

Religious Education Policy 2024



Lurga National School
Gort,
Co Galway

INTRODUCTION

Lurga National School is a co-educational, Catholic primary school, located in the Parish of Galway, Kilmacduagh, Kilfenora, catering for children from Junior Infants to 6th Class. Our school is under the patronage of the Most Reverend Michael Duignan, Bishop of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora and Bishop of Clonfert.

Our Parish Priest Fr. Tommy is Patron's Nominee on the Board of Management, as is its Chairperson, Paul Walsh.

Lurga NS provides Religious Education for our pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Non-Catholic pupils are welcomed into our school community and respect for all religions and for people of no faith is a fundamental principle of our school. Non-Catholic pupils may be exempted from the Religious Education programme at the request of their parents.

A certificate in Religious Education, or its equivalent, is a requirement for employment as a teacher in Lurga NS.

As employees of the Board of Management, all staff members are expected to support the school's Catholic ethos.

Schedule of a Catholic School

A Roman Catholic school (is established in connection with the Minister for Education) aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and with other people.

The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

Mission Statement

We, the staff of Lurga NS, are dedicated to the creation of a pleasant, relaxed, safe, controlled learning environment providing for the personal, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual development of each child. We wish to enable each child to realize their maximum potential, to develop self-confidence, security and to develop as well-adjusted human beings and responsible citizens.

Our Ethos

Lurga NS is a co-educational Catholic National School under the patronage of the Bishop of Galway, Kilfenora and Kilmacduagh, & Bishop of Clonfert. Together with the Board of Management, the parents and the parish community, we provide Religious Education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and prepare them for the reception of the sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation. We promote the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith in a manner that is welcoming to and inclusive of the

presence of pupils committed to other religious traditions and none. Our Christian ethos also informs our actions, attitudes and practices on a day-to-day basis.

LURGA NS CATHOLIC SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- The Schedule of a Catholic School and the school's Mission Statement and the school's Ethos are displayed in the reception area of our school
- A Sacred Space that reflects the Liturgical Seasons is obvious when entering the school
- Religious symbols are on display and utilised in the school as visible signs of our Catholic faith
- Catholic Schools Week is celebrated in our school annually
- The major Church Feasts are recognised and celebrated
- Awareness of Social Justice is promoted in the school through engagement with charities
- Board of Management meetings begin with a prayer

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Aim of Religious Education in a Catholic School

"To help children mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives, through their encounter with and exploration and celebration of their Catholic faith." (page 31 Catholic Pre-School and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland 2015)

Vision for Religious Education in a Catholic School

"The Catholic vision of education is rooted in its 'Christian concept of life centred on Jesus Christ; He is the One who ennobles people, gives meaning to human life, and is the model which the Catholic school offers to its pupils'

(Catholic Pre-School and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland 2015)

Religious Education in the Catholic primary school has two distinct but complementary dimensions; the education dimension and the faith formation dimension.

The educational dimension teaches the children the skills of spiritual, moral and religious literacy.

The faith-formation dimension helps form the children's characters in the values of Jesus Christ. It nurtures and supports their faith development. They begin to experience a sense of belonging to a Faith Community. (Religious Education Curriculum)

Aims of Religious Education

- To help pupils to form a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- To promote the harmonious growth of the whole person
- To promote Gospel values and the teachings of the Church
- To help pupils to realise that they are a valued part of a faith community within their class, their school and their parish
- To promote the ideas of equality, respect and tolerance
- To help pupils appreciate and respect the other religious traditions within the school, to motivate pupils to work towards peace and justice in their world • To encourage pupils to care for creation as God's gift

- To foster a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation
- Religious Education Policy
- To assist pupils in their personal faith formation through formal prayer, religion lessons, celebrations of the sacraments and recognition and appreciation of the liturgical seasons of the year.
- To help pupils to develop healthy and wholesome relationships based on dignity and respect

Aims of our Religious Education Policy

- To reaffirm our school's commitment to our Catholic ethos
- To clarify aims, procedures, understanding and delivery of religious education
- To clarify roles and responsibilities regarding Religious Education in the school
- To help class teachers in their approach to the different levels of faith-commitment and knowledge which they encounter in their classrooms
- To appreciate the richness of all religious traditions, especially those present in our school community, and to provide a framework to encounter these traditions.
- To assist all members of staff in the teaching of Religion.

The Patron's Programme

Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools states that: *The Patron's Programme is developed by a school's patron with the aim of contributing to children's holistic development, particularly from the religious and/or ethical perspective, and underpins and supports the characteristic spirit of the school. There are a number of patrons' programmes in the Irish primary school system, reflecting the diversity of patronage. Some are denominational or religious, emphasising the place of children's faith, spiritual, and moral development in their lives. Some are ethical or multi-belief and values-based, and emphasise children's understanding of ethics and values and their application in the life of the child. All patrons' programmes contribute to children's development and sense of identity and support their connection to their community and to wider society.*

The development and implementation of the curriculum in religious education in Catholic primary schools is the responsibility of the Patron.

Grow in Love: Whole-School Approach

The Religious Education Programme in use in Lurga NS is the Grow in Love Series, as prescribed by the Patron.

The Grow in Love series consists of eight separate programmes, one corresponding to each class from Junior Infants to 6th.

The **Grow in Love** series aims to help children to see how they can respond to God's love through love: by doing acts of love that mirror the actions of Jesus. They can show respect for God, for themselves, for one another and for all creation. Children are taught that, through the grace of God's Spirit which we receive in Baptism, we are enabled to become witnesses to the love of God in the world by living as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Under the Primary Curriculum Framework, the time allocation in respect of delivery of the Patron's Programme/Religious Education is as follows:

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|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Glór don Athair | | | | | | | | |
| Glory be to the Father | | | | | | | | |
| Morning Prayer | | | | | | | | |
| Prayer Before Meals | | | | | | | | |
| Night Prayer | | | | | | | | |
| Prayer to Guardian Angel | | | | | | | | |
| Se do Bheatha a Mhuire | | | | | | | | |
| Hail Mary | | | | | | | | |
| Ár nAthair | | | | | | | | |
| Our Father | | | | | | | | |
| Act of Sorrow | | | | | | | | |
| Mass Responses (incrementally) | | | | | | | | |
| The Angelus | | | | | | | | |

Polas aí Oideachais Reiligiúin/Religious Education Policy Scoil _____

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|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Hail Holy Queen | | | | | | | | |
| Gloria | | | | | | | | |
| Confiteor | | | | | | | | |
| Nicene Creed | | | | | | | | |

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal

- Uphold and defend the school's Catholic ethos
- Ensure the Religious Education Policy is implemented
- Ensure Religious Education is timetabled in each classroom for the appropriate amount of time
- Assist and supports the teachers who are preparing children for the Sacraments.
- Supply teachers with the relevant Grow in Love material and other requisites
- Maintain a good working relationship with the parish.

- Children of First Communion Class participate in Adoration, monthly, organised by the parish
- Children of 6th Classes contribute to a thematic display in the Cillín

Home Link

- The school encourages parental involvement in the following ways:
- Religious education is included in parent-teacher meetings and end-of-year reports
- Parents are encouraged to engage with their child's Grow in Love homework
- Attendance at Sacramental Preparation meetings is encouraged
- Parents are informed about which prayers the children are currently learning in school.
- The school recommends parents to pray with their children at home.
- The parents are invited to attend the Nativity Play and school Masses etc.
- All are encouraged to support Catholic Schools Week
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INCLUSION

Inclusion of Pupils of Different Faiths and None

Our School Handbook and Admissions Policy makes it clear to parents/guardians applying for admission to our school that:

- we are a Catholic School, with a Catholic Ethos that informs our actions, attitudes and practices on a day-to-day basis
- we welcome and accommodate pupils of other religious backgrounds as well as those who profess no religious beliefs
- Parents/Guardians should meet their child's teacher at the start of the year and outline the degree to which they would like their child to participate in Religious Education and/or associated activities
- we prepare our pupils for reception of the sacraments
- pupils of other religious backgrounds/no religious beliefs are welcome to attend all religious activities/events/celebrations
- we provide Religious Education for our pupils as part of the Patron's Programme, i.e. Grow in Love
- We engage in prayer and the singing of hymns and religious songs at various times.

Acceptance and Respect

Lurga NS holds as a core belief the right of each member of the school community to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of his/her religious persuasion. We endeavour to make all our pupils feel welcome, included and valued as important members of our school community.

We endeavour to keep Parents/Guardians of non-Catholic pupils informed regarding faith-based activities of our Catholic pupils that directly impact upon their children, e.g. sacramental preparation, ceremonies, retreats. Pupils of different faiths are encouraged to talk about their own religious traditions and beliefs, with due regard to the beliefs of our other pupils, i.e. without criticising, fault finding or making little of the beliefs and traditions of others in comparison to their own.

Arrangements regarding Students not attending Religious Instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents/guardians have

- Facilitate opportunities for in-service and faith development

Class Teachers

- Support the school's Catholic ethos
- Follow the Grow in Love series appropriate to the class level they are teaching
- Timetable Religious Education for the appropriate amount of time
- Include planning for and reporting of Religious Education in the Scéim Coicíse/Cuntas Míosúil document
- Teach mass responses and prayers appropriate to the class level they are teaching
- Teach prayers in accordance with the Grow in Love series
- Lead pupils in prayer at the start and end of each school day and at lunchtime
- Maintain a Sacred Space in their classrooms that reflects the current Liturgical Season. The Sacred Space should contain images and faith symbols such as holy water, a crucifix or statue
- Arrange for children's work to be displayed in the classroom
- Liaise with parents to ensure that their wishes in terms of their children's participation in Religious Education are respected
- Provide reasonable, respectful accommodations for pupils not participating in Religious Education as per the school's Admissions Policy
- Cultivate an atmosphere of acceptance, toleration and respect for pupils of other religious traditions and none as per the school's Handbook and Code of Positive Behaviour

SNAs and Ancillary Staff

- Facilitate pupil's participation in Religious Education and celebration of the sacraments
- Do nothing that would undermine the school's Catholic ethos

The SACRAMENTS

Sacramental Preparation and Celebration

- In school the children are prepared for the sacraments in partnership with home and the parish
- The school and parish engage with parents to plan for sacramental preparation
- The school supports the Diocesan guidelines on how best to prepare for and celebrate the sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation
- Parents and children are encouraged to engage in the parish-based programmes provided for their preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation, such as Do this in Memory
- The celebration of First Penance takes place in the local church. Parents are invited to participate in the Sacrament with their children
- In preparation for the sacraments, the children learn and memorise the relevant prayers

Parish Link

- The school and parish priest plan for Sacramental celebrations – First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation
- The school attends and contributes to masses on 8th December (The school and parish feast day) and 6th December

requested that the student does not receive religious instruction in the school:

The child will not be required to say prayers or sing religious songs or hymns with the rest of the class. He/she will, however, be expected to show an appropriate level of respect while the other pupils of the class are at prayer or singing.

The child will not be required to prepare for or participate in the sacraments. The child is, however, by prior agreement with his/her parents/guardians, welcome to

- assist his/her classmates in their preparations, e.g. artwork, music, collation and preparation of booklets
- attend such ceremonies with his/her class as a non-participating guest
- be part of all subsequent parties and celebrations, e.g. the First Communion Party

The child will not be required to participate in the formal religious instruction class. The child must, however, remain present in the classroom for the duration of the class. Activities may be assigned to the child for the duration of the class, such as:

- reading for pleasure/entertainment (library book)
- reading or written activities based upon his/her own religion (these are to be provided by the child's parents/guardians)
- other reading or written activities as agreed between the parents/guardians and the teacher, i.e. independent project work. This may not include the use of iPads or Chromebooks

The teacher will not assign academic exercises to the child for the duration of the formal religious instruction class.

The child may remain in his/her seat or move to another seat in the class for the duration of the formal religious instruction class, as agreed between the parents/guardians and the teacher.

The child will not be required to complete any homework assignments arising from religious instruction.

The teacher will not assign other homework assignments as an alternative to homework assignments arising from religious instruction.

The child will not be required to attend religious ceremonies such as mass or adoration in the church. He/she may:

- when all classes are attending church, remain in the school with other non-participating children under the supervision of a teacher
- when his/her own class is among a number of classes attending church, remain in the school with another class group, under the supervision of that class teacher • alternatively, and by prior agreement with the child's parents/guardians, he/she may accompany his/her class to the church and bring some literature according to their own religious tradition or secular world view to read

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- An acknowledged sense of God, prayer and worship within the school community

- Consistent engagement with the Grow in Love programme
- Respect for the dignity of all members of the school community, regardless of religious persuasion
- A sense of concern for the environment and God's creation
- Active outreach to those in need
- Evidence of mutually supportive partnership between school, parish and home

MONITORING

This Religious Education Policy will be monitoring and evaluated on an ongoing basis and revised in light of experience and/or guidance from the Patron.

RATIFICATION

This Religious Education Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 2ND October 2024

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| Chairperson Board of Management | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| | 2/10/24 |
| Principal and Secretary Board of Management | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| | 2/10/24 |