

# **SCOIL EINDE**

## **SCHOOL ETHOS & EDUCATION POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION:-**

Scoil Einde Boys' Primary School is a Catholic primary school established under the patronage of the Bishop of Galway. It promotes Christian values and is committed to the holistic development of both pupils and staff. The school endeavors to recognize, develop and appreciate the dignity and uniqueness of each child in a happy, caring and safe environment where respect for both people and the environment is central; thus enabling children to strive with confidence towards their full potential animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity.

### **VISION:-**

“Catholic schools seek to reflect a distinctive vision of life and a corresponding philosophy of education.” (Vision 08 – A Vision for Catholic Education in Ireland – Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference).

The main objective of Scoil Einde is to provide primary education for children from second to sixth class class. The school is also committed to the professional and personal development of its pupils in a community environment. It aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects 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.

### **OUR OBJECTIVES:-**

The primary objectives are aimed at embracing:

- A sense of fairness and good relationships with all other persons.
- Deep respect and cherishing for all people equally.
- Forgiveness and reconciliation: A place where grudges are not held.
- Respect and Dignity: Deep intrinsic respect for others.
- Affirmation and Tolerance: That we speak to, react to and act towards others, respectful of their dignity.
- Personal Faith Formation: Formal prayer, religion lessons, celebrations of sacraments as well as recognition and appreciation of the liturgical seasons of the year.
- Belonging: That all experience a sense of belonging and contribute to the promotion of the Christian ethos of the school.
- Understanding: Teachers and pupils promote positive experiences of school and foster healthy and wholesome relationships.

### **CORE VALUES:-**

A Catholic Primary School is recognized as a national school by The Department of Education and Skills. This recognition is expressed in the Deed of Variation, a legal agreement between the Patron, the Trustees and the Department of Education and Skills. The Catholic school is a faith school that expresses a set of core values that can be described as human, religious, Christian and Catholic. The Board of Management, the Principal and the staff, working with the Patron, the parents and the Parish, model a living human – religious – Catholic educational tradition to nurture the faith of Catholic pupils in a manner that is welcoming to an inclusive of the presence of pupils committed to other religious faiths or human traditions.

Religious Education is a core subject but in the Catholic school the curriculum for it is specified by the Patron. The programme approved by the Catholic Bishops of Ireland is currently the Alive-O Programme.

In recognition of these core values of the Catholic school education. Scoil Einde. 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.

### **OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS:-**

Subject to the terms of the enrolment and admission policy, we enroll pupils of other faiths or no faith in the school and accord due respect for their beliefs and practices. Consultation with parents of these pupils takes place on enrolment. Each child is welcome to attend and benefit from the Catholic religious education programme. If parents have difficulty with this the principal shall meet with them to see if an accommodation can be reached. Parents are welcome to view the religious programme taught – at its core is the commandment “Love God and love your neighbor.” Sensitivity is always shown when pupils cannot participate in liturgical celebrations. The school cannot, however, undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith, nor can it provide supervision in a separate class environment during the religious education period.

### **PROMOTING AND NURTURING A CATHOLIC ETHOS:-**

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

The programme incorporates the recommended approach to religious education for the reception of the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation and other religious educational curricular activities. The programme is timetabled each day for one half – hour. A Christian ethos however permeates all aspects of school curricular activities.

### **WHOLE SCHOOL DIMENSION:-**

There is a spirit of prayer in the school not just related and taught to the children, but is seen to be a lived and valued experience for the teachers. In each classroom the aim is to create an atmosphere of openness, forgiveness and understanding and above all love. A sense of awe and wonder at the goodness, beauty and love of God is developed in the child.

Meaningful icons, pictures, artwork and sacred spaces are on display throughout the school building.

The majority Catholic, significant and local, feast days are celebrated appropriately. They are marked with prayer services and with the aid of artwork, signs and symbols, which are displayed in the classroom and throughout the school. These include:

- Hallowe'en – All Saints, Remembering the Dead – The Remembrance Tree.
- Advent – the Advent wreath and Jesse tree.
- Christmas – tree and crib.
- Feast of St. Brigid – traditional crosses.
- Feast of St. Patrick – depiction of story and shamrock.
- Lent – symbols of repentance and forgiveness.
- Holy Week – Reflection on the way of the Cross.
- Easter – symbols of the new life of the resurrection.
- Pentecost – artistic depiction of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

**Liturgical and Eucharistic celebrations are held on significant days of the school including:-**

- The opening and closing of the school year.
- Feast Days.
- Christmas Carol Service.
- Times of trauma or crisis and for other occasions, which from time to time are considered appropriate to celebrate or to commemorate.
- School assemblies, which incorporate thematic religious subject matter, appropriate to age, season and circumstances.

**The pupils of the school also participate:-**

- At the celebrations of First Eucharist and Confirmation.
- School Masses at the beginning and the end of the academic year.
- Other liturgical celebrations in cooperation with the wider community of the parish including altar servers and members of the choir and other participatory roles in the Parish Eucharist.

**A COLLABORATIVE & PARTNERSHIP APPROACH:-**

Catholic tradition has always emphasized that parents are the primary educators and that the role of the school is to work in partnership with the family/home. Parents have a right to a free choice of school in a manner that reflects their religious convictions. The Board of Management will endeavour to promote and encourage close links with the parish and the wider community.

### **CONNECTING WITH OUR PARISH:-**

The Catholic education offered in Scoil Einde is conducted in collaboration with the children's parents and the local parish. The school perceives its role as being supportive of the role of parents and parish. The priest provides support, expertise and assistance in the religious formation of the children and in a collaborative manner, with the other stakeholders and partners in education. These include providing opportunities for:

- Blessing of throats on the fest of St. Blaise.
- Celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to Christmas and Easter and the conclusion of the school year.
- Informal lessons/talks and interaction with pupils on faith issues and moral development.
- Praying with the pupils.
- Prayer Services i.e. Ash Wednesday, St. Brigid's Day and May Day.
- Faith talks for parent's faith in preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation/graduation as well as including other liturgical services.
- Training and organizing altar servers, choirs, offertory bearers and assisting in other participatory roles in the liturgical life of the Parish.

### **SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF TEACHERS:-**

The spiritual nourishment of teachers is acknowledged by the Board of Management to be an integral part of the religious programme undertaken by the school and this is fostered where appropriate.

### **IMPLEMENTING A RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL AND FAITH FORMATION PROGRAMME:-**

Teaching Methodologies include:

- Study of the Alive O Teachers Guide.
- Interactive learning.
- Giving children prayerful and faith formation experiences that are meaningful and relevant.
- Sacramental and para-liturgies.
- Use of meditation in prayer.
- Drama, pageants and role play on thematic Christian values.
- Questions and answers which encourage children to use their own words.
- Vocal, spontaneous and noun – vocal prayer.

**SUCCESS CRITERIA:-**

We will know this policy is operating effectively in our school if:

- There is an acknowledged sense of God, Faith formation, a sense of prayer and worship within the school community and environment.
- There is a well behaved school community where respect for the dignity and uniqueness of all school staff and pupils is evident and upheld at all times.
- There is evidence of a committed parental interest and involvement in the implementation of the religious education programme, particularly in the home environment.
- There are recognizable links which forge strong bonds between parish/home/school.
- Children can speak confidently and lovingly of their faith and its relation to the living of their lives.

**CONCLUSION:-**

The Board of Management in consultation with the Principal and the school staff are responsible for facilitating the smooth and effective implementation of this policy.

**RATIFICATION OF THIS POLICY:-**

The Board of Management ratified this policy document on

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This policy will be reviewed from time to time and maybe amended whenever the need arises or when circumstances requires it.

**Chairperson of the Board of Management.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_