

Loreto Secondary School, Wexford



Religious Education Policy

Religious Education (RE) Policy:

Mission Statement:

Truth, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy – as relevant today in Loreto, Wexford as for Mary Ward in 1609.

The Religious Education (RE) Policy in Loreto Secondary School, Wexford is based on the aims and vision contained in the school's policy document. Loreto Secondary School is a Catholic school, founded by Mary Ward, offering Religious Education to students of all faiths and none. In accordance with the school's aims, Religious Education strives to promote the moral, spiritual, academic, social and personal development of the students.

Towards this end, since September 2000, the RE Department has taught the Department of Education and Skills Junior Cycle Religious Education syllabus. Complimenting the aims of the school's own policy document, the rationale for the Religious Education specification 'aims to develop knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values to enable young people to come to an understanding of religion and its relevance to life, relationships, society and the wider world. It aims to develop the students' ability to examine questions of meaning, purpose and relationships, to help students understand, respect and appreciate people's expression of beliefs, and to facilitate dialogue and reflection on the diversity of beliefs and values that inform responsible decision-making and ways of living (NCCA RE specification)'. Religious Education is a core subject of our Junior Cycle programme.

The school's chaplains are Fr. Jim Fegan, P.P. Ballindaggin and Ms. Linda Jordan. Both Chaplains supports the ethos of the school, coordinates/celebrates liturgical events and provides support following a bereavement.

The policy of Religious Education in this school includes the following:

- In accordance with the Catholic Bishops' guidelines, and as required by the Loreto Education Trust, we are committed to providing a minimum of three class periods of Religious Education to all non-examination classes in 4th, 5th and 6th year. During 6 – 8 lessons per year, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) will be taught to 5th and 6th year students at RE time.
- In accordance with the stated aims of the Department of Education and Youth Junior Cycle Religious Education Specification, Religious Education in this school, whilst promoting a Catholic ethos, will be offered to students of all faiths and none.
- All senior level students will be expected to study Religious Education. Students will also be offered the Department of Education and Skills Leaving Certificate Religious Education Specification to be taught along with non-examination Religious Education.
- It is the policy of this school that the Religious Education Department will co-operate with the school chaplain in organising liturgical events for the school year. It is envisaged that these will be cross-curricular events. It is also the policy of this school that all students will be strongly encouraged and most welcome to participate in school community events.
- The Religious Education Department will encourage the students to develop an awareness of the work of charitable organisations.
- It is part of the vision of this school that the study of Religious Education would act as a link between parish, school and home. First years will be given a retreat each year. Other retreats and wellbeing days will be organised in accordance with the wishes

and needs of students. These form an important part of the pastoral care of our students, and students of all faiths and none are encouraged to attend.

- It is the policy of this school that all Religious Education teachers be suitably qualified, insofar as possible, to teach this subject at examination level to both Junior and senior students.
- It is the policy of this school that all Religious Education teachers be suitably qualified, insofar as is possible, to teach senior non-examination students.
- The Religious Education Department will be adequately resourced each year and Religious Education teachers will be facilitated to attend in-service courses.
- The Prayer Room is a sacred space reserved for religious activities, both individual and communal, within the school.
- Religious Education teachers will co-operate with the Diocesan Advisor.

Non-Participation Policy:

As a Loreto school we are committed to the holistic education of our students, and we believe our Loreto Charism contributes to the education of the whole person.

Religious Education is taught in an invitational rather than instructional way, suitable for all students.

If a student wishes to withdraw from the study of Religious Education, their parents/guardians must make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Principal or Deputy Principal.

While it is a parent's right to withdraw their daughter from RE class, individual supervision of the student outside of the RE classroom due to the limitations of the Department of Education and Youth's staff allocation to the school will not be possible. Students who opt out of Religious Education will have to remain in the classroom while not participating.

The 1998 Education Act states that schools are required to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students (Section 9(d)). The allocated time on the timetable for Religious Education responds to this. Students who opt out of the subject will be required to use this time to study something relating to their own religious tradition or belief, for example, a sacred text. For a student of no faith, relevant literature or philosophical texts will be available in the school library. Students are welcome to bring their own texts in consultation with their teacher.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 20 April 2026 and will be reviewed periodically.

Signed: Edward Lyons

Edward Lyons, Chairperson, Board of Management.

Signed: John Mc Ginnity

John Mc Ginnity, Principal.