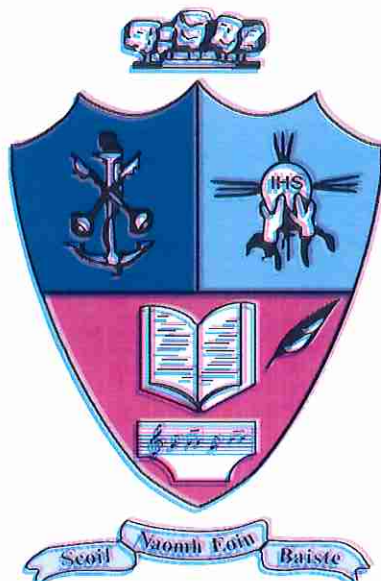


**St. John the Baptist  
Junior Boys' School**  
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Tel: (01) 833 6539  
Roll No. 19006Q



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## Religious Education Policy

# Religious Education Policy

## Introduction

St. John the Baptist Junior Boys' School is a Catholic school under the patronage of His Grace Archbishop Dermot Farrell. We cater for boys from Junior Infants to Second Class. We endeavour to create a pleasant, secure and happy environment and provide a broad, balanced educational experience which promotes a positive attitude towards learning, enabling our boys to recognise their talents and potential.

## The Aim of Religious Education in a Catholic School

The aim of Religious Education is to help children mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives, through their encounter with and exploration and celebration of their Catholic faith.

## Relationship to School Ethos

The school enrolls pupils of other faiths and no faiths in the school, subject to full enrolment criteria and respects their beliefs and practices in accordance with the school ethos of inclusivity.

## The Vision for Religious Education in a Catholic School

Religious Education in the Catholic Primary school has two distinct but complimentary dimensions, the education dimension and the faith formation dimension.

- 1) The educational dimension teaches the children the skills of spiritual, moral and religious literacy.
- 2) The faith-formation dimension helps form the children's characters and values in Jesus Christ. It nurtures and supports their faith development. They begin to experience a sense of belonging to a Faith Community.

## Religious Education

- Seeks to focus on Gospel values and the teachings of the Church.
- Teaches skills of spiritual, moral and religious literacy.
- Contributes to the building of the Faith community.
- Helps pupils develop a living relationship with God and other people.
- Provides a place where all are respected and valued.
- Promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person.
- Works for peace and justice
- Offers outreach to the poor and needy.
- Seeks to care for creation.
- Helps children appreciate and respect the religious traditions within the school.

- Acknowledges the different roles of home, school and parish in the faith formation of the children.

## **School Procedures**

### Whole School Dimension

There is a spirit of prayer in the school. In each classroom there is an atmosphere of openness, forgiveness and understanding. A sense of wonder and awe at the goodness, beauty and love of God is developed in the children. Meaningful icons, pictures and artworks are on display throughout the school building. A dedicated RE noticeboard and altar are in a prominent position in the school foyer.

The major Catholic and local feasts are celebrated. They are marked with the aid of signs and symbols displayed throughout the school:

- Advent – the Advent wreath and Jesse tree
- Christmas – tree and crib
- Catholic Schools' Week
- Feast of St. Brigid – traditional crosses and the story of St. Brigid.
- Feast of St. Patrick – depiction of story and shamrock
- Lent – symbols of repentance and ashes. The children are encouraged to learn about the good work that Trócaire does to help people in need and where possible make a contribution to the Trócaire box.
- Easter- symbols of new life of resurrection
- May- hymns and prayers to Our Lady.
- Pentecost – artistic depiction of the coming of the Holy Spirit

Liturgical Celebrations are held on some occasions e.g.:

- The opening of the school year
- Carol Service at Christmas
- Nativity Plays at Christmas
- Incorporated into School Assemblies

### Sacramental Preparation and Celebration

- The children are prepared for the sacraments of First Penance and First Holy Communion in partnership with home and the parish.
- The school and parish engage with parents to plan for sacramental preparation.
- The school supports the Diocesan guidelines on how best to prepare for and celebrate the sacraments for First Penance and First Holy Communion.
- Parents and children are encouraged to engage in a parish-based programme provided for their preparation for First Holy Communion, such as Do This In Memory.
- The celebration of First Penance takes place in the local church. Parents are invited to participate in the sacrament with their children.

- In preparation for the sacraments, the children learn and memorise the relevant prayers.

### Classroom Environment

- There is a Prayer Space in each classroom. It reflects the current Liturgical Season.
- The Prayer Space contains a Catholic Bible and faith symbols such as holy water, a crucifix or statue.
- Children are encouraged to add faith symbols to the Prayer Space.
- The *Grow in Love* series is taught from Junior Infants to Second Class. It aims to help children to see how they can respond to God's love through love: by doing acts of love that mirror the actions of Jesus.

### Prayer in the classroom

- At the beginning of the day, before and after lunch and before the children leave for home in the afternoon.
- Children learn by heart traditional prayers and Mass responses in accordance with the *Grow in Love* series and in preparation for the sacraments.
- Children have the opportunity to experience different forms of prayer i.e. Spontaneous prayer, guided meditation, reflection on a gospel story etc.

### Connecting with our Parish

- The Catholic education offered in Belgrove JBS is conducted in collaboration with the children's parents/guardians and the local parish.
- We see our role as being supportive of the role of parents/guardians and parish. Our chaplain is a welcome visitor to our classrooms.
- Opportunities are provided for the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday
- Opportunities are provided for informal lessons and talks to pupils on faith development.
- Opportunities are provided for praying with pupils.
- Second Classes are encouraged to attend morning mass in St. Gabriel's Church once a term.

### Connecting to our Parents/ Guardians

The school encourages parental involvement in the following ways:

- Parents/ Guardians are encouraged to engage with their child in the *Grow in Love* weekly lesson for homework in Second Class
- Attendance at Sacramental Preparation meetings is encouraged.
- Parents/ Guardians are informed about which prayers the children are currently learning in school through SeeSaw
- The school recommends parents/guardians to pray with their children at home.
- The parents/guardians are invited to attend the Nativity Play/ Carol Service.
- All are encouraged to support Catholic Schools' Week.

Pupils of other Religious Denominations

Belgrove JBS is a welcoming, inclusive school. Children of all faiths and no faith are welcome.

- The admission policy clearly states that the school is a Catholic School.
- The admissions policy states that the school welcomes diversity and inclusion.
- Parents/Guardians are made aware that the Catholic ethos of our school is not confined to the religion class only, but permeates the whole school day.
- The class teacher and pupils will show interest in any pupil making a special feast in his tradition while attending school.
- Children are helped to recognise that everyone, regardless of their ethnic origin, colour or faith, is created in God's image and is precious in God's eyes.
- Every child, regardless of their faith, is *encouraged* to participate in and benefit from the Catholic religious education programme.
- Sensitivity is always shown to pupils who 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.**
- Children of other faiths who do not wish to participate in the religion class or in meditation will be assigned work to do in the classroom for the duration of the class.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 30 May 2023

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: 3/5/23

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

