

**Holy Spirit Boys National School**  
**Religious Education & Faith Development Policy**

In this document the Board of Management of the Holy Spirit BNS sets out the policy of the school regarding Faith Development & Religious Education. Holy Spirit BNS is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life of Jesus Christ.

It promotes Religious Education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church and promotes the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith.

A Christian ethos permeates the school day and the life of the school.

The school day opens and closes with prayers, whole school assemblies open with a prayer and religious feasts, Holy Days of Obligation and religious seasons are all celebrated in the school community.

- **Catholic Tradition**

Holy Spirit Boys National School is a community which is proud of its Catholic tradition. We are committed to developing each child's full potential in a positive, supportive and Christian environment. We invite everyone to participate and we urge everyone to contribute.

- **Religious Education**

Religious Education in a Catholic school has two main dimensions:

**1. Religious Knowledge**

**2. Faith Development**

The children are led to know about God and to know God.

**Religion**

Any universally acknowledged Religion is generally accepted to have six elements:

- Its founding story
- Its doctrines
- Its rituals
- Its morality
- Its community aspect
- An experiential element

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### ***Aims***

The programme aims to encourage:

- Belief in *God* and in the person of *Jesus Christ* as portrayed in the Bible
- An understanding of doctrine
- The practice of prayer and worship
- Moral growth
- The development of community spirit [which implies caring for each other, recognising the uniqueness and dignity of each person, the sacredness of life, our welcoming of the stranger, etc.]
- The experience of *God* through prayer, through the recognition of the world as *God's* creation and through the circumstances of daily life.

### ***Faith Development***

We carefully plan for the development of the inner life of the child through creativity, imagination, an appreciation of our world and a sense of wonder.

This inner growth lays the basis for helping children with:

- faith in their ability to develop a personal relationship with *God*;
- faith in the doctrines of the Catholic Church in which they have been baptised and an awareness of the mysteries of faith;
- the development of a personal prayer life and an understanding of the importance of communal worship.

This growth in the pupils' understanding and faith informs their willingness to share, to make sacrifices for others and to act in a morally appropriate way.

## **CONTENT OF THE POLICY**

### ***The Programme***

The Board of Management and the teachers have adopted the *Grow in Love* Catechetical Programme approved and recommended by the Irish Hierarchy for use in Catholic Schools.

The programme assists our aims in an age-appropriate progression through the school.

The programme incorporates the recommended approach to religious education for the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation, which is undertaken by the school in close co-operation with parents and parish.

The programme is studied each day for one half-hour. A Catholic ethos, however, permeates the school day and the life of the school.

### ***Whole School Dimension of Religious Education Programme***

As well as the programme, which is taught in each class, there are many aspects of religion, which are undertaken by the whole school together.

The Management and Staff and sometimes the children decide on appropriate and meaningful icons, pictures and statues to display throughout the school building. These speak of people, events and ideas with which children can identify or through which they can be led to some new understanding of God.

### ***Community Building***

We try to ensure that all children feel safe within the school community and feel that they belong; we also aim to ensure that all children understand that each one has the same right to have his opinions heard as any other.

A sense of togetherness and solidarity among the school community is fostered through, e.g.

- assemblies being held by the Principal or organised by other teachers in their turn
- Sports Day
- School Concerts
- celebrating achievements of the pupils
- celebrating diversity

### ***Collaboration***

The Catholic education offered here informs and permeates the whole atmosphere and ethos of the school.

It is conducted in collaboration with the children's parents and the local parish.

In all matters pertaining to the education of the children and especially in religious education we acknowledge the primacy of the place held in this process by the parents or guardians of the children. We see our role as being supportive of the role of parents and parish.

### ***Spiritual Formation of Teachers***

The spiritual nourishment of teachers is understood by the Board of Management to be an integral part of the religious education programme undertaken by the school. The Board of Management is committed to supporting this development but also acknowledges that faith is a deeply personal matter.

### ***Religion in Relation to Admission Policy***

Subject to the terms of the admission policy children of any faith or of no faith are welcome to this school. Each child is welcome to attend and benefit from the Catholic religious education programme. However, if parents have difficulty with this the Principal shall meet with them to see if an

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accommodation can be reached.

The school cannot, however, undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith, nor can it provide supervision during the religious education period apart from the class.

Where parents agree and see value in it, children who are not Catholic are welcome to participate in the Religious Education Programme and prayer life of the school.

### ***Responsibility for Implementing this Policy***

The Board of Management in consultation with the Principal, all staff and our school chaplain are responsible for facilitating the smooth implementation of the policy. The teachers teach the programme appropriate to their class. All members of staff and all within the school community are expected to actively support the spirit and ethos of the school.

The Board fully supports Diocesan Policy on religious education in Catholic Schools.

### ***Parents***

Co-operate and support the school in its efforts, especially at times of sacramental preparation and at other school events to which they are invited.

### ***Principal***

Takes an active role in encouraging the whole school aspects of the programme and monitors progress throughout the school

Liaises with the school chaplain in defining the role of the chaplaincy and the parish in the life of the school

Helps to facilitate supportive interaction of all parties in implementing the programme.

### ***Responsibility for Review***

The Board of Management will initiate the review of the policy.

### ***Approval and Communication***

The policy is approved by the Board of Management and forwarded to the Trustees. It is available for perusal by the parents.