



BLACKROCK COLLEGE C.S.Sp.
ESTABLISHED 1860

Religious Education and Faith Formation Policy

Due for next review: December 2022

Blackrock College is a Catholic school, established and owned by the Spiritans. Central to its mission, Blackrock College recognises its responsibilities:

"To create an environment which nurtures faith, one which will provide students with an informed understanding of the Catholic Faith, but which also motivates them to live their lives in accordance with Gospel values". (Mission Statement)

This Religious Education and Faith Formation policy (R.E policy) impacts on the entire school community. Support for, promotion and implementation of the policy comes from the Spiritan congregation and the whole school community. Within this community some sectors have a particular responsibility:

The patron body - The Spiritan Education Trust - approve and assist in the implementation of the R.E. policy, in line with the Spiritan educational ethos (Appendix 1).

Board of Management: approve the policy and ensure its implementation.

Senior Leadership Team: inherit and protect the Spiritan ethos in supporting the procedures of the policy, ensuring its effective implementation and reviewing it regularly.

School Staff: embrace, safeguard and promote the Ethos of the school and support the cross-curricular nature of Religious Education.

Teachers of Religious Education: develop, implement and review the policy ensuring a high standard and effective delivery of Religious Education, faith development and prayer opportunities.

College Chaplain: assists the faith and prayer development of students and delivers appropriate pastoral care.

Parents/ Guardians: as primary transmitters of faith to their children, support the R. E. programme in the school as an important element in this faith formation.

Students: participate in the Religious Education Programme on an intellectual, emotional and spiritual level with opportunities to engage actively in works of charity, social justice and prayer. Participation in the programme enables students to cultivate an openness to other religious traditions.

The Education Act 1998 states that a recognized school should: *"(d) promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school"*.

To this end, formal religious education is placed at the heart of the school's programme of instruction. A Religious Education programme for each year group is in place (Appendix 2). Each student receives a minimum of two hours of religious education per week, in line with the Dublin Diocesan requirements for Catholic schools. The College ensures that the number of religious education class groups in each year does

not fall below the number of class groups in any other core subject. The number and quality of catechists is a school priority.

All 2nd and 3rd year students prepare for and sit the D.E.S. Junior Cycle (Certificate) Religious Education exam. *“Religious Education promotes the holistic development of the person. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual and moral development of students. Religious Education provides a particular space for students to encounter and engage with the deepest and most fundamental questions relating to life, meaning and relationships. It encourages students to reflect, question, critique, interpret, imagine and find insight for their lives. The students’ own experience and continuing search for meaning is encouraged and supported.”*(Junior Cycle Religious Education Specification, NCCA)

Senior cycle students study modules designed and implemented by the R.E. Department or they may opt to take Religious Education as a Leaving Certificate Exam subject. Students in the senior choirs learn liturgical music and provide choral accompaniment at all school liturgies as part of their programme. The college’s RSE programme is delivered within the R.E. timetable for senior cycle. The positioning of R.E. classes in the college timetable facilitates modular teaching at senior cycle (4th, 5th and 6th years) thus ensuring optimum delivery. R.E. makes a distinctive contribution to the Transition and Senior Cycle years by developing the boys’ knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, practice, language and traditions and their influence on individuals, communities and cultures.

Pastoral Care:

While all teachers have a duty of care for students in their charge some have a particular responsibility for the pastoral care of students:

The College Chaplain oversees the spiritual welfare of students, individually and collectively, with particular responsibility for promoting personal prayer, bereavement counselling and preparation of sacraments of initiation. The College Chaplain is also available to the college staff.

The Guidance Counselling Department promotes the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of the students.

The Pastoral Programme Department co-ordinates, facilitates and supports college liturgies and prayer opportunities, days of reflection, pastoral outreach and pilgrimages. A pastoral programme for each year group is in place (Appendix 3).

The Choral Director has responsibility for liturgical music.

The Blackrock College Spiritan community, as the local presence of the congregation, ensures the celebration of masses for the college community and participates in College liturgies. It is particularly cognisant of pastoral outreach to past pupils, parents and the local community.

The College has a particular obligation towards the disadvantaged members of society, in line with the missionary vision of the founders, Claude Poullart Des Places, Francis Libermann and Jules Leman. The College motivates its students to work for ***the promotion of a caring, Christian society in which honesty and justice are fostered.*** Through working with appropriate Christian charities, for example, the Society of St Vincent De Paul, and especially Spiritan works of service, the students are encouraged to work for the creation of a more Christian society.

Students in Transition Year have an opportunity to work on the Mathew 25 Programme, ***a Pastoral Placement where they can learn the value of service to others*** particularly those with disabilities. In such service they see God's love made present and the work of the Church continuing.

The college aims to foster and develop, in their students, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, through prayer. Opportunities for personal and communal, formal and informal prayer are provided regularly in the school.

The school is ecumenical in its disposition. It is expected that parents who enrol their sons commit to supporting the College ethos as stated in the Mission Statement and continue to do so while their son(s) is (are) at the College. All students attend Religious Education classes and related activities. Parents and students are informed of this at enrolment and in the school contract. Withdrawal of a student from liturgical ceremonies is only facilitated after a parental, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years of age the student's, written request and a discussion with school management. Arrangements agreed upon must facilitate the student's spiritual and moral growth.

Catholic students are required to provide evidence of Baptism at point of entry. The Chaplain and RE teachers should be made aware of students who are not Catholic or who have not received these sacraments by the school management at the start of each year.

The Religion Department, the Pastoral Care Department and the Chaplain each have their own offices. Members from these departments, along with College management and the Blackrock Spiritan Community meet on a regular basis to keep the pastoral life of the school community under review. Meetings are chaired by the Head of the Pastoral Department and minutes of meetings kept.

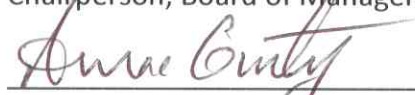
This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management on 15 December 2020

Signed:



Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed:



Secretary, Board of Management

Appendix 1

Abridged version of Spiritan Ethos Document.

The Spiritan Education Ethos is guided and grounded by seven core values:

Openness to the Spirit

Guided by the Holy Spirit in our relationships, choices, behaviours and decisions.

A Sense of Community

Working together as a family of schools who are committed to the fulfilment of every individual's human potential through support and advocacy.

Concern for the Poor

To create an awareness of the disadvantaged in our society and to promote a responsibility of the better off towards a global society where poverty is eliminated.

Commitment to service

To follow in the footsteps of des Places by building a commitment of service to each other and to our communities.

Global Vision

Reflecting the missionary outlook of the Congregation, Spiritan

Education works for the empowerment of peoples and their liberation from injustice, poverty and ignorance.

High Educational Standards

The realisation of each person's holistic potential and to strive for excellence in all areas of life.

Personal Development

The moral, spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and cultural aspects of each student's development is at the heart of the Spiritan vision of Education.

Appendix 2

RE Programme

All 2nd Years and 3rd Years study the DES Junior Cycle/Certificate Religion Education specifications and take it as an exam. Junior Cycle Religious Education has been designed for a minimum of 200 hours of timetabled student engagement across the three years of junior cycle. The Classroom-Based Assessments will be set at a common level and there will be a common level externally assessed final examination.

All 4th, 5th AND 6th YRS STUDY RELIGION. THERE IS A MODULAR PROGRAMME WHICH INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING TOPICS

TRANSITION YEAR

Module 1: “Justice in Ireland”

Module 2: “Justice in the Developing World”

LEAVING CERTIFICATE: YEAR 1

Module 1 “RSE & Catholic Marriage”

Module 2 “World Religions”

Module 3: “Morality, Truth and Conscience”

LEAVING CERTIFICATE: YEAR 2

Module 1: “Jesus of Nazareth”

Module 2 : “The Catholic Church Today”

Module 3: “Faith and Unbelief”

RSE: Six lessons on RSE are delivered to each class

Appendix 3

1. Pastoral Programme

A Pastoral Programme is in place for all years. The Common Elements are as follows:

- Reconciliation (twice in the year)
- Investiture of House Representatives
- Day of Reflection (for each year group)
- Christmas Carol Service
- Family Mass for each year
- Service for Ash Wednesday
- Mission Awareness
- Catholic Schools Week
- Celebration of feast days: Francis Libermann, Claude Des Places, Feast of Immaculate Conception, Feast of the Epiphany

- 6th Yr Retreats (Sun – Tue)
- 6th Yr Volunteers on Dublin Diocese Pilgrimage to Lourdes
- 6th Yr Commissioning of Eucharistic ministers.
- 4th Yr Pilgrimage to Santiago De Compostela
- 4th Yr Pastoral Placement (2 Weeks)
- 4th Yr Faith Friends Programme
- 4th Yr Soup Run programme