



St. Brigid's G.N.S.

Policy on Opting out of Religious Instruction

Introduction

This policy was formulated in consultation with staff of St. Brigid's GNS with the aim of providing a clear plan for parents with regards to children opting out of religious instruction.

Children of all faiths and different stances for living are welcome in our school. Our school is hospitable, open and inclusive. We continuously strive for best practice concerning the inclusion of pupils in our school. Our practice is founded on principles of good communication, clarity on rights and responsibilities, good relationships, openness to dialogue and compromise and flexibility. With this in mind we wish to outline how these children can be supported in our school.

- Parents are aware that there are prayers at moments during the school day. It is made clear that for children of other faiths and different stances for living, that these can be times for personal reflection.
- Parents who have concerns about the content of the Religious Education Programme are invited to meet with the Principal.
- If parents wish to have their children opt out of formal religious education, the school offers that the pupil can:
 - Stay within the classroom and engage in an educationally appropriate activity (Appendix A).
 - Be withdrawn* by a parent for the duration of the Religious Lesson.

**In exceptional circumstances, particularly with infants, withdrawal of students during religion class can be facilitated in school, however this may not always be possible.*

- Parents whose children are of other faiths or different stances for living are made aware in advance of any religious events or celebrations.
- Children are always invited but not obliged to attend all Catholic religious celebrations in the school.
- Planned visits to the church for sacramental preparation will be communicated to parents; during this time children of other faiths or different stances for living can either be collected by a parent or remain in school and be supervised by another member of staff.

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St Brigid's GNS, Killester.

Signed: *Carmel Reid*

Date: 14th May 2024

Review Date: May 2028

Appendix A:

- Project work on SEE topic of choice
- EPIC website- teacher assigns books to children; engage in quizzes relating to books if provided
- Senior classes engage in STEM activities- use suggestion cards as stimulus
- Senior classes; engage in open ended Maths problem solving activities
- Supervised project work/research in another room where a member of staff is available
- Work through activities in a Wellbeing booklet appropriate to their age
- Engage with Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) and Ethics curriculum designed by the NCCA
- Engage in Global Village Schools Pilot Programme; the programme supports teachers to embed Global Citizenship Education (GCE) into their classroom and whole school planning and practice
- *Infant classes engage in station activities in peer teacher's class while religious instruction lessons are taking place