



**Midleton C.B.S.**  
Secondary School  
*An Edmund Rice School*

# Religious Education Policy

Ratified: 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Due for review: 2026

---

## **1. Introduction**

It is our policy to make students aware of the special contribution of the Christian Brothers to the work of Christ in the world. While Midleton CBS is a catholic school, we welcome students of all religious backgrounds and none.

Religious and education philosophy if the Edmund Rice school:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

## **2. Rationale**

As a Christian Brothers school, we are committed to the importance of formal religious and moral education. This policy allows us the opportunity to reflect on, explore and articulate what it means to be a Christian Brothers school. It is our hope and privilege to harness the religious development of our students and to provide opportunities for them to know their God. We strive to be faithful to the founding intention of Edmund Rice and the implications of what it means to be a Catholic school in this Edmund Rice tradition in third millennium Ireland.

### **3. Scope of the policy**

This policy looks at religious education throughout the whole school community. Faith formation happens throughout the school day and the school year. It is expressed in actions, interactions and activities and is experienced through the relationships between everyone in the school community. This policy deals with all religious education in Midleton CBS and is not specific to in class tuition. For details on subject content please see the relevant subject plan.

### **4. Aims of Religious Education**

In Midleton CBS, Religious Education endeavours to:

- Promote in each student a knowledge of his faith and its practice in everyday life.
- Enable students to appreciate the life and mission of Christ.
- Contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the students.
- Foster an awareness that the human search for meaning is common to all peoples of all ages and all time.
- Explore how this search for meaning has found and continues to find, expression in religion.
- Identify how understandings of God, religious tradition, and particularly the Christian tradition, have contributed to the culture in which we live, and continue to have an impact on personal lifestyle, interpersonal relationships and relationships between individuals and their communities and contexts.
- Provide opportunities to deepen sacramental awareness and to participate in prayer and liturgy.
- Foster awareness of shared values such as justice, peace, the dignity of the human person.
- Promote right relationships with self, others, God, and all of creation.
- Heighten awareness, empathy and compassion for local needs/issues and global problems.
- Appreciate the richness of the teachings and practices of the great religious traditions of the world and to understand the non-religious interpretation of life.
- Encourage peer - teaching where students of different faith traditions are invited to speak about their beliefs, sacred texts, and rituals.

### **5. Connection to Admissions 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 faiths and none are welcome to this school. Each student is welcome to attend and benefit from the religious education in this school. Religious Education plays a pivotal role in the holistic development of the student. The principal outlines to Parent/Guardian of incoming students the importance of attending religious education classes and our ethos and values during the open evening.

## **6. Curriculum & Resources**

At Junior Cycle Religion is taught as an exam subject following the Junior cycle Specification. Students receive 2 hours of tuition time each week in the subject. Students complete CBAs and assessment tasks as appropriate and sit the SEC exam at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

For Transition Year and Leaving Certificate the subject is not available as an exam subject in the school, however, it is a core subject on our school timetable. Students follow a programme designed by the RE teachers which closely follows the exam syllabus but allows for a difference in approach and emphasis.

For further information on the subject specifics please see the relevant subject plan.

## **7. Religious Education Coordinator/Team**

The role of the Religious Education Co-ordinator/Team is to:

- Coordinate the formation of the subject plan for each year group.
- Liaise with the principal regarding liturgical celebrations and retreats.
- Update and maintain sacred spaces and the meditation room.
- Remind teachers of the important liturgical celebrations, feast days and holy days.
- Organise regular meetings of the religion department.
- Notify those in the department of in-service days or CPD opportunities.
- Communicate with the diocesan advisor re school visits.
- Organise retreats and liturgical events.
- Implement and review the policy.

## **8. Staff Support and Development**

Effective Religious Education does not just happen spontaneously or accidentally. The very nature of the Religious Education class requires teachers of Religious Education to keep upskilling and enhancing their teaching skills and resources.

Therefore, it is important that:

- Management is supportive of all Religious Education both in and out of the classroom.
- Teachers with a qualification in Religious Education are timetabled to teach this subject.
- All Religious Education teachers are encouraged to attend in-service for Junior Cycle and Leaving Cert exams and the diocesan in-service.
- A budget is provided to support teaching and learning in this area.
- Membership of subject associations is encouraged.

Outside support is received from:

- Diocesan Advisor
- The Edmund Rice Schools Trust
- Religious Education Support Service
- Diocesan Clergy

## **9. Faith Formation & Liturgical Year**

All staff and students are encouraged to participate in the liturgical life of the school. Students not of the Catholic faith are welcome to attend and participate, in as much as they can, in the liturgical life of the school. Observing liturgical celebrations is an opportunity for learning. However, if a parent/guardian requests their child not to participate in a specific event, then they should put this request in writing to the principal in advance. In such instances, arrangements will be made for the supervision of the student.

To ensure that significant liturgical events are celebrated and recognised throughout the school year the following take place:

- Opening of the school year prayer services
- November Remembrance Prayer for the dead involving the whole school community.
- Services at Christmas and during Lent
- Ash Wednesday service
- Carol service
- Christian Unity Prayer
- Catholic School's Week
- Feast day of Blessed Edmund Rice
- Regular year group mass
- Visit to Mount Sion

### **Christian Unity Week and Catholic Schools Week**

Christian Unity Week and Catholic Schools Week are celebrated in January through our sacred space, poster competitions and reflections.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation Service**

The sixth-year graduation service takes place in May and involves students, their parents, and staff.

### **Outreach Programmes**

The school's involvement in a wide range of outreach programmes ensures religious education is experienced through faith in action. These programmes include:

- Edmund Rice Awards
- Parish Liturgy
- Visit to Mount Sion
- India Immersion Programme
- Volunteer on annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul fundraiser
- Penny Dinners appeal
- Community work

### **Retreats**

Retreats are encouraged and promoted. The purpose of retreats is to:

Provide a reflective space for students to deepen their understanding of the content of Religious Education programme by engaging in creative activities, group discussion, meditation, and prayer. It is a time for them to consider the spiritual aspect of life in a communal setting. Students who do not participate in the retreat, attend school on the day.

### **10. Religious Imagery**

Religious images and symbols are a part of our Catholic school and are reflected in our school crest.

Images and symbols are also used during the school year such as the Bible, Christmas crib, Advent wreath etc.

### **11. Parental Involvement**

There is an opportunity for parents to be informed about the content of the Religious Education programme through:

- Parent-Teacher meetings
- Open Evening information night

Parents are involved in the Religious Education programme by their presence at:

- 6<sup>th</sup> year Graduation service
- Other liturgical celebrations

### **12. Inclusion**

Students of all faiths and none are encouraged to participate fully in religious education in the school. At Junior Cycle, the classes follow the Junior Cycle Specification which looks at many different faiths. Given the emphasis on studying world religions and the opportunity for inter-faith discussion, all students should be encouraged to engage with religious education at Junior Cycle. Students of other faiths and none, if comfortable, may be asked to discuss their own faith in class.

At senior cycle it is not an exam subject but closely follows the exam syllabus. It is taught on a modular basis. RSE also forms part of one of these modules in 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> year.

### **13. Staffing**

We consider Religious Education to be such an integral part of our school ethos and school community that it is imperative that we give it the status it deserves. That means looking at the appointment and selection of qualified teachers and its place on the school timetable and the allocation of class periods. All students are taught by teachers with specialist qualifications.

### **14. Withdrawal from Religious Education Classes**

Middleton CBS encourages full participation of students of all faiths, and of none, in Religious Education class. It also respects and acknowledges the rights of parents (and students who are over 18) who request their son to not undertake Religious Education

classes in the school. The way such a request is facilitated is related to available resources within the school and complies with the school's policies on curriculum, supervision, and child safeguarding.

Faith formation happens throughout the school day and the school year. It is expressed in actions, interactions and activities and is experienced through the relationships between everyone in the school community. As such parents/guardians need to be aware that students will be experiencing the values and Catholic ethos of the school in the day-to-day running of the school, not just in Religious Education class.

The school has arranged that the allocated time on the timetable for Religious Education classes will be used by students opting out of religious education classes to study material relating to their own religious traditions or philosophical thinking. The student will be supervised in the Religious Education class and will follow an educationally appropriate activity, for example, students of other faiths are required to use the time to study something relating to their own religious tradition, such as a sacred text. Humanist and students of no faith are required to read relevant literature (see Appendix B from the JMB Guidelines on the *Inclusion of Students of Different Beliefs in Catholic Secondary Schools* for examples). Students may provide their own text which must be relevant and not be a text on the curriculum for other subjects in school or may choose from the texts available from the school staff. Students will not be allowed to study other subjects or complete homework during this time.

If a parent/guardian insists that their son is not present during a Religious Education class, then the supervision of the student will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian. They should also ensure that they are meeting their constitutional obligations (Article 42.1) to provide for the religious and moral education of their children.

An appropriate procedure to facilitate a request for withdrawal from Religious Education classes is as follows:

1. A written notification from the parent/guardian to the principal.
2. The student's RE teacher or RE Coordinator contact the parents/guardians and discuss the parents/guardian's concerns.
3. The principal meets with the parent/guardian.
4. The principal explains the Religious Education policy and the workings for the withdrawal of their son from Religious Education classes.
5. Parent/guardian confirms in writing their wish to withdraw their son from religious education classes.

An official list/database will be drawn up, each year, of those students who have opted-out of religious education classes. The reason for the student's non-participation is also recorded so that all parties in the process are kept informed.

## **15. Further Information**

Subject department plans


Junior Cycle Religious Education Specification

JMB Guidelines on the Inclusion of Students of Different Beliefs in Catholic Secondary Schools

**16. Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Signed:   
Dónal Cronin  
Chairperson  
Board of Management

Signed:   
Niall Ahern  
Principal

---

Document History:

Ratified: 28-05-2024

Due for Review: 2026

Updated:

Due for Review: