

**Corpus Christi Girls National School**  
**Religious Education Policy**



# Corpus Christi Girls' National School

## Religious Education Policy



Corpus Christi Girls' National School Religious Education Policy was formulated by the Principal in consultation with school staff, the Parents Association and Board of Management. This policy recognises the recent introduction of the revised Religion programme 'Grow in Love' which has been phased into schools since September 2015.

### General Information about the school

Corpus Christi Girls' National School is a single-sex primary school with pupils from Junior Infants to Sixth Class with an enrolment of approximately 405 pupils. The school was founded in 1931 and is located in the parish of Corpus Christi in the Dublin Diocese. The school Patron is the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The parish church of Corpus Christi is a short walk from the grounds of the school. Monsignor Martin O'Shea is the current parish priest of Corpus Christi Parish. Corpus Christi Girls' National School follows the curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills. The school provides Religious Education for Catholic pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Non-Catholic pupils may be exempted from the religious education programme at the request of their parents.

### Catholic Ethos Review

The Board of Management of Corpus Christi Girl's National School are participating in a Catholic Ethos Review in this school year 2020/2021. The Board of Management meetings and staff meetings always commence with a prayer. The Catholic Ethos Review is listed on the agenda of every Board of Management Meeting since November 2020.

### Aim of Religious Education in Corpus Christi Girls National School.

The aim of Religious Education is to foster and deepen the children's faith through teaching the Catholic religious programme and through the cultivation of the Catholic ethos of the school. In Corpus Christi Girls' National School, pupils are helped to understand that that the world is infused with the loving presence of God. Throughout the Religious curriculum and the 'Grow in Love' programme pupils are given an opportunity to notice, accept and celebrate the loving presence of God in their lives.

### Religious Education Resources used in Corpus Christi Girls National School

The Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland is the foundation document for all Religious Education.

The Grow in Love Religious programme has been introduced in Corpus Christi since September 2015 as follows:

Junior & Senior Infants 2015/2016, 1st & 2nd 2016/2017, 3rd & 4th 2017/2018 & 5th & 6th 2018/2019.

Each classroom has a 'Grow in Love Teacher Resource Kit' ie a teacher's manual and CD with password to the Grow in Love website with online resources linked to each theme & seasonal lesson. Also included is a copy of the pupil's book & flipchart of posters for the

classroom Sacred Space. Classes where Grow in Love has been introduced bring home the pupil's book and complete the At Home page with parents.

- There is a set of Bibles in the school which are available for the senior classes to use. There is also a large Catholic Children's illustrated Bible in the school Sacred Space.
- The R.E. co-ordinator displays posters in the School Sacred space which are relevant to liturgical year. Additional Religious Education resources are placed in the Sacred Space.
- The Grow in Love programme allows for the differentiation of the material given in each theme for SEN pupils or children who are gifted and talented.
- Resources for Catholic Schools Week (CWS) from the Diocesan Education Office are available to the school each January and are accessible for teachers to support religion and Catholic Schools Week events.

### **Religious Symbols and Practices in Corpus Christi Girls National School**

- A Schedule for Catholic Schools is displayed in the reception area and in the Principal's office.
- A Sacred Space has been developed in a front area of the school for all classes to visit and have prayerful reflection. There is a Crucifix, Catholic Children's Bible, Holy Water Font, liturgical calendar & Statue of Our Lady in this area. Other symbols pertaining to the Liturgical year are also displayed ie Advent wreath, a Crib & St. Brigid's Day Cross.
- Classroom Prayer Space

Each class has its own designated Sacred Space arranged by teacher with symbols (crucifix and statue of Our lady) and pictures etc to reflect the Liturgical year and the themes of the RE programme being taught. Pupils are encouraged to pray during the school day and to add relevant symbols and prayers etc to the class sacred space.

The pupil's faith in Corpus Christi GNS is supported by prayers as follows:

- As pupils progress through the different class levels, teachers encourage different forms of prayer ie vocal prayer word, meditative prayer and contemplative prayer.
- Each class level has a list of formal prayers to be learned in at each class level.
- Teachers seek to create a prayerful atmosphere in class for prayer ie a candle may be lit, a hymn sung or meditative music played.
- Teachers encourage pupils to focus on their breathing, to be in a relaxed posture & to respect and enjoy prayerful silences.
- There is a pdf available showing all the revised Mass responses and prayers which teachers are encouraged to review with pupils before attending school Mass.
- Classes are led in a daily reflective prayer over the school intercom system. Pupils from second to sixth class are involved in this by way of a class rota. Teachers and pupils prepare prayers, poems and songs and the children turn take to say the prayers over the intercom system.
- School Assemblies begin and end with prayer and have a religious theme.
- All staff meetings and Board of Management meetings start and end with a prayer

- A prayer service may be held in a classroom/assembly hall to pray for a member of the school community who has passed away (refer to Critical Incident Policy)

### **Sacramental Preparation**

Sacramental preparation is a collaborative process with home, school and parish working together to prepare pupils for the sacraments. First Penance and First Communion preparation is undertaken in Second Class with Confirmation preparation undertaken in Sixth Class. The schedule for the celebration of the sacraments is as follows:

(Second Class)

Communion Enrolment Ceremony

First Penance in March /April & First Communion in May/June.

(Sixth Class)

Ceremony of Light in March & Confirmation in May/June.

### **School based Preparation**

In Corpus Christi pupils are prepared thoroughly for the Sacraments of Penance & First Communion (Second Class) & Confirmation (Sixth Class) by their teachers in association with the school chaplain. Teachers and pupils follow the preparation lessons as presented in the relevant religious programme. Parents are notified of the dates of the sacraments early in the school year, once the dates are agreed between the school and the parish. Pupils in Sixth Class are encouraged to nominate a charity and to donate to this charity after their Confirmation. Teachers arrange to send the monetary donations to the nominated charity and pupils may also include a letter to accompany their donation.

**Parish based preparation:** The “Do this in Memory” programme assists in the parish-based preparation of pupils in 2nd class for First Communion. The Confirmation classes are engaged in the ‘Fanning the flame’ preparation programme for Confirmation. This is facilitated by parent volunteers and organised through the parish. Confirmation pupils attend an annual retreat to explore their faith journey to date. The Confirmation candidates wear white robes for the Confirmation Ceremony and the distribution of robes is arranged by the Parents’ Association in advance of the confirmation ceremony. (This practice is suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic)

### **Implementation of Religious Education during the School Year**

- Normally Religious Education classes take place daily from 12 noon.
- The school day commences with a morning prayer and also a prayer before home time.
  - Corpus Christi GNS supports the annual Catholic Bishops Trocáire campaign and teachers have access to the cross – curricular links on the education section of its website.
- Early in September a meeting is held between the Principal and the Parish Priest to schedule all religious celebrations in the coming year including:
  1. Setting a date for the beginning of year Mass in the Church for all classes.
  2. Parents representatives of the sacramental classes volunteer to form Communion/Confirmation parent committee.

3. Nominating pupils from different classes to represent the school at Mass on Feast days normally occurring during school term ie Dec 8th Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Jan 6th Feast of the Epiphany, Ash Wednesday.

4. Catholic Schools' week is celebrated each year at the end of January with whole school meditative prayer. There is a scheduled visit from the school chaplain during CSW.

**Other Religious related activities include:**

- The 6th classes attend a retreat during their Confirmation year.
- Social justice awareness is highlighted through our annual participation in charity events. The school will choose charities to support e.g Vincent de Paul, Brother Kevin Capuchin Day Centre, Aoibhneas Refuge for Women and Children.
- Inservice has been offered to teachers for the introduction of the Grow in Love programme.
- School Staff and Board of Management are notified of the date of the annual Diocesan School Mass organised by the Archdiocese.
- Pupils in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5th class provide the choir for the Confirmation ceremony and are prepared by their teachers annually. Third and fourth classes provide the Communion choir.
- An annual Christmas Carol Service may be held in the church prior to the Christmas school holidays with classes participating. Junior Infants and Senior Infants participate in a Carol service for their parents in the school hall.
- A monthly liturgical planning guide is e-mailed internally to all teachers from the Diocesan Office.

**Partners in Religious Education Home/School:**

The pivotal role of parents as primary educators of their children is recognised. The Grow in Love Religious Programme provides home pages to be completed which link directly with the themes taught to the pupils.

- Parents are invited to attend the Christmas Carol Service. They are also invited to attend the Beginning of the school year mass.
- The school newsletter and school website provide regular updates on aspects of Religious Education and sacramental preparation in the school.

School/Parish: The school liaises with a team of parent volunteers who organise and deliver the Do This in Memory and Fanning the flame programmes.

Corpus Christi Parents Association (First class parents) organise the reception in the school hall after the Communion ceremony for the families and pupils involved. A reception is organised for sixth class pupils on the day of their Graduation. The Communion after party and Graduation party are organised in the classroom during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **The Role of the Religious Education Co-ordinator in Corpus Christi GNS**

The Board of Management of Corpus Christi and the Principal have overall responsibility for maintaining and supporting the Catholic ethos of the school. The Religious Education Coordinator supports the Principal in this role. Currently the RE coordinator is Ms. Gurry.

The Religious Education Coordinator supports the work of the Principal and the staff in the implementation of the current RE Programme and supports the continual fostering of the Catholic ethos of the school.

### **The Religion Co-ordinator assists the Principal:**

- To facilitate the formulation and updating of the Religious Education Policy
- To organise the distribution and collection of all necessary Religious resources, e.g. Grow in Love Resource Packs, Bibles for senior classes etc
  - To share and advise on online resources with the staff (see list below)
  - To support the prayer life of the school throughout the liturgical year
    - To encourage the use of prayer spaces in classrooms and in school common areas, and to ensure the prominence of religious symbols and icons
    - To provide input on Religious Education at staff meetings, in order to maintain a conscious profile of this area of the school curriculum
  - To facilitate links with the parish, school chaplain and parish personnel
  - To support parents to take an active role in the Religious Education and formation of their children, e.g. use of home links in Grow in Love
- To distribute Religion resources throughout the Liturgical Year.

### **Accommodation of Pupils of Other Faiths and None**

Corpus Christi Girls National School welcomes pupils of other faiths and none as per our Admissions Policy.

Pupils whose parents do not wish them to participate in the Religion Education classes must remain in the classroom and work quietly and independently during religious instruction time.

All pupils and parents are invited to attend the annual Opening of the School Year Mass and the Christmas Carol Service.

Pupils of other faiths and none who are in the sacramental classes are invited to attend the ceremonies and the reception held after Communion/Confirmation. These pupils are also invited to be photographed with the other pupils in their classes who have celebrated the sacraments.

Inter –Religious links are a welcome part of the Grow in Love programme. Such links provide information for teachers on festivals and celebrations from other religions. This provides an opportunity to include pupil/s in from other religious traditions or life stance in our school.

## **Policy Review**

This Policy was approved and ratified by the Board of Management on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021.  
It will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

**Signature:** *Aidan Savage*  
(Chairperson)

**Signature:** *Niamh Greene*  
(Principal)

## Useful Religious Education Websites

Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education for Primary Schools in Ireland.  
[www.veritasbooksonline.com/religious-education/re-curriculum-for-ireland.html](http://www.veritasbooksonline.com/religious-education/re-curriculum-for-ireland.html) Grow in Love

[www.growinlove.ie](http://www.growinlove.ie) Termly overview (theme, scripture, prayers, songs and doctrine)  
[www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2015/06/26/grow-in-love/](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2015/06/26/grow-in-love/)  
[www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2014/12/15/alive-o/](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2014/12/15/alive-o/)

Monthly Planning Guides (ideas for prayer spaces, liturgical feasts, prayers, lesson themes)  
[www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2014/06/19/monthly-planning-guidelines/](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/2014/06/19/monthly-planning-guidelines/)

Prayer Postcards

[www.education.dublindiocese.ie/prayerpaidreacha/](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/prayerpaidreacha/)

Catholic Schools Week

[www.education.dublindiocese.ie/catholic-schools-week/](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie/catholic-schools-week/)

Catholic Schools Partnership

[www.catholicschools.ie](http://www.catholicschools.ie)

Liturgical Calendar

[www.marypages.com/LiturgicalCalendar.htm](http://www.marypages.com/LiturgicalCalendar.htm) (good guide to praying the Rosary)

A daily prayer online

[www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie)

A three- minute retreat

[www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer.html](http://www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer.html)

Pray as you Go

[www.pray-as-you-go.org/70/](http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/70/)

[www.ignationspirituality.com](http://www.ignationspirituality.com)

Spirit Radio

[www.spiritradio.ie/listen-now](http://www.spiritradio.ie/listen-now)

Trocáire

[www.trocaire.org/education](http://www.trocaire.org/education)