



Monkstown Educate Together

National School

**Religious Education Core Curriculum
at
Dalkey School Project N.S
&
Monkstown Educate Together N.S**

April 2020



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1. Preface

The purpose of this document is to provide information for parents and members of the Dalkey School Project about the Religious Education Core Curriculum (RECC) which is offered in the two schools that are under the patronage of the DSP; Monkstown Educate Together National School (METNS) and Dalkey School Project National School (DSPNS).

A booklet describing this programme was produced in 1989. In 1998 a review of the RECC was initiated. The original booklet indicated that the programme would be updated periodically to incorporate new ideas and suggestions. With the establishment of a second school under the patronage of the DSP a review of the RECC became of increasing importance. Many changes have occurred in Irish society since the development of the original RECC programme and this programme needs to accommodate these changes while at the same time maintaining and reinforcing the core values of the DSP. The review focused on the Aims and Objectives of the RECC. This is just a beginning; teachers in both schools are reviewing the teaching programme in light of the revised aims and objectives. The ultimate intention is to develop a comprehensive Religious Education Core Curriculum for both schools.

It is recognised that before the DSP-National School was set up in 1978, a programme of this kind had never before been attempted in a national school in this country. The Dalkey School Project, as Patron of the school, appreciates the considerable work and effort that was put into the development of the original curriculum by teachers from the DSPNS in the early years. We would like in particular to thank the members of the Religious Education Advisory Committee (REAC), which has been instrumental in producing the revised aims and objectives. We were particularly grateful to have Mary Stuart, principal of METNS, as a member of the REAC as she also participated in the development of the original REAC. We are grateful for the support and help of the many parents who provided help and advice on materials and resources for the programme.

Tommy Gallagher. Chairperson Dalkey School Project. Nov 2001.



2. Who is the Patron of the D.S.P. national school?

This question is sometimes asked by parents and others interested in the DSPNS or METNS. The original definition of a National School Patron was as follows: "The Patron is the person or persons who applies in the first instance to have the school taken into connection (as a national school)". The Department of Education's current definition is as follows: "The Patron is the person or body of persons recognised as such by the Minister for Education".

In the case of denominational national schools, the Bishop of the diocese (either Catholic or Church of Ireland) in which the school is situated is usually the Patron. In the case of the DSPNS and METNS, the Patron is a company limited by guarantee without share capital. The company is called the Dalkey School Project, and registered in the Company's Office as such. This company is recognised as patron of national schools by the Dept. of Education, the Chief State Solicitor's Office, the Company's Office, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners and some other official bodies. While it is unusual for the patron of a national school to be a limited company, the Dalkey School Project is not unique in this; St Michael's House Special schools are also under the patronage of a limited company as are a growing number of special schools run by the Parents and Friends of Mentally Handicapped. This has become the model for schools in the Educate Together sector where many of the schools are also under the patronage of limited companies.

The Dalkey School Project is comprised of its members, who pay whatever annual subscription is agreed at the annual general meeting every year. The members also elect, annually, an executive committee consisting of a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and six others to act on their behalf. It is this executive committee, which administers the affairs of the Dalkey School Project during the year.

Anybody who supports the principles of the Dalkey School Project may become a member. Application forms for membership are available from the Hon Treasurer, Dalkey School Project, c/o DSPNS, Glenageary Lodge, Glenageary, Co Dublin.

3. The role of the Patron in determining the religious education policy in a national school

The Dept. of Education's Rules for National Schools state that religious instruction must be provided in all nation schools. Rule 68 states that "Religious Instruction is a fundamental part of the school course" and this requirement is reiterated and developed in the Primary School Curriculum - Teachers' Handbook (1971). However, the Constitution of Ireland (Art. 44.4) states that "Legislation providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to affect prejudicially the right of any child to attend a school receiving public money without attending religious instruction at that school". Rule 69 (2) (a) of the Dept. of Education's Rules for National Schools states that "No pupil shall receive, or be present at, any religious instruction of which his parents or guardian disapprove".

Religious Education Core Curriculum at DSPNS & METNS



The Dept. of Education has no role in "prescribing the subject matter of Religious Instruction, the examination of it (or) the supervision of its teaching". Responsibility for deciding what should be taught in this area is a matter for the school Patron. When the DSP was negotiating with the Dept. of Education in 1978 for recognition as patron of a national school, the Dept. made it clear that the DSP was obliged to lay down policy in relation to Religious Education in national schools under its patronage. Patrons of all subsequent multi- denominational national schools have also been required by the Dept. of Education to submit their policy on Religious Education before permission was granted to them to open a school.

4. Patron's Policy on Religious Education in a D.S.P. School

(Draft adopted by the Annual General Meeting of 2 December 1979)

1. The fundamental principles of the Dalkey School Project will determine that the ethos of a **DSP** school reflects the ethos of a society in which there are many social, cultural and religious strands co-existing in harmony and mutual respect; these **DSP** principles are as follows:
 - *The multi-denominational principle* -- all children must have equal light of access to the school, and the religious, cultural and social background of each child must be respected.
 - *The co-educational principle* -- each child must be allowed to develop his or her potential without distinction by sex.
 - *The democratic principle* - the **DSP** must at all times be sensitive and aware of the needs and aspirations of its parents, teachers and children, both individually and collectively, and be responsive to them.
3. The primary responsibility for the religious education of each child lies with its parents; any programme for religious education must therefore take account of parents' wishes with regard to the religious education of their children.
4. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education classes.
5. (a) In accordance with the fundamental principles of the DSP, the Board of Management will offer a Religious Education Core Curriculum, designed to help children to understand the religious traditions of life and thought that they will meet in their environment; and to help them to be sensitive to the ultimate questions posed by life and to the dimension of mystery and wonder that underlies all human experience.
(b) The Board of Management shall also facilitate any group of parents that may require it to provide Denominational Instruction as required by them for their children to take place where numbers, resources and time-tabling permit within school hours. In the case of very small groups where this is not practical, the Board of Management will facilitate the parents concerned by making the school premises available at some other suitable time. Qualified catechists may be appointed by such a group by agreement between the Board of Management and the parents concerned.
6. The Dalkey School Project will as patron set up a Religious Education Advisory Committee (REAC), which will function on an ongoing basis as a research and curriculum development unit in relation



to the DSP's Religious Education Core Curriculum, and will be available as required by teachers as an advisory body to help with the planning of specific programmes.

5. Aims and Objectives of the Religious Education Core Curriculum

The REAC presented a revised set of Aims and Objectives for the Religious Education Core Curriculum in Nov 1999. These were adopted by the DSP at the AGM in Dec 2000.

Summary of Aims

1. To cultivate an understanding of the basic principles of the major world religions and belief systems and a respect for the individual's right to his/her beliefs.
2. To guide personal development
3. To help children develop confidently and sensitively in awareness and appreciation of themselves and others.
4. To encourage the development of a wise and compassionate relationship with the natural world.
5. To nurture a sense of spirituality.
6. To help children cope with disappointment, death and loss in life.

Aim 1

To cultivate an understanding of the basic principles of the major world religions and belief systems and a respect for the individual's right to his/her beliefs.

Objectives

To enable the child to:

1. Acquire a knowledge of the major religious traditions in Ireland.
2. Gain an understanding of historical religious difference in Ireland.
3. Develop awareness of major world religions and belief systems.
4. Acknowledge the individual's rights to his/her beliefs.
5. Understand the significance of major religious celebrations.
6. Identify and consider religious prejudice and accept diversity.
7. Reflect on profound questions.

Aim 2

To guide personal development

Objectives

To enable the child to:

1. Grow in dignity and pride in being.
2. Acknowledge personal moral code and develop qualities of compassion, responsibility, honesty, trustworthiness, loyalty, courage.



3. Explore choices and consequences, and to establish and accept reasonable boundaries.
4. Develop clarity of thought and conscious conduct.
5. Become reflective.
6. Learn to speak and behave in a wholesome way.
7. Develop a sense of place and belonging.
8. Experience an atmosphere of openness and sharing.
9. Celebrate achievements.

Aim 3

To help children develop confidently and sensitively in awareness and appreciation of themselves and others.

Objectives

To enable the child to:

1. Gain in understanding and compassion for self and others.
2. Grow personally through engagement with and experience of heritage, nature and human endeavour.
3. Consider barriers faced by specific groups when seeking to exercise their rights as equal citizens.
4. Consider conflict and methods of resolution.
5. Identify racism and develop anti-racist strategies.
6. Develop an awareness of the characteristics and effects of negative discriminatory behaviour.
7. Acquire an understanding of human rights and world development issues.
8. Learn and experience the value of co-operation and working together.
9. Appreciate interdependence of people and nations.
10. Acknowledge diversity in the human race.

Aim 4

To encourage the development of a wise and compassionate relationship with the natural world.

Objectives

To enable the child to:

1. Grow in awareness of being part of the web of life.
2. Develop an awareness of the cycles of life.
3. Appreciate the interdependence of all life.
4. Develop attitudes and responses based on respect and care in our use of natural resources and provide opportunities for practical action.

Aim 5

To nurture a sense of spirituality.



Objectives

To enable the child to:

1. Nurture the "still place" within.
2. Develop a sense of awe, joy, wonder and delight
3. Experience an atmosphere of trust within the classroom.
4. Recognise and appreciate values and experiences not based on material success.
5. Observe and reflect on the beauty and diversity of life.
6. Develop growing awareness of the inner self.

Aim 6

To help children cope with disappointment, death and loss in life.

Objectives

To enable the child to:

1. Experience an atmosphere of trust and support.
2. Experience understanding of his or her state of confusion/sorrow,
3. Work through the grieving process.

6. The Children in the DSPNS and METNS

All children in the DSPNS and METNS, whatever their religious, cultural and social background, are equally respected. The children come from a wide range of backgrounds. Many of the children in the school attend classes in instruction in their own religion either within the schools or outside the schools. The knowledge and attitudes which the children derive from instruction in their own religion are a significant resource which can be drawn from and built on during Religious Education Core Curriculum classes. The variety of social and cultural backgrounds provides a wealth of information, attitudes and experiences from which teachers and pupils can draw during the religious and other classes and can thus be regarded as a positive resource in the teaching situation.

7. The Distinction between the Religious Education Core Curriculum and Denominational Instruction

The Religious Education Core Curriculum, which neither presumes nor precludes a religious affiliation, is the R.E. programme offered in the DSPNS and METNS. The curriculum "is concerned with helping children to understand the religious traditions of life and thought that they will meet in their environment and with helping them to be sensitive to the ultimate questions posed by life and to the dimension of mystery and wonder that underlies all human experience."

Denominational Instruction, on the other hand, is specific in its aim of teaching children the doctrines and beliefs of a particular religion with a view to achieving belief in and commitment to the tenets of that religion. While the Patron's Policy requires the Board of Management of the DSPNS or METNS to facilitate groups of parents who wish to provide Denominational Instruction for their children, it is not the role of the Boards of Management or of the principals or their staff to provide such instruction.



When arrangements are made by the parents concerned for the provision of Denominational Instruction in the school, it is the responsibility of parents to opt their children into the Denominational Instruction classes.

One of the aims of the Religious Education Core Curriculum is to develop the children's awareness of the pluralist nature of our society. With this in mind, children of different backgrounds will be encouraged to talk about their beliefs and practices. In the process, children will be helped to articulate these beliefs and values, thus enabling them to communicate to others the meaning and significance of these beliefs. Both formally and informally, children will learn about the beliefs and values of others in the school and in the community. It is hoped that such learning will help in the development of tolerance, respect and understanding.

In the Religious Education Core Curriculum classes, the children will learn about the practices and forms of worship of different religions. This will include information on various religious festivals -- both those which are of cultural and social significance in Ireland and those which may be less familiar.