



Religious Education & Faith Development Policy

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Milford Grange National School



‘...ag foghlaim le chéile’
Milford National School

Milford Grange National School, Plassey Park Rd, Sreelane, Castletroy, Co. Limerick, V94 W3W4 Tel: 061-339123

Policy Statement

Milford Grange National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Bishop of Limerick. The school models and promotes a Christian philosophy of life based on the Christian premise of love and respect for others.

The Mission statement of the school reflects the Catholic ethos:

We, in Milford National School, dedicate ourselves to providing a holistic education for our children, where potential and uniqueness of mind, heart, body and spirit are fostered and celebrated. In achieving this ideal we aim to promote self-esteem, self-worth, self-confidence and a sense of belonging to our School Community. It is our goal to provide a culturally rich and multi-faceted education, striving for academic excellence, while mindful of the diverse learning needs of all our children.

Milford National School 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. Subject to the terms of the Admission Policy we enrol pupils of other faiths or no faith in the school and respect their beliefs and practices. Consultation with parents of these pupils takes place on enrolment, if the parents so wish.

Each child is welcome to attend and benefit from the Catholic religious education programme, as set down by the Irish Hierarchy and which is taught in Milford Grange National School. If parents have an issue with this the class teacher will meet with parents to reach an acceptable accommodation of their child within the classroom, while mindful that all accommodations must be within a practical supervisory framework, i.e. the child cannot be left unsupervised. Parents are welcome to view the Religious programme taught – at its core is the commandment ‘Love God and love your neighbour’.

Sensitivity is always shown when pupils cannot participate in our school’s Catholic based liturgical celebrations. The school cannot, however, undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith, nor does it have the extra personnel needed to provide outside supervision during the religious education period. Parents are invited to withdraw their children from school for the duration of a liturgical celebration. If parents prefer not to withdraw their children for the duration of the celebration, the children will accompany their class to the mass, prayer service, assembly, confession, ceremony of light, etc. They may bring a book or workbook to the celebration. The Christian ethos pervades through the school and we as a staff try to give our pupils a strong sense of Christian values, placing a big emphasis on love and respect for others.

Religious Education 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 incorporates the recommended approach to religious education for the reception of the sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation. The programme is normally timetabled each day for one a half-hour class daily. A Christian ethos however permeates the entire school day and the whole life of the school.

Our school ethos is closely aligned with the Salesian ethos and the teachings of St. John Bosco. Reason, Religion, Love & Kindness are central pillars of the Salesian ethos. Don Bosco's Oratory, a center for educating and caring for poor children, was structured around four key pillars:

- Home: Creating a welcoming and familiar environment where young people feel a sense of belonging.
- School: Providing quality education and a space for learning and growth.
- Church: Offering a place for prayer, inspiration, and the celebration of faith.
- Playground: Making the environment interesting and fun, fostering healthy relationships and joy.

Whole School Dimension

Catholic prayers are part of the routine of the school day. In each classroom there is an atmosphere of openness, forgiveness, and understanding.

The major Catholic and local feasts are celebrated throughout the year. These Catholic feast days and celebrations may be marked with the aid of signs, pictures and artwork and symbols displayed in the classroom and school. The children's artwork associated with these Catholic feast days and celebrations is also regularly displayed in the church. Class libraries contain bible stories and books about St. John Bosco.

- November : children remember loved ones - artwork in church and school
- Advent – the Advent wreath
- Christmas – tree and crib and other artwork in school and church
- January: Feast of our patron Saint John Bosco- pictures and artwork
- February: Feast of Saint Brigid – traditional Brigid's crosses, and Saint Valentine: pictures and stories
- March: Feast of Saint Patrick – depiction of his story and shamrock
- Lent – symbols of repentance and ashes
- Easter – symbols of the new life of resurrection
- Pentecost – artistic depiction of the coming of the Holy Spirit
- Annual sacraments: in spring/ summer terms: Communion and Confirmation: artwork displayed in church and classroom

“School Events held in the church, which are liturgical in nature:”

- September/ early October: the opening of the new school year Mass involving the school band, choir and children from all classes
- Choral concert at Christmas
- Christmas Nativity - involving school band, choir and children
- January: Saint Bosco Mass (feast day of patron saint) & St. John Bosco Table Quiz
- Prayer service/ gathering to come together in times of crisis / loss, or in times of celebration
- School assemblies take place every month of the school year.
- 2nd Class Enrolment ceremony in preparation for their Sacrament of Communion
- Sacrament of Penance
- First Holy Communion
- 6th Class Graduation Mass
- 6th Class attend several masses in preparation for their Sacrament of Confirmation.

The pupils of the school join in:

- At the celebration of First Communion and Confirmation
- At the school Mass at the beginning of the year, Don Bosco Mass
- Other liturgical celebrations in co-operation with the parish.

Connecting with our Parish:

The Catholic education offered in Milford NS is conducted in collaboration with the children's parents and the local

parish. We have a very close relationship and friendship with the Salesian community next door to the school. The Salesian priests are well-known to all the children and often visit the classrooms. Opportunities are provided for:

- Blessing of throats on the feast of St Blaize
- Distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday
- Hearing of pupil confessions at Christmas and Easter
- Support for the Communion and Confirmation classes
- Celebrating feast days such as Saint John Bosco

Teaching Methodologies Used To Achieve Aims

- Study of the 'Grow in Love' Catechetical Programme
- Interactive learning
- Giving children opportunities to perform music in to sing in church ceremonies
- Sacramental and non-sacramental liturgies
- Drama and role play for school and parish Masses and services
- Children participate in the St. John Bosco Table Quiz.
- Expression through the visual arts

Success Criteria

We will know this policy is working in our school if:

- There is a good sense of community spirit where respect for all is evident at all times
- There are recognisable links between parish/home/school

Responsibility For Implementing This Policy

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

Teachers and Staff:

- Inform themselves through studying the 'Grow in Love' programme
- Deliver and teach the 'Grow in Love' programme appropriate to their class
- Cooperate with the Chaplain / Parish and the Diocesan Advisors
- Avail of in-service support provided.
- Actively support the spirit and ethos of the school

Parents:

The parents co-operate and support the school in its effort, especially at times of sacramental preparation and at other school events to which they are invited. They are also asked to help with religious education homework and to read the parts of the 'Grow in Love' programme that are intended for them.

Principal:

- Takes an active role in encouraging the whole school aspects of the programme and monitors progress throughout the school
- Liaises with the parish in the organisation and celebration of school, community and parish events
- Liaises with the Diocesan Office and Diocesan Inspectors regularly

This policy review was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on October 8th 2025.

Scheduled for review: October 2028

Signed Liam de Búrca

Date October 8th 2025.

Chairperson