students to their fullest potential
- ★ to encourage them to work collaboratively,
- ★ to awaken in them a sense of the presence of God, in themselves, in others and in all of creation.

To this end, we educate our students so that they may:

- ★ have a sense of justice
- ★ be compassionate
- ★ achieve academically
- ★ be responsible citizens
- ★ have a realistic sense of self
- ★ be able to take initiative
- ★ be able to take responsibility
- ★ grow in freedom and maturity
- ★ be alive to wonder.

Curriculum

Three class periods are devoted to Religious Education at Junior Level and Transition Year and two at Senior level.

Junior Level

The Junior Cycle RE programme is a core subject at First, Second, and Third Year levels, but is not an exam subject. The desirability of RE as an exam subject is kept under review.

The Junior Cycle Religious Education contains three strands:

- ☆ Expressing Beliefs
- ☆ Exploring Questions
- ☆ Living our Values.

Textbook:

Inspire – Purcell and Travers

Transition Year

TY students will follow a programme in a modular capacity which has been formulated by the RE department in conjunction with the TY co-ordinator.

Senior Cycle

The aims of Senior Cycle Religious Education are to:

- ★ Explore some of the questions people ask when searching for meaning in life.
- ★ Reflect on issues dealing with, morality, Prayer and Worship, peace and justice.

The course consists of:

- ☆ The search for meaning.
- ☆ World religions, in particular Christianity.
- ☆ Morality.
- ☆ Justice and Peace.
- ☆ Society and Responsibility.
- ☆ Prayer and Worship.

Textbook

Time to Journey – Breen and Hedderman.

Withdrawal from Religious Education Classes

St Clement's College respects and acknowledges the rights of parents who require their son to be excluded from Religious Education. The manner in which such an 'opt out' is facilitated is related to available resources within the school and complies with the school's policies on curriculum, supervision and child safeguarding.

Four options that are provided for students when a request for 'opt out' from Religious Education is made include:

1. Staying within the classroom following an educationally appropriate activity, for example, students of other faiths are required to use the time to study something relating to their own religious tradition, such as a sacred text. Humanist and non-believing students are required to read relevant literature, for example, *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl.
2. Parents remove their son from the school premises for the duration of Religious Education.
3. Parents provide supervision within the school for their son during Religious Education.
4. Students with an entitlement to resource may be facilitated at this time if there are staff available.

An appropriate procedure to facilitate a request for withdrawal from Religious Education is as follows:

1. A written notification from the parent/guardian to the principal.
2. The principal meets with the parent/ guardian
3. The principal explains the Religious Education policy and the four options the school can provide for the withdrawal of their son from Religious Education classes.

Facilities & Resources

- ★ Fully equipped prayer room
 - ☆ In keeping with the underlying principle of the room only activities that facilitate the ambience will be acceptable e.g., meditation, prayer service, mass, religion etc.
 - ☆ The prayer room is filled with contemporary images and symbols from the Christian traditions.
 - ☆ Students and staff of any tradition are welcome to use the prayer room.
- ★ Local Redemptorist Community – Mount St Alphonsus
- ★ Scala, Esker, and Clonard – Redemptorist retreat teams

- ★ Serve - voluntary organisation set up by the Redemptorist for overseas immersion projects.
- ★ The Christmas Redemptorist Hamper Appeal.
- ★ Department of Education and Science, Religious Education Support Service.
- ★ Limerick Diocesan Youth Service
- ★ Parents
- ★ School Chaplain.
- ★ Chaplain's Office.
- ★ Sacramental Chaplain.
- ★ Local Community Groups.
- ★ Chaplaincy Notice Board.
- ★ Shared RE folder online.

Staffing

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 the status it deserves. That means looking at the appointment and selection of qualified teachers and its place on the school timetable and the allocation of class periods.

All students are taught by teachers with specialist qualifications.

Religious Education Co-ordinator

The role of the Religious Education coordinator is to:

- ★ Establish and overlook the subject plan for each year level.
- ★ Liaise with principal and chaplain re timetabling of religious education and the allocation of class periods, liturgical celebrations and retreats.
- ★ Remind teachers of the important liturgical celebrations, feast days and holy days.
- ★ Ensure a high standard and effective delivery of Religious Education.
- ★ Support Religious Education teachers in and out of the classroom.
- ★ Organise regular meetings of the Religion department.
- ★ Organise in-service days.
- ★ Communicate with the Diocesan Advisor re school visits etc.
- ★ Implement and review the policy.

Liturgy

All staff are encouraged to participate in the Liturgical Life of the School.

To ensure that significant liturgical events are celebrated and recognised throughout the school year the following activities take place:

- ★ Opening of the school year – Mass/ Masses or Prayer services.
- ★ November Prayer Services for the dead.
- ★ Advent Wreath Service for 1st Years.
- ★ Carol Service.
- ★ Catholic School's Week.
- ★ Intercultural week.
- ★ St Clement's Day.
- ★ Leaving Cert Graduation Mass or Ritual.
- ★ Class Masses – year groups have one Mass in the academic year.

Sacred Space and Religious Imagery

Religious images and symbols are an integral part of our school. These images and symbols are placed in prominent areas around the school.

The religious images and symbols include:

- ★ Crucifix in each room
- ★ Icons – our Lady of Perpetual Help in each classroom
- ★ Religious paintings throughout the school
- ★ Bible
- ★ Holy Water Font
- ★ Advent wreath
- ★ Lenten, Holy Week and Easter display
- ★ Crib

Staff Support & Development

Effective Religious Education does not just happen spontaneously or accidentally. The very nature of the Religious Education class requires teachers of Religious Education to keep 'upgrading' and enhancing their teaching skills and resources.

Therefore, it is important that:

- ★ Management is supportive of Religious Education both in and out of the classroom
- ★ Teachers with a qualification in Religious Education are timetabled to teach this subject

- ★ All Religious Education teachers are encouraged to attend in-service for Junior Cert and Leaving Cert Exams and the Diocesan in-service day
- ★ A budget is provided to support teaching and learning in this area

Outside support is received from:

- ★ Diocesan Advisor
- ★ The Redemptorist community as Trustees of the school
- ★ Religious Education Support Service
- ★ Diocesan Clergy

Outreach Programs

Peace and Justice is an integral part of a Religious Education programme. Students are encouraged to empathise and show compassion for local and global justice issues.

Students participate in the following:

- ★ Immersion project with Serve every three years
- ★ Redemptorist sleep-out
- ★ Carol singing to raise money for the Poor campaign
- ★ Food appeal for the Poor campaign
- ★ TY's helping in the warehouse to pack hampers
- ★ Student volunteers sent to Lourdes each year to work as aids on the Diocesan Trip
- ★ Transition Year Community involvement, in the church
- ★ A whole school fundraising drive to raise money to send with the volunteers going on the Immersion project.
- ★ Shoe Box Appeal.

Guest Presentation

Guest presentation must be in accordance with the safeguarding policy of the school. During such a presentation a teacher will always be present.

Sacramental Chaplain

The role of the sacramental chaplain, the Redemptorist Priest, is to:

- ★ Encourage school - Redemptorists links.
- ★ Be a support to the principal and staff.
- ★ Provide sacramental celebrations.

Chaplaincy Services

The school has a part- time Chaplain.

The role of chaplain is to:

- ★ Be available to staff, students and members of the school community.
- ★ Update and maintain sacred space and prayer room.
- ★ To work as part of the Pastoral Care Team.
- ★ To liaise with key staff: Religious Education Co-coordinator, School Guidance Counsellor, Outreach worker, Additional Educational Needs Co-coordinator, Year Heads, Class tutors etc.
- ★ To encourage School-Redemptorist links.
- ★ To facilitate the implementation of the Liturgical Calendar.
- ★ To support the Religious Education Department.

Retreats

Retreats are encouraged and promoted.

The purpose of a retreat is to:

Provide a reflective space for students to deepen their understanding of the content of the Religious Education programme by engaging in creative activities, group discussion, meditation and prayer.

Students, who do not participate in the retreat, are invited to attend timetabled classes on the day.

The Board of Management contributes towards the cost of the retreats.

Parent Involvement

There is an opportunity for parents to be informed about the content of the Religious Education programme through:

- ★ Enrolment meeting with parents
- ★ Parent-Teacher meetings
- ★ First year and Transition –Year information night

Parents are involved in the Religious Education programme by their presence at:

- ★ Opening School Mass.
- ★ Graduation Mass/Ritual.
- ★ Liturgical Celebrations.
- ★ Catholic School's Week activities.
- ★ Prayer rituals in different year

Diocesan Support

The Diocesan Advisor visits the school twice a year to meet with the Principal, Religious Education Co-coordinator, chaplain and religion teachers.

The Diocesan Advisor provides:

- ★ Update on Diocesan and National programs of events
- ★ Advise on policy and subject plan
- ★ Creative ideas for religion lessons, meditation and Liturgical events
- ★ Monthly online resources
- ★ Support by attending Masses, concerts and other celebrations
- ★ Support for a school when there is a critical event
- ★ Ongoing support through letter, telephone and email

Monitoring and Review of Policy

At the end of each academic year, the Religious Education department meet to evaluate the success of the policy implementation.

The policy is reviewed every two years.

Note: Submitted to Board of Management and Trustees on: 25th January 2022

Reviewed and ratified on: 25th January 2022

Signed: Patricia Kiernan

Signed: Pat Talty

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: January 2024 or as required