

Scoil Asicus Naofa,
Strandhill,
Co Sligo.
Roll No. 15004P



Email: asicus81@gmail.com

Phone: 071- 9168154

www.strandhillnationalschool.ie

Religious Education

Scoil Asicus Strandhill has a Catholic ethos. This encompasses collective attitudes, beliefs, core values, traditions, aspirations and goals. These are reflected in the actual practices which are carried out in the school on a daily, weekly and yearly basis.

Our school welcomes diversity and strives for inclusivity. It is open to people of other denominations, other faiths, and none, welcomes them into its community and respects their beliefs. Pupils are shown by example and teaching to appreciate and respect people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities.

While it is impossible to outline all aspects of the school 'ethos', the following characteristics are experienced and promoted as essential elements in the establishment of a supportive and positive 'ethos'.

- The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil, including his / her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment.
- Religious instruction, in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church is part of the education given to children who belong to that Church.
- Pupils of Catholic faith are prepared for the reception of the sacraments of First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation, in accordance with arrangements in the diocese.
- Prayer is a feature of the school day – at morning assembly, in class and on days when classes visit the church.
- The Principal and teaching staff aim at maintaining high professional standards and creating a safe and happy environment.
- Close contact is maintained between school and home. Parents / guardians and teachers support one another and collaborate with one another in leading the children to the fullness of their potential at the different stages.

Religious Instruction:

Teachers provide religious instruction to children in all classes from Jnr Infants to 6th as set out in Grow in Love programme. Teachers are free to timetable this lesson as best suits their particular class and time allocated for learning support, PE etc. This

programme includes stories, songs and prayers intended to introduce children to the Catholic faith and deepen their understanding of what it means to be a Christian.

Sacred Spaces:

Classrooms will generally have a space dedicated to prayer and reflection. This may include a candle, holy water, crucifix, religious pictures, statues etc. This space will evolve to reflect the seasons in the Christian calendar and be decorated with children's work around Christmas, Easter, St. Patrick's Day etc.

Our school hall will also display seasonal posters and prayers for use at assembly e.g. "In November we pray for the Holy Souls", "St. Brigid's Day".

Catholic Schools Week:

Our school celebrates Catholic Schools Week each January. During this week there is a focus on themes such as "A Living Tradition", "Serving the Community" "Welcoming Everyone". We celebrate Grandparents Day as an extension of this week when children's grandparents are invited to attend a mass in Strandhill and visit the school to meet children in their classrooms.

Christmas Concert:

Children are invited to participate in whole school Christmas concert held in the church each December. All classes perform a song, dance or reflection based on the story of Jesus' birth and parents are invited to attend.

Interaction with the Parish:

- Visits to the Church – children are invited to attend mass for the beginning of the school year, to receive blessed ashes on Ash Wednesday and to visit the church with their teacher.
- School Choir - Children who wish to are prepared to sing and play in our school choir. They perform at a monthly mass in Strandhill church, on the day of First Communion and Confirmation and at other religious events e.g. blessing of an extension.
- Altar Servers – children from 3rd class upwards are invited to act as altar servers in the parish. With parental consent, they may leave the school to serve at funerals during the school day.

Sacraments:

During their period of education in Scoil Asicus, children are prepared for the following sacraments with support from the shared catechist.

Penance

- Children in 2nd class are prepared for the Sacrament of Penance each year. The book **Grow in Love** is used by the teachers and the First Confession ceremonies are prepared and organised by the teachers in collaboration with the priest(s) and parents / guardians.

- First Confessions usually take place shortly before the Communion ceremony and are conducted in the Church in the evening time. Parents / guardians are invited to attend with their children.

First Holy Communion

- Children in 2nd class are prepared for the Sacrament of Communion each year. The book **Grow in Love** is used by the teachers as a guide to the programme of religious education for Communion.
- A series of Masses, called “Do this in Memory” are organised during the school year by the teacher in collaboration with the Priest. Children and their parents/guardians are invited to attend these Masses. The school choir also participates in these Masses.
- Communion ceremonies are prepared and organised by the teachers in collaboration with the priest(s) and parents / guardians.
- Parents / guardians are encouraged to become involved in the formal religious education of their children.

Confirmation

- Children in 6th class are prepared each year for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Grow in Love book is used by the teachers as a guide to the programme of religious education for Confirmation.
- Pupils use a workbook which is completed as each topic is covered in class.
- Parents / guardians are encouraged to become involved in the formal religious education of their children.
- Confirmation ceremonies are prepared and organised by the teachers in collaboration with the priest(s) and parents / guardians. As many children as possible are involved in the ceremony.
- Ceremony of Commitment takes place in November.

Welcoming and respecting people of other faiths and none:

Our school has always included families who practised different faiths and those who were from a humanist or non-religious background. It is an integral part of our school's Catholic ethos that such families and children be welcomed them into our community and respect shown to their beliefs. Teaching and modelling appreciation and respect for people of different religious affiliations and of different nationalities is seen as important for all children living, as they do, in a multicultural and pluralist society.

Parents who do not wish their children to participate in the religious education programme may indicate this to the school upon enrolment and this decision will be communicated to the class teacher.

In classes where sacramental preparation is undertaken, we will endeavour to provide an itinerary to all children near the start of the school year outlining dates when the parish catechist will visit and when church visits / class retreats are taking place. This itinerary, which is liable to change, will also give the date for the sacrament so parents may prepare

suitable alternative educational materials for these days when teachers are rehearsing prayers, responses, reading etc in advance of the sacrament. See note on suitable materials below.

These children will not be expected to join in morning prayer at assembly time or in class prayers. They should arrive in school as normal between 8.45am – 8.55am and can privately say a prayer from their own faith tradition or reflect quietly on those they love and who love them at home instead.

Children will not be expected to participate in the religion class where their parents have expressed a wish to the contrary. Parents can provide children with books or written material of a faith-based or secular nature for the child to view during the lesson. For reasons of supervision, the material should not involve media or ICT and be able to be independently accessed by the child without disturbance to the other children. Where such a child wishes to contribute to the lesson or discussion, their contributions should of course be heard and valued by the teacher and the class.

Parents should be notified when classes are to attend the church so that, should they wish, the child may come to school afterwards or be collected early from school. A note in the child's homework diary will indicate to the teacher that the child will be in school and need not be marked absent. All children present in the school will be accompanied to the church by staff.

Class and school rules around behaviour are written and displayed in a secular manner which does not mention any one religion. There may be non-religious reflections and messages at whole-school assembly – resolutions for a New Year, end of year reflections on how we have grown etc.

Success Criteria:

Our policy on religious education may be assessed on the extent to which succeed in living out our Catholic ethos. This should be evident in pupils' attitudes to one another, to God and to the environment as well as in daily life in school and seasonal celebrations. It should support and foster the Christian faith of children from Catholic backgrounds while also welcoming and respecting children from other religions or non-religious families.

Drafted by Joseph Fogarty
Feedback from teaching staff taken
Feedback from Parents Association
Reviewed & Ratified by Board of Management
To be reviewed
new Board of Management.

6th November 2019
12th November 2019
9th December 2019
28th January 2020
2024 or upon commencement of the

Signed: _____

Gabriel Gormley,
Chairperson Board of Management.