

Our Lady's College,
Greenhills,
Drogheda,
Co. Louth.

Faith Development Policy

'Pro Fide Et Moribus'

'I believe life is more than survival. I believe the heart is more than a muscle. I believe in hope and freedom. I believe we can know right from wrong. I believe my life can make a difference. I believe the message of the cross.'

Rom.10: 9-13

Eph.2: 8-10

Year:

2007 – 2008

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MISSION STATEMENT:

We are a Christian Community founded by the Presentation Order, which is committed to:

- Fostering Gospel values and ensuring a Catholic ethos as the cornerstone of school life in co-operation with parents and the local community.
- Being aware of the Pastoral needs of all the students and providing an environment which will enable them to develop their full potential as individuals who recognize their own dignity, value and worth.
- Reflecting Nan Nagle's mission to education of the marginalized.
- Offering a balanced curriculum of subject choices that will enable each student to develop at his/her own rate and to her/his own potential.
- Delivering the highest standards of teaching, learning and performance.
- Cultivating an ongoing awareness of the beauty of the school surroundings and its maintenance.

Scope

The Policy aims to reflect and promote the work of faith development in the school community. It works to encourage all students to explore and deepen their faith . It works to promote Catholic and Presentation values. It works to outline where and how faith is developed in the life of our community.

Relationship to Mission and Vision

In line with the admission policy, the school's mission statement and Catholic values in education, the school welcomes all students to Our lady's College. Each student attends J.C. religion exam classes. At senior cycle all students participate in religious education . This course reflects the N.C.C.A . and Veritas programmes . Students take a transition year religion programme. Students can choose to take Religion as an exam subject at Leaving Certificate level. Students participate in school liturgies and retreats. Students of other faiths and none are encouraged to observe or participate in these activities as part of the formal religion programme.

Rationale

Faith is a personal insight and response to God at work in our school and in our lives. Our Catholic community life encourages faith to grow through the religious education curriculum, provision of sacraments, concern for the disadvantaged, charity work, prayer, ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. This faith policy reflects the mission and vision of the school and outlines where all the above are a part of our community life.

Goals

The policy aims to specify the activities undertaken in the school to promote the faith of its Catholic students . It also aims to encourage other students to deepen their particular faith . These activities are set out under the following headings

- 1. The Formal RE Programme**
- 2. The Celebration of Faith in our Community and charitable activities.**
- 3. Student Welfare Policies**

1. The Formal Religious Education Programme

The formal religious education policy through its content, aims and objectives develops students faith.

(See appendix for detail of the programme)

2.The Celebration of Faith in our Community and Charitable Activities

Throughout the year numerous prayer services, masses and charitable events take place which work to celebrate and develop faith in our community.

Prayer and Liturgy

A spirit of prayer is promoted and developed in the school. The school has a dedicated oratory/sacred space which is open to students and staff . Resources are made available to ensure that the ambience of the oratory is peaceful,warm welcoming and conducive to reflective prayer.

The school has a chapel which is also available for school prayer services.

All school meetings begin with a reflective prayer including
The Board of Management Meetings
Staff Meetings
Student Assemblies
Parent Meetings
Student Council Meetings

In addition teachers are encouraged to start class with a prayer.
Special occasions are marked with prayers over the intercom.

The Schools Liturgical calendar includes **Services to Celebrate the Start of the School Year**

- Pre First year mass
- 1st Year Initiation Ceremony

Celebrations specific to the school ,such as

- Presentation day(21st November)is marked with prayer
- A special November mass to remember past staff,students workers and parents who have passed away.
- The school community also celebrate various feast days throughout the year e.g.St.Brigid's day .This is marked by teachers in class and a corresponding prayer may occur over the intercom.
 - Throughout the year ,various class groups organise class masses,paraliturgies,meditations,etc
- As part of the Transition Year Programme and the L.C.A.pupils complete a Visitation programme. Apt reflections take place on this experience.

Advent /Christmas

Each Christmas a carol service is held for the whole school.Through prayer- songs - readings- dance art and drama the school community celebrate the birth of Our Lord.

Lent /Easter

A ceremony is held each year on Ash Wednesday in the school chapel.
During Lent reconciliation services are held for class groups.

End of Year Mass

Every year ,all those involved in the transition year programme , hold a mass to celebrate their transition year.

A Graduation mass is held for sixth years to celebrate, in prayer, their school life.

Throughout the year the school holds liturgies in response to particular life events.

Symbols of Faith

Symbols and art displays which reflect the faith dimension of the school are placed in prominent positions in the school.

Retreats

As part of the religion programme students attend a retreat each year.

Charity

Throughout the year numerous charity events take place. Some include

- Drogheda Cares at Christmas
 - Concern Fast
- Badminton Marathons for Presentation Sisters in Africa
 - Cake Sales for Bothair (and other causes) etc
 - Charity work by the Student Council
 - Trocaire 24 Hour fast is organised

This community work is witness to the message and spirit of The Gospel.

3. Student Welfare

Our school community takes a holistic approach to the development of students. This includes their spiritual development. Through personal development classes the spiritual wellbeing of the students is nurtured. The school has a Head of Year Team which meets weekly and monitors the implementation of pastoral care courses. These classes reflect the gospel message of justice equality love and care. The school in conjunction with the chaplain cares for students through, observing, understanding and developing a caring listening attitude. The school community nurtures the gift of who each student is. The chaplain has a special role in caring for children who are bereaved through death, or any loss in their lives. The school community cares for children who are sick or indeed a member of their family. The community through its work reflects Nano Nagles' mission of educating the marginalized neglected and those on the fringes. In the words of Dom Helder Camara

“If I Could”

If I could,

I'd Give every child

A terrestrial globe.....

If possible, even

A globe that would light up

In the hope

Of opening those young eyes

As wide as they will go

And of arising interest in,

And love for,

All peoples

All races

All tongues

All religions!

Roles In Promoting Faith Development

In the Catholic School a key role of the principal is to promote and uphold the faith life of the school.

The staff and school departments are a part of faith development in the school. Many subjects including religion, art, music, drama, the choir and orchestra contribute greatly to the liturgical and spiritual life of the school.

Many subjects examine the human search for meaning.

Teachers work in many subjects to examine and explore spirituality.

The Management, Parents Council and Presentation Congregation support the school in this work. Religion teachers contribute by delivering their courses and supporting the liturgical and spiritual life of the school.

Diocesan Adviser

The Diocesan Adviser makes resources available to teachers for use during the Liturgical Year. These are posted on the Religion Noticeboard.

He provides inservice in the region for Faith Development.

Chaplain

The Chaplain is committed to the value of Christ as lived out in Nano Nagle's vision and the schools' mission statement "a Christian community founded by the Presentation order which is committed to fostering Gospel values ensuring a Catholic ethos as the cornerstone of school life in co-operation with parents and the local community"

The Chaplain is available to support the school community: including

- R.E Teachers
- Pastoral Care Teachers
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Parents

The Chaplain works in a collaborative way to lead by/through witness.

The role of the Chaplain is to create an understanding and develop a caring, listening, supportive, hope-filled attitude toward all people young and old. This includes high and low achievers "all peoples races tongues and religions" (Dom helder Camara)

To pray with and for groups in various ways through prayer services.

To facilitate ordained Chaplains and be present for the following

- The celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- The Celebration of the Eucharist
- To take responsibility for the T.Y. religion programme.

The Role of the Family

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Faith development takes place within the family in a unique way, christian initiation based on solid human values begins in the family. The family awakens the sense of God, prayer and moral conscience. Parents provide Christian education for their children more by being witnesses to Christian life and religious values, rather than through formal teaching.

Catechesis is the responsibility of the entire Christian community, the family- the parish the school, they work hand in hand to develop the faith our students.