



# **Religion Plean Scoile**

**St. Louise de Marillac Primary School  
Drumfinn Road  
Ballyfermot  
Dublin 10**

## **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

St. Louise's Primary School, founded in 1958, is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The school promotes a welcoming, loving, compassionate, forgiving, respectful, hopeful and enabling culture in the tradition of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, co-founders of the Daughters of Charity. It is linked to the Parish of St. Matthew's, Ballyfermot.

This policy was formulated in partnership with the staff of the school, the parent body, the Board of Management and personnel from St. Matthew's Parish.

## **Mission Statement**

St. Louise de Marillac Primary School is a Catholic Primary School and is conducted in accordance with the values and philosophy of the Daughters of Charity. We welcome and respect all our pupils and commit ourselves to promoting the confidence, self-belief and potential of each pupil, within a happy and safe environment. In partnership with parents, we seek to give pupils a love of learning, good social skills and a positive foundation for life. We commit ourselves to the ongoing cohesive development of the school, of our own resources and of our links with the local community and with other support agencies.

## **Rationale**

While we are a Catholic school, pupils of all faiths or of no faith are enrolled in our school. Their practices and beliefs are respected in accordance with the school ethos of inclusion. Symbols of our Catholic identity are on display throughout the school. These include crosses, an altar and a statue of St. Louise, who is the patron saint of our school.

## **THE CATHOLIC CHURCH & PRIMARY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Staff are led and supported in the teaching of Religious Education through dedicated time assigned at staff meetings to discuss relevant matters. Meetings take place with teachers preparing classes for the sacraments where guidance and support is offered. The monthly memo from Archbishop's House is circulated to all teaching staff. The Schedule of a Catholic School is on display in the main reception area. Religious Education is given a dedicated 30-minute timeslot each day in all mainstream classes.

## **AIMS**

### **Aim of Religious Education**

The aim of the Religious Education curriculum is to help children mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives, through their encounter with, exploration and celebration of the Catholic faith. The curriculum distinguishes four interrelated strands of Christian Faith, The Word of God, Liturgy/Prayer and Christian Morality. The strands overlap and interact to form a holistic learning experience for the child. Christian Faith: Teaching and learning in this strand assists children to become religiously literate in key truths, doctrines and practices of the Catholic religious tradition.

The Word of God: In this strand children are introduced to an age-appropriate way to Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church.

Liturgy and Prayer: Children are encouraged to engage with liturgical signs, symbols and rituals which nurture their relationship with God as Father, Son and Spirit, and to develop their capacity for personal prayer and for participation in the liturgy of the Church.

**Christian Morality:** The teaching and learning in this strand helps children to grow in awareness of their identity as persons created in the image and likeness of God and called to live in a loving, respectful, relationship with God, other human persons and the whole of creation. The children are introduced to Jesus as the example for living an ethical life and are formed in gospel values and in love of God and neighbour.

### **The aims of the RE Policy**

That the pupils will in a way appropriate to age and maturity and faith development:

- Come to know God the father, through Jesus Christ, in the Spirit
- Value self as loved and gifted by God
- Become aware of the religious, spiritual and moral dimensions of their own being
- Learn how to participate in prayer and worship of the Church
- Develop Christian attitudes and values for example love, justice, compassion, truthfulness and respect
- Develop virtue, personal and social responsibility, ecological consciousness and the ability to act in accordance with an informed conscience when making moral decisions as a child
- Develop their understanding of the church as a community of faith
- Grow in awareness and understanding of Christian spirituality
- Develop respect for family and community values in other religious traditions
- Explore the significance of Mary and the saints within the Catholic tradition

Additional aims for teachers

- Provide guidelines for teachers in the instruction of religious education
- Support the pupils to engage in a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **Diocesan Information:**

Name: Dublin Diocese

Patron: Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell

Director of Education: Education Secretariat, Dublin Diocese

Website: <http://education.dublindiocese.ie/>

Diocesan Advisors: Primary Diocesan Advisors

#### **Parish Information:**

Name: St. Matthew's Parish

Parish Priest: Fr. Piaras MacLochlainn

Deacon: Fr. Simon

### **School Information:**

Our school is called St. Louise de Marillac Primary School. Our chaplain is Fr. Piaras MacLochlainn. Currently we are fortunate in having the support of Sr. Cabrini DC to support our parents and children for sacramental preparation and organisation of prayer services for the school community.

Board of Management Members: Vincent Jackson (chairperson), Mary Hogan, Anna Gibbons, Marian McCarthy, Louise Smyth, David Foynes, Maria Purcell and Alma Quinn

Religious Education Coordinator: Paulette O' Gorman

### **MATERIALS**

- The *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* is the foundation document for all Religious Education in Catholic primary schools.
- The school uses *Grow in Love*, the Religious Education series for Catholic Primary Schools in Ireland from junior infants to sixth class.
- Each teacher has his/her own *Grow in Love* manual. Each teacher has registered with the login code for the *Grow in Love* programme using the school email address.
- Each child from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class has access to the *Grow in Love* book appropriate to the child's own level.
- Every Thursday the children at all class levels bring home materials from the *Grow in Love* programme.
- Children have copies designated for RE from third class up. *The Grow in Love* workbook is used in the younger classes.
- Set of pupils' bibles for use in the senior classes.
- The monthly memos sent out by the Education Secretariat are received by the principal and are circulated via email to all staff.
- Website recommended by the Diocesan Advisors:  
[www.education.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie)

### **PRAYER SPACE**

Each class has a designated prayer space which changes in accordance with the liturgical cycle - *Grow in Love* programme.

## **PRAYER**

Participation in experiences of prayer (formal and informal), silence and meditation develops children's capacity for personal prayer. Prayer is a regular feature of the school day. Teachers say the following prayers with their classes daily:

- *Morning Prayer*
- *Prayer Before Meals*
- *Prayer After Meals*
- *Evening Prayer*

The *Hail Mary* is said daily during May and, when appropriate, within the classroom. Other prayers are taught in accordance with the religious programme. As a whole school community, prayers are said together on the feast days when prayer services take place in the hall.

## **ARRANGEMENT FOR SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION BETWEEN HOME/PARISH/SCHOOL**

The staff of the school work closely with Fr. MacLochlainn and the parents to prepare the children for the sacraments. The *Accompanying Families* document is available as an appendix to this policy.

### **First Confession and First Holy Communion**

The children begin learning prayers in Junior Infants. Parents of children in Second Class are asked to help their children learn the prayers and responses needed for First Penance and First Holy Communion. The doctrine associated with the sacraments is taught in accordance with the *Grow in Love* programme. Second classes attend Mass / visit the church more often before the First Penance and First Holy Communion. The children participate in the programme organised by the parish in preparation for the sacraments if it is on offer.

### **Confirmation**

The Sixth Class girls are encouraged to learn the following:

- The Ten Commandments (modern format)
- The Seven Sacraments
- The Gifts
- Symbols of the Holy Spirit
- The Mysteries of the Rosary (be familiar with)

The doctrine associated with the sacrament is taught in accordance with the religious programme in use. In recent years the Service of Light ceremony has been incorporated into the Confirmation ceremony.

### **Mass**

Children are taught some of the Mass rituals within the classroom. All classes are welcome to attend morning Mass occasionally in St. Matthew's Church. Second and sixth class pupils should attend regularly to practise for the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Depending on the availability of a celebrant, the school may celebrate Mass during the year. Sr. Cabrini leads several prayer services throughout the year. Children can also watch Mass on the RTE Player or on the live link to St. Matthew's Church.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR**

Religious ethos and education is integrated in other curricular areas including drama, music and art. The core values of the Catholic church form the basis of Our Code of Behaviour and inform how we expect pupils to behave. Prayer is integrated throughout the day in all classes.

If CPD in the area of Religious Education is available through Archbishop's House the principal notifies and encourages the staff to avail of it. If training is during school hours, the principal will aim to provide cover so teachers can attend. Time is given at Croke Park sessions to discuss religious education in our school. The school celebrates Catholic Schools Week each January. The parents are made aware of the event and whole school prayers or meditations are led in the hall/over the intercom. Grandparents are invited to visit for Grandparents' Day.

Parents are invited to join their children for prayer services and masses once a year. Parents of pupils in Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First Class are invited to attend prayer services in the hall on a rota basis. Parents in 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class are invited to attend Mass in St. Matthew's Church.

### **Symbols/Sacred Space**

Each classroom has a sacred space appropriate to the class level, which changes in accordance with the liturgical cycle. Our reception area also has a sacred place, where a statue of St. Louise is on display. All classes are encouraged to set up a May altar during the month of May. Displays for different religious feast days and festivals may be displayed. A large crib is set up in December.

### **Catholic Feasts**

The staff and children celebrate the feast days in a variety of ways, from learning about them within the class, to celebrating as a whole school. The school chaplain/Sr. Cabrini are regularly invited to help us celebrate these events. Generally, prayer services are held in the school hall. The following feasts are celebrated:

- Feast of St. Vincent de Paul - 27<sup>th</sup> September
- Feast of St. Catherine Labouré/ Miraculous Medal - November 27<sup>th</sup> - children receive a medal
- Immaculate Conception - December 8<sup>th</sup>
- Advent - Advent wreath and calendar
- Christmas - large Nativity crib displayed, carol service held for the whole school
- The Epiphany - January 6<sup>th</sup>
- Catholic Schools Week (Mass for grandparents if celebrant is available)
- Feast of St. Brigid - February 1<sup>st</sup>
- Feast of St. Louise - May 9<sup>th</sup> (changed from March 15<sup>th</sup> in 2016)
- Feast of St. Patrick - March 17<sup>th</sup>
- Lent - ashes distributed to all pupils on Ash Wednesday
- Easter - at class level
- End of year Mass
- 6<sup>th</sup> class prayer service for graduation

### Daughters of Charity

The school has a strong link with missionary work. The school remains in regular contact with the Daughters of Charity, who are based in Kitale in Kenya. Projects take place funded by the school. Sisters from Kenya visit the school and chat to the pupils about life in Kenya.

### **PARTNERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

We encourage parents/guardians to support their child's religious education through prayer at home, home/link in RE class, parent/teacher meetings in the school. This includes the following:

- Textbooks/ workbook/copies sent home every Thursday as homework with illustrations, stories, poems and activities for families to do together
- Letter from *Grow in Love* pack to be sent home termly with link to the diocesan website [www.education.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.education.dublindiocese.ie)
- Parents are invited to any meetings held about preparation for First Communion and Penance and Service of Light and Confirmation
- Parents are encouraged to take the children to Mass regularly and participate in the sacramental preparation programme offered by the parish
- Parents are encouraged to view the aforementioned website

### **School/Parish**

- Sacramental preparation programme
- Regular visits from Chaplain
- Children from all classes welcome to attend Mass occasionally during school day – parents may be invited to attend with their children
- Children from older classes welcome to attend Confession with prior arrangement

### **PUPILS OF OTHER TRADITIONS OTHER THAN CATHOLIC**

Our school is open and inclusive of children who are not of the Catholic faith. We welcome children of other or of no faith in accordance with the school's Admissions Policy. Having satisfied the Admissions Policy, every child is welcome into the school. However, the school cannot undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own religion. Religious Education is delivered in each class for 30 minutes daily.

The following, taken from our Admissions Policy, are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

- The student will remain in their classroom while religious instruction takes place.
- The student will engage in an age appropriate, alternative and independent activity such as reading, project work etc. while the religious instruction takes place.
- The school celebrates religious feasts throughout the year. Ceremonies take place in the school hall. Children, not attending religious instruction, may be present at

these ceremonies but do not participate. If supervision is available, these pupils may be supervised in an alternative location in a non-instructional capacity.

- When sacramental preparation takes place, it involves visits to St. Matthew's Church. The children, who are not preparing to receive the sacraments, may stay behind in a different classroom in the school, which will include teacher/SNA supervision.
- A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent(s) to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

### **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS**

Children with additional needs, who are placed in mainstream classes, receive religious instruction with their peers. Class teachers differentiate the content according to the pupils' needs. Additional support from a SNA may be provided when preparing for the sacraments.

The children in our special class for pupils with autism attend whole school prayer services. If they become too overwhelmed in the hall, a separate prayer service / blessing can be arranged in their classroom. *The Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* provides guidelines for the instruction of RE in this setting. Grow in Love have an adapted programme to prepare children with autism for their First Holy Communion.

### **ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR**

The principal has overall responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic ethos of the school. The principal facilitates supportive interaction between all parties in implementing the programme. Paulette O' Gorman is the Religious Education Coordinator. Her role is to support the principal.

### **Other Roles & Responsibilities**

#### **Staff**

- Deliver *Grow in Love* programme
- Cooperate with the chaplain/parish and diocesan advisors
- Avail of in-service support

#### **Parents**

- Actively support the ethos of the school
- Support the school during times of sacramental preparation and assist at home with Religious Education homework



### **Evaluation Criteria**

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

### **REVIEW, RATIFICATION & COMMUNICATION**

The Religious Education Policy will be reviewed through observation and through staff and parent discussions. Discussion with the Diocesan Advisors will also inform our policy. As per our agreed systematic cycle of review, it will be reviewed after three years unless circumstances arise that necessitate an earlier review. Having been ratified by the Board of Management, it will be available for viewing by staff and parents on the school website and in the policy folder in the staffroom and parents' room.

The above policy was discussed and ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed on behalf of B.O.M. by Chairperson:



Date: 18/6/24

## **Appendix A: World Religious Holidays/Celebrations**

### **Islam**

- Al-Hijra — Islamic New Year. Marks the end of Mohammad's journey from Mecca to Medina.
- **Eid ul-Adha** — Festival of Sacrifice.
- **Eid ul-Fitr** — End of Muslim month of fasting (Ramadan)
- Prophet's Birthday -- Celebration of the **birth of the Prophet** Muhammad
- Ramadan — Muslim Month of Fasting.

### **Hinduism**

- Diwali — Festival of Lights is a major holiday that is also celebrated by Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs.
- Dussera — This is the important tenth day of Navratri.
- Ganesha Chaturthi — celebration the birth of Ganesha, son of Shiva
- Holi — Festival of Colors
- Navratri — Nine Nights.

### **Buddhist**

- Chinese New Year
- Nirvana Day
- Losar
- Songkran Festival
- Wesak
- Wassana
- Obon
- Dhamma Day
- Confucius's Birthday
- Pavarana
- Kathina
- Bodhi Day

**Christian Orthodox:**

- The Nativity of the Theotokos
- The Elevation of the Holy Cross
- The Presentation of the Theotokos
- The Nativity of the Lord
- The Theophany (Epiphany) of the Lord
- The Presentation of the Lord
- The Annunciation
- The Transfiguration
- The Dormition (Falling Asleep) of the Theotokos

### **Appendix B: Possible Parental survey questions**

If a child of a religion other than Catholicism is enrolled in the school, the teacher may like to circulate this survey to the parents to gain some background information.

Q. Are there any specific religious traditions that your child partakes in that the school and the class teacher should be aware of?

Q. Are there any religious holidays that your child celebrates that we could incorporate into their classroom? (e.g. Al-Hijra or Diwali)

Q. Are there any religious customs that your child follows that you would like the school and class teacher to be made aware of?