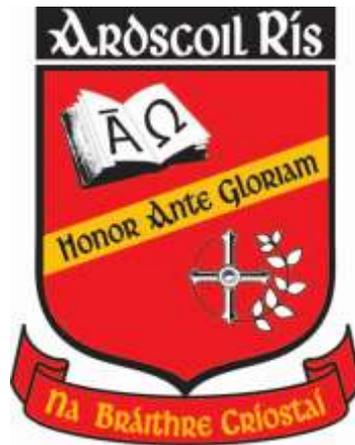


# Religious Education Policy



Ardscoil Rís  
Edmund Rice Schools Trust School  
North Circular Road  
Limerick

Ardscoil Rís is a Catholic School under the  
Trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust

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## ***The Scope of the Policy***

As an Edmund Rice Catholic School, this Religious Education Policy will impact on the whole school community. Support for and implementation of the Policy will come from a number of groups:

***Board of Management:***

To support the procedures of the Policy and ensure its effective implementation.

***Principal and Deputy Principal:***

To support the procedures of the Policy and ensure its effective implementation.

***School Staff:***

In an ERST School, the expectation is that the whole staff embraces and safeguards the Ethos of the school and supports the cross curricular nature of Religious Education.

***Teachers of Religious Education:***

To ensure a high standard and effective delivery of Religious Education.

***Chaplain:***

To assist in the faith development of students.

***Pastoral Care Personnel (Class Teachers /Year-Heads/Guidance Counsellors).***

To monitor the effects of the policy and to provide support and guidance to the students.

***Parent(s)/Guardian(s):***

To support the Religious Education Programme in the school and facilitate the faith formation of their children.

***Students:***

To participate in the Religious Education Programme and to cultivate an openness to other religious traditions.

## ***Mission Statement and Rationale***

The Religious Education Policy is informed by the Edmund Rice School Trust Mission Statement:

“To provide Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition”.

**The Ardscoil Rís Mission Statement:**

“To promote the spiritual, personal, physical, cultural, aesthetic and academic development of its students. We aim to create a community where students are imbued with Christian values of respect, justice and integrity”.

### ***The Rationale:***

As an Edmund Rice school, we, at Ardscoil Rís are committed to the importance of both formal and informal religious and moral education. The characteristic spirit of the congregation of Christian Brothers is based on the vision of Edmund Rice which:

- Gives priority to education in a living faith whereby students grow to appreciate the life and mission of Jesus Christ with a view to being committed to the world as he was.
- Has a special concern for the poor and underprivileged.
- Is challenged to develop a curriculum which promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person.

### ***Vision of an Edmund Rice School:***

Inspired by the vision of Edmund Rice, Ardscoil Rís seeks to:

- Nurture faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values;
- Promote partnership in the school community;
- Excel in teaching and learning;
- Create a caring school community;
- Inspire transformation leadership.

## ***Staffing***

### ***Our Specific Aims at Ardscoil Rís:***

The aims of Religious Education which plays an integral part in the curriculum and philosophy of Ardscoil Rís is to promote in each pupil a knowledge of the importance of faith and practice in everyday life, while adhering to the school ethos.

Religious Education is an integral part of our school ethos and school community and it is imperative that it is given the status it deserves. The appointment of qualified teachers, its priority on the timetable and the allocation of three class periods to each group confirms this importance.

We strive to ensure all our Religion teachers are trained Catechists, teaching both at Junior and Senior Cycle. In addition the school will support any teacher who wishes to gain further qualifications.

The Religious Education Co-ordinator is a rotating position among the qualified Religion teachers.

The religion co-ordinator facilitates the planning, organising and administrative aspects involved in the smooth running of the R.E. dept.

Meetings of the Religious Education Department are formalised so that all relevant teachers may communicate as a group on a weekly basis. The aims of these meetings will be to consistently review practice in the light of the Policy.

## *Curriculum*

The Junior Cycle Religious Education Programme is a core subject at 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year levels but is not an examination subject.

Transition Year students will follow a programme which has been formulated by the Religious Education Department.

The Senior Cycle Religious Education Programme is a core subject at 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year, but is not an examination subject. It is school policy that Religious Education will not be timetabled during the first and last period of each day for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year students where feasible.

Religious Education as an exam subject is reviewed every five years. It was last reviewed by the RE Department in 2015.

The textbook used at Junior Cycle is “Light the Way” by Niall Boyle and the “Good News Bible”. These books are used to help the pupil understand the truth of the Gospel and the challenge of living it. In conjunction with the textbook, a variety of additional resources are used. Due to the evolving nature of Religious Education at Junior Cycle, textbooks are constantly being reviewed and upgraded. We are conscious of economic circumstances and older versions/editions of textbooks are acceptable.

No formal textbook is used in Transition Year but resource materials are provided by teachers and pupils. A modular system is in operation.

The textbook used at Senior Cycle is ‘Life Matters’ by Niall Boyle.

Guest speakers are invited to the school to share their personal experiences on a variety of social topics, thus providing students understanding of their Christian education.

### *Class Periods:*

At both Junior and Senior Cycle there are three class periods per week.

Religious Education classes are timetabled for all students and active participation is encouraged. Exclusion is only allowed with permission of the school management. We, at Ardscoil Rís, encourage students to participate in experiential learning through areas such as social awareness in Transition Year and the India Immersion Project. The students engage in a variety of charitable works, for example, a Christmas Food Appeal.

## *Facilities and Resources*

A variety of resources are stored in the Religion room and are available to relevant teachers. These resources are updated by the Religious Education Department on a continuous basis. A section of the Library is dedicated to Religious Education.

Every effort is made to allocate at least one class period per week in the prayer room. A variety of activities take place including prayer and reflection, liturgical services, meditation and experiential learning.

We regard our staff as a major resource in the promotion of Religious Education.

**Staff Shared Server/Dropbox Folder:** These have been created for sharing and storing resources online.

This will be used for:

- Sharing resources
- Recording agendas and minutes
- Storing subject planning files
- Miscellaneous correspondence

### ***Record Keeping Procedures***

All minutes from RE meetings are filed in the Staff Shared folder. The correspondence and other relevant information is filed in the RE Department folder which is stored by the RE Coordinator.

The RE Department also submit an annual report which records all events, activities and actions within the department during the year.

A dropbox folder has been set up so that the RE team can share and store resources online.

### ***Content and Assessment Techniques***

Consistent with other subjects students are assessed regularly on an informal basis.

The Religion Department is committed to the whole school approach and will endeavour to implement the Literacy and Numeracy Targets where applicable.

### ***Communication***

Activities and features pertinent to the Religious Education Programme are communicated to students through the school newsletter, through the school website, in classes and on the Religious Education notice board and information monitors throughout the school.

## ***Budget***

The Board of Management decides on the Religious Education budget annually.

## ***Chaplaincy Services***

The Board of Management works positively to ensure chaplaincy services are available to the school.

## ***Retreats***

It is school policy that retreats are encouraged and promoted. Retreats are supported by the Religious Education Programme in so far as they meet the needs of the students.

## ***Prayer and Liturgy***

### **Prayer:**

Prayer is an integral part of Religious Education in the school. Each religion class begins with a short prayer. Similarly other meetings in the school commence with a prayer, for example, staff meetings.

All classes have a prayer/reflection in the first class each day and after lunch.

Students are given the opportunity to actively participate in prayer, meditation and reflection. The school religion room provides an ideal setting for such forms of prayer.

### **Liturgy:**

A variety of liturgical and para liturgical worship takes place throughout the year. Such occasions may include:

- Opening of year Masses for Junior and Senior students.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Class Liturgies for the month of November.
- Advent services.
- Christmas Para Liturgy
- Lenten and Easter Liturgies – distribution of ashes etc.
- Edmund Rice Mass.
- Graduation Service.
- Prayer Room Liturgy
- Training of Eucharistic Ministers
- Staff prayer services
- First year prayer services

In exceptional circumstances such as bereavements pertaining to the school, Masses and prayer services maybe held. The importance of Liturgical events is promoted and the whole school/staff is invited to participate in such events.

The services are enhanced through signs and symbols and students' personal input. Christian signs and symbols are displayed throughout the school.

In order to protect, maintain and promote the Catholic ethos, the importance of Holy Days of Obligation in the Liturgical year should be respected.

### ***Parent(s)/Guardian(s)***

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are informed of the aims, objectives and content of Religious Education Programmes by means of:

- Attendance of Religious Education teachers at the parent/teacher meetings.
- Open Night presentations and meetings concerning the India Immersion preparation programme and Encounter programme.

### ***Social Awareness***

Over the years, the school has had an amicable relationship with the local parish and community as well as surrounding parishes. As part of the Transition Year Social Placement Programme many of our students are actively involved with local community organisations, which promotes awareness of social justice amongst the student body.

The Social Placement Programme which takes place during Transition Year plays an important role in making students aware of the social problems that exist within the local community such as Thomond House, Milford Hospice and Focus Ireland.

Action Aid Programmes include the India Immersion Project which occurs bi-annually. Preparation for this project is ongoing so that over a two year period, the students become aware of the social injustices and poverty that exist outside Ireland.

Students are actively involved in fundraising and other charitable works which benefits the under privileged in our own society.

### ***Parish***

The school is situated in Our Lady of the Rosary Parish and links with the parish are actively encouraged.

Students from other parishes, who attend the school, are encouraged to participate in their own parish action projects.

### ***In-Service and Professional Development***

Teachers are facilitated so they can attend meetings with Diocesan advisors.

The Limerick Diocesan Pastoral Centre also provides the team with liturgical resources and teaching resources throughout the year.

All RE department members are members of schoolethos.ie which provides support for learning, spirituality and resources for teaching.

It also provides the team with resources to help celebrate the Liturgical Year.

Additional services provided by schoolethos.ie include invitations to lectures and annual reflection days.

### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

The development of the Religious Education Policy was undertaken by a task group drawn from the staff, Parents' Council, Management and members of the Board of Management,

The Policy is implemented by the Religious Education team, the Religious Education Co-ordinator and supported by the staff.

The monitoring and reviewing of the Religious Education Policy will be carried out by the Board of Management.

### ***Support Systems***

A system of support is in place in the school. This consists of E.R.S.T, Board of Management, liaisons with the Marino Institute, the Diocesan advisors, school Chaplain and priests in the Parish.

### ***Policy Monitoring and Timeframe***

Effective Policy requires constant monitoring and evaluation to ensure successful implementation and to review what adjustments may be necessary from time to time.

#### **Monitoring and Review of Policy:**

Formal monitoring will occur bi-annually.

Board of Management Approved September 2010.

Reviewed – February 2012.

Reviewed – September 2013.

Reviewed By Re Department– April 2015.