



VIRGIN MARY GIRLS' NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Roll No. 19303W

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Religious Education Policy

Introduction

Virgin Mary Girls' National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. 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.

Rationale

This policy has been implemented in response to the necessity to accommodate the enrolment of increased numbers of children of other faiths into the school community.

Relationship to school ethos

This school enrolls pupils of the Catholic faith, pupils of other faiths and pupils of no faith, subject to the enrolment criteria, and respects all beliefs and practices in accordance with the school ethos of inclusivity.

General Information

Diocesan Information

Name of Diocese	The Archdiocese of Dublin
Name of Archbishop	Archbishop Dermot Farrell
Diocesan Education Secretariat	Mgr. Dan O'Connor, Episcopal Vicar for Education

Parish Information

Name of Parish	Virgin Mary Parish, Ballymun
Name of Parish Priest	Fr. John Dunphy
Parish Chaplain	Fr. Rajesh Joseph
Parish Deacon	

School Information

Name of School	Virgin Mary Girls' National School
Name of Chaplain	Fr. John Dunphy
Name of Chairperson of B.O.M.	Mr. Pat Kenny

School Procedures

Every child is welcome into the school having satisfied enrolment procedures, 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 as approved and recommended by the Irish Hierarchy for use in Catholic schools. The programme is taught to each class. All Catholic feasts are celebrated.

Beginning of School Year Mass – All classes attend the beginning of school year Mass in the Parish Church. Children read the 1st and 2nd readings and the Prayers of the Faithful. Parents, guardians and parishioners are invited to attend.

Welcome Ceremony – A Junior Infant Welcome Ceremony takes place in September where Fr. Rajesh welcomes all the parents and children into the school community.

Harvest Mass – A Harvest Mass takes place in October in the Parish Church. Parents, guardians and parishioners are invited to attend.

Advent/Christmas – An Advent wreath, crib and Christmas tree are displayed in the entrance hall. Christmas stories are read in all classes. All classes participate in our Christmas Carol and Nativity service. This takes place in the Parish Church and parents, family members and parishioners are all welcome to attend. 5th and 6th classes visit Saint Pappins' Nursing Home to sing Christmas carols for residents and staff. 6th class pupils bring Christmas gifts as a random act of kindness in their preparation for Confirmation.

Catholic Schools Week is celebrated every January/February throughout the school daily and at a special Mass in the Parish Church.

Feast of St. Brigid – this feast is celebrated through the story of St. Brigid and through the making of traditional crosses.

Feast of St. Patrick – this feast is celebrated through the story of St. Patrick and the shamrock. St. Patrick's Day art including cards and paintings by the children are displayed.

Lent – Fr. Rajesh visit the school on Ash Wednesday to distribute ashes. Children in senior classes reflect on the position of Lent in the Liturgical Year Calendar. Children are also encouraged to make a Lenten promise.

Easter – In preparation for Easter the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus is taught in an age appropriate way in each class. They also complete the Easter exercises in their workbooks.

Graduation Ceremony – A 6th Class Graduation Ceremony takes place in June where Fr. Rajesh addresses the parents and children and reads from the Bible. The pupils read Prayers of the Faithful.

Sacramental Classes attend and take part in Mass once a month, in the Parish Church with their teachers. They are also expected to attend preparation Masses with their families one weekend each month. Second Class take part in "Do this is Memory" Masses and Sixth class take part in "You shall be my Witness" Masses. The school sends text messages before each of these Masses to remind parents about the importance of attendance. In September the school also sends out a hard copy schedule of all Masses for Sacramental classes. This schedule along with other relevant information for parents can also be accessed on our school website www.virginmarygns.ie.

Liturgical Celebrations

The school celebrates the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Children receive the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation in the Virgin Mary Church. Children are prepared thoroughly in all aspects of these sacraments by the individual class teachers who are supported by Deacon Steve, in keeping with the Catholic ethos of the school. Liturgical celebrations are held on other appropriate occasions, for example, bereavement, times of trauma or crisis and for other occasions which from time to time are considered appropriate to celebrate or to mark.

Resources

Teaching Resources include Grow in Love resources i.e. online resources, Teachers Books, Pupils books and Workbooks, CDs, DVDs and posters. Each child has a copy of the Grow in Love textbook or workbook. Additional resources include Bibles, books, Sacred Space statues, pictures, candles, Rosary beads etc. Teachers also receive a monthly bulletin by email from Aisling Clarke in the Dublin Dioceses. Teachers also access the Diocesan website.

Symbols

Various symbols are on display in each classroom and in the welcome area of the school that identify the school as a Catholic school i.e. crucifix, holy water and a statue of Our Lady.

Sacred space

Each class allocates a sacred and prayerful space. The sacred space includes a statue of Our Lady, a candle and other objects reflecting the current time of the Liturgical Year.

Doctrine

Doctrinal elements may be theme based as appropriate to the age and ability of the children and in line with the guidelines of the Grow in Love programmes. The Ten Commandments in use in Confirmation preparation follows the traditional format.

Sacramental preparation

1. Virgin Mary Girls' National School has always had a deep involvement with the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.
2. Virgin Mary Girls' National School has a deep commitment to and a long tradition in preparation of the Sacraments. The school sees the preparation for the sacraments as the strongest manifestation of our commitment to Religious life and Education in the school. We see the sacraments as significant steps in the journey of the child's growth in faith.
3. Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation are celebrated in the Virgin Mary Church, in Ballymun.
4. Non-sacramental classes are involved in the sacraments through their participation in the school choir at sacramental Masses.

Implementation of religious education throughout the school year

Time

Religious Education is taught throughout the school in line with the 'Time in School' Primary Circular 11/95.

Links to Curriculum

Where possible the basic principles of our Catholic faith are explored, exemplified and modelled through day-to-day interactions. Our Catholic faith is also explored through Visual art, Music, Drama and Story-telling.

Home/ School/Parish links

Formal prayers include Morning Prayer, Grace before and Grace after meals and Evening Prayer at home time.

Our Religious Education in the school is strongly supported by regular visits from Deacon Steve & Fr. Declan. These visits play an active part in leading the pupils to a deeper understanding of their faith.

Our Religious Education in school is supported by parents through the sending home of Grow in Love worksheets. Parents also prepare their children for the sacraments by attending "Do this in Memory" and "You shall be my Witness" masses with their children, and by attending other sacramental preparation services i.e. Service of Light.

Parents are invited and welcomed to all church and school based ceremonies and services. (Please refer to **School Procedures**)

Links to Liturgy

The Religious Education Programme is linked to the Liturgical year.

Success Criteria

- An acknowledged sense of God, Faith and prayer and worship within the school community.
- Respect for all within the school community.
- Parental interest and involvement.
- Recognisable links between home, school and parish.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff:

- Deliver Grow in Love programmes.
- Co-operate with Parish Priest (chaplain), deacon and diocesan advisers.
- Avail of In-Service support when available.
- Actively support the ethos of the school.

Parents:

- Support the school during times of sacramental preparation.
- Assist at home with Religious Education homework.
- Support the Catholic Ethos by attending masses and services throughout the year.

Principal:

- Facilitates supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the Grow in Love programmes.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Signed : _____ ***Date :*** _____

Chairperson.

Appendix 1: Formal Prayers

Title of Prayer	J. Inf.	S. Inf.	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Sign of the Cross	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Glory be to the Father	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Morning Prayer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Night Prayer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grace Before Meals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grace After Meals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayer to Guardian Angel		✓						✓
St. Patrick's Breastplate			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hail Holy Queen					✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayer to Mary					✓	✓	✓	✓
Our Father		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hail Mary		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayer to Jesus			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Confiteor			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Act of Sorrow			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayer for Forgiveness				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayer after Forgiveness				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mass Responses			Some	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gloria				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayers before Communion				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayers after Communion				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Angelus (old version)					✓	✓	✓	✓
The Apostles Creed					✓	✓	✓	✓
The Memorare				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Magnificat				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mysteries of the Rosary				Some	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nicene Creed							✓	✓