**Religious Education and Faith Inclusion Policy**

**Colaiste Nano Nagle**

**Sexton Street**

**Limerick**

**“Faith is not simply the subject matter of particular lessons but forms the foundation of all that we do and the horizon of all that takes place in the school”**

**(Vision ’08)**

**Mission Statement of Colaiste Nano Nagle**

Our school is a Christian community, which welcomes students in the tradition of Nano Nagle, Foundress of presentation Order.

A primary aim of our school is the pursuit of academic excellence.

We seek to develop the full potential of each person; intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social, physical and creative.

To achieve this, the school strives to provide an educational environment suited to the needs of each individual, within the demands of a changing world.

**Trusteeship**

This voluntary secondary school is in the trusteeship of CEIST, Catholic Education Irish Schools Trust. It is conducted in accordance with the CEIST Charter Values.

It compromises of Five Religious Congregations: Presentation Sisters, Daughters of Charity, Sisters of Christian Retreat, Sisters of Mercy and Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

**CEIST Vision**

To create a compassionate and just society inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

**CEIST Mission**

To provide a holistic education in the Catholic tradition.

**CEIST Values**

“The core values of CEIST are intended to nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of the school-students, staff and parents.

These are the members of the school; their rights must be respected and their responsibilities should be performed in a manner which promotes the spiritual development of each person, creates a sense of community and is founded on compassion and justice.

These values can only be lived out if students, staff and parents work together for the common good of all.

In CEIST schools processes should be put in place to deal with areas of conflict and disagreement so that the dignity of all members of the school can be protected.”

**The Five CEIST Values**

1. Promoting Spiritual and Human Development
2. Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning
3. Showing Respect for every person
4. Creating Community
5. Being Just and Responsible

(CEIST Charter)

**Educational Philosophy of Presentation Schools**

Presentation Education draws inspiration from and is guided by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the teaching of the Catholic Church, the spirit and life of Nano Nagle and the Constitutions of the Presentation Congregation.

**Introduction**

A Catholic school, of its very nature, exists as a faith community and faith development is a process through which this community deepens its Christian life. Spiritual and moral development cannot be relegated to the realm of Religious Education only but are nurtured by the whole curriculum. Each member of the school community has a responsibility to live in a way that witness to the Gospel so that Faith permeates all aspects of our school life.

**“Faith is not simply the subject matter of particular lessons but forms the foundation of all that we do and the horizon of all that takes place in the school”**

**(Vision ’08)**

**Rationale**

The rationale of the Faith Formation Policy/Religious Education Policy of Colaiste Nano Nagle is based on the CEIST Charter and on the characteristic spirit of Nano Nagle and the educational philosophy of Presentation Congregation.

This policy will articulate this school’s commitment to its catholic ethos and to the religious and moral development of our students. It will ensure that in striving to achieve academic excellence, this school will also provide holistic education and spiritual formation that each student may learn to live in solidarity with other persons in search of common good.

**Goals:**

* To promote awareness of the reality that faith formation belongs to the whole school community.
* To support and encourage parents in exercising their responsibility for their child’s spiritual growth and faith formation in partnership with the school and parish communities.
* To develop a sense of God in the lives of our students.
* To provide a framework for a school faith community this will enable its students to become catalysts for social transformation.

**Aims**

* To contribute to the religious formation and faith development of our students and to their spiritual and moral development.
* To encourage all members of the school community in their search for truth and in seeking answers to the fundamental questions about the meaning of life.

(Ref**: Vision ’08** p.2)

* To allow each member of the school community to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ which will give meaning and purpose to their lives.

(REF **CEIST** Charter p. 12)

* To nourish the life of students, staff and parents as they work together for the common good, respecting each other’s rights and the carrying out responsibilities in a manner which promotes the spiritual development of each person, achieves quality in teaching and learning, creates a sense of community and is founded on compassion and justice. (Ref: **CEIST** Charter p. 12)
* To deliver the RE Curriculum as prescribed by the Department of Education and skills. (www.education.ie)
* To plan and prepare all liturgical celebrations in the school.
* To provide retreats for each year group.
* To share Morning Prayer for the whole school community.

**Relationship to other policies**

All policies are informed by the school’s Catholic/CESIST values.

However other policies which particularly reflect the school’s ethos and it’s faith in action will include the school Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Child Protection, S.P.H.E. and R.S.E.

**Relationship to Admission Policy**

In line with our admissions policy and the Catholic Ethos of the school, this school is open and accessible to all without discrimination.

Students of all faith (or of no faith) are welcome to this school.

Each student is welcome to attend and benefit from the religious education programme in this school.

R.E. plays a pivotal role in the holistic development of the student. The Principal outlines to Parent/Guardian of incoming students the importance of attending R.E. class.

If a Parent wishes to withdraw their daughter from R.E. class, as is their Constitutional Right (Article 42 (1)), it is not possible for the school to provide supervision of the student outside of the classroom. If a Parent/Guardian is willing to supervise his/her daughter, the school will accept the offer however this must be negotiated with school management.

Parents could also be informed that a copy of the syllabus can be found on the Department of Education website (www.education.ie) or obtained from the Government Publications Office in Molesworth Street, Dublin.

Parents should be made aware of the new Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus (NCCA, 2000) as some parents may think its approach is doctrinal and proselytising in nature. Parents of other faiths should be informed that the syllabus is a positive step forward in promoting understanding of other faiths as well as the Christian faith.

Religious Education should ensure that students are exposed to a broad range of religious traditions and to the non-religious interpretation of life. It has a particular role to play in the curriculum in the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding.

It seeks to develop in students the skills needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other, or of no religious traditions. It is important to note that the syllabus is a state syllabus, written to encompass all faiths and none.

There is no reason why students of different faiths in a Catholic school should not participate fully in this syllabus, whether the class is sitting the exam or not. However, denominational schools, with a particular characteristic spirit or ethos, should be and are entitled to teach the syllabus through the lens of their own religious tradition.

*“It should also be made clear that their son or daughter will be experiencing the values and ethos of the school in the day-to-day running of the school, not just in RE class. If the parents are concerned about the Christian content in the curriculum, they should be encouraged to see it as a civic education for their son or daughter to understand more about the history and heritage of Ireland. There would never be any effort to ‘convert’ their son or daughter to Catholicism.” (JMB Guidelines on inclusion of students of other faiths in a Catholic Secondary school)*

*“This is the allocated time on the timetable for Religious Education and faith formation and students of other faiths should be required to use this time to study something relating to their own religious tradition, for example, a sacred text.*

*If a student is humanist or a nonbeliever, there is still relevant literature or philosophical texts that could be read during this time, for example Sophie’s World by Jostein Gaarder or Man’s Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl.*

*This approach highlights the importance the school places on the religious or spiritual formation of all of its students. All students have their own personal journey that should be encouraged and respected” (JMB Guidelines on inclusion of students of other faiths in a Catholic Secondary school)*

***Guidelines on the Inclusion of Students of other Faiths in Catholic Secondary School April 2010 JMB.***

* ***The Catholic ethos of the school needs to be explained to all parents prior to enrolment in the school.***
* ***Any difficulty with the school uniform or Religious Education or any other subject should be discussed and resolved before the student is admitted.***
* ***Subjects such as music, PE and RSE should also be discussed with parents from different religious backgrounds prior to enrolment.***
* ***It is important to allay any parental fears about proselytising in the Catholic school. Parents should be informed that the Religious Education syllabi are open to all faiths and no faith.***
* ***It should also be made clear that their son or daughter will be experiencing the values and ethos of the school in the day-to-day running of the school, not just in RE class.***
* ***All students are encouraged to grow in their own faith or spirituality, whether it is Catholic or not.***
* ***A student of a different denomination cannot insist that religious instruction in that denomination be provided.***
* ***Withdrawal from Religious Education can present a difficulty for the Catholic school, as Religious Education is at the heart of its enterprise. However, students who are withdrawn from formal Religious Education classes can be asked to use these classes to explore their own faith tradition or some philosophical text, rather than doing their homework.***

[www.**jmb**.ie/menu-news/583-**students-of-other**-**faiths**-manua](http://www.jmb.ie/menu-news/583-students-of-other-faiths-manua)

**The main liturgical celebration:**

* Opening of the New school Year
* CEIST Values week
* Prayer Service for all Souls
* Presentation Day
* Reconciliation
* Christmas Liturgy
* Catholic Schools Week
* St. Bridget’s Day
* Feast of St. Blaise
* Ash Wednesday
* Easter
* Leaving Cert Graduation
* Prayer services
* Retreats
* Month of Our Lady- May

Each day begins with a morning prayer. This is led by the RE Department and is delivered over the public address system. The prayer is based on the liturgical calendar, relevant needs to the school community, major national and world events.

**Facilities**

* The school RE classroom is a very important facility and is updated as the need requires. The room contains symbols from the Five Major World Religions.
* School Oratory is a sacred space and is respected and maintained by the RE Department.
* There are Christian symbols displayed in all classrooms and there are sacred spaces in the school, which vary in conjunction with the liturgical season.

**Resources**

* Financial support is available through the RE Budget in the school for resources, hiring of Retreat team and Priests.

**Roles and Responsibilities in Developing and Implementing the Policy**

It is essential that all members of the school community commit to the implantation and practice of the Faith Development Policy:

***Board of Management:*** To commit, to promote and to support the Catholic Ethos of the School.

***Principal/Deputy Principal:*** to ensure the procedures of the policy work towards its implementation.

***All School Staff:*** all Staff must understand the values underpinning Catholic Education and that they subscribe to engaging in the implementation and cultivation of a culture of Faith in the life of the school.

***Teachers of Religious Education and Chaplain***: formation will happen through formal programmes- but a Faith Development policy will ensure whole school support for R.E. team in promoting liturgical and sacramental life of the school.

***Parents/Guardian:*** to accept responsibility as the primary religious educators of their children. While understanding that the Catholic Ethos of the school is respectful of, and open to, students of all faith traditions and none, parents must be prepared to acknowledge and support the Catholic Ethos of the school.

***Students:*** will participate in the R.E. programme. All will undertake to live the values of the CEIST charter to the best of their ability and endeavour to become involved in the liturgical celebrations and various social justice programmes undertaken by the school.

The Teaching Staff, Parents Association and the Board of Management have read this policy and made the necessary recommendations.

This policy will be reviewed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of the Board of Management