



School Ethos and Religious Education Policy

Ennis National School is a co-educational Catholic primary school under the patronage of the Bishop of Killaloe. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life of Jesus Christ. Our Catholic ethos represents the norms of behaviour which have emerged and continue to emerge gradually from the repeated interactions and relationships between people in the school community. While Ennis National School is a school with a Catholic ethos, it has due recognition for pupils of other faiths or no faith.

Our Catholic ethos finds expression through the care values of our school and through our actions, attitudes and practices:

- The staff of this school want to create a climate of physical, emotional, social, and intellectual safety for students, teachers and parents so that teaching and learning can occur within relationships of mutual valuing and respect.
- With this in mind, the teachers of the school see education not just as providing students with knowledge and skills but also as providing for the emotional, social, sexual, physical and spiritual development of students.
- In this school we want students to be self-motivated and to be at peace with themselves, others and the world. Achievement of these aspirations by the school requires the help and co-operation of students, teachers and parents.

Religious Education and Faith Development

Ennis 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. Sensitivity is always shown to pupils of all faiths. The school cannot, however undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith, nor can it provide supervision during the religious education period apart from the class. Supervision is offered in school for children of other faiths for school Masses which take place during the school day.

Ennis National School has adopted the Grow in Love and Alive – O Catechetical Programmes approved and recommended by the School Patron for use in Catholic Schools. The programme is normally timetabled each day for one half-hour. A Christian ethos however permeates the school day and the life of the school. There is a spirit of prayer in the school. The major Catholic and local feasts are celebrated. Liturgical celebrations are held on occasions and the whole school celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation annually.

Whole School Dimension

There is a spirit of prayer in the school not just imposed on the children, but is seen to be a value for the teachers. In each classroom there is an atmosphere of openness, forgiveness, and understanding. A sense of awe and wonder 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. 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
- Feast of St. Brigid – traditional crosses
- Feast of St. Patrick – depiction of 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

Liturgical celebrations are held on some occasions e.g.

- The opening and closing of the school year
- Carol service at Christmas
- Times of trauma or crisis and for other occasions which from time to time are considered appropriate to celebrate or to mark.
- Incorporated into school assemblies

The pupils of the school join:

- At the celebration of First Communion and Confirmation
- School Mass at the beginning of the year
- Other liturgical celebrations in cooperation with the parish e.g. Christmas morning Mass in the Cathedral

Connecting with our Parish:

The Catholic education offered in Ennis National School is conducted in collaboration with the children's parents and the local parish. We see our role as being supportive of the role of parents and parish. The local priests occasionally visit classrooms. Opportunities are provided for:

- Blessing of throats on the feast of St Blaize
- Distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday
- Hearing of pupil confessions
- Informal lessons and talks to pupils on faith development
- Praying with pupils

Spiritual Formation of Teachers

The spiritual nourishment of teachers is understood by the Board of Management to be an integral part of the religious education programme undertaken by the school.

Teaching Methodologies Used To Achieve Aims

- Study of the *Alive – O Teacher's Guide*
- Interactive learning
- Giving children prayer experiences that are meaningful
- Sacramental and non-sacramental liturgies
- Use of imagination in prayer
- Drama and role play on the theme of Christian Values
- Questions and answers helping children to use their own words
- Vocal prayer



Other Religious Denominations

Subject to the terms of the enrolment and admission policy, we enrol pupils of other faiths or no faith in the school and accord due respect for their beliefs and practices, faiths in their own faith. S

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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 neighbour.'

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.

Children of other faiths who do not wish to participate in the RE class of the day or in meditation will be assigned work to do in the classroom for the duration of the class.