

**Policy for Religious Education 2018**  
**De La Salle College**

## **De La Salle College, Waterford**

As a De La Salle Catholic School, this religious education policy will impact on the whole school community. The scope will reach:

### **Board of Management**

To approve the policy and promote the Lasallian ethos.

### **Principal and Deputy Principals**

To support the procedures of the policy and ensure its effective implementation

### **School Staff**

As staff in De La Salle College, the hope is that the whole staff community embraces the ethos of the school and support and contribute to the cross-curricular nature of Religious Education.

### **Teachers of Religious Education**

To bring to fruition the aims outlined in the RE Policy (see aims)

To implement and review the policy.

### **Chaplain**

To assist in the faith and spiritual development of the whole school community.

### **Pastoral Care Personnel (Class Tutors / Guidance Counsellors)**

To provide support and guidance to the teachers in the pastoral care of students.

### **Parents / Guardians**

To acknowledge that the parents/guardians are the primary educators of their sons and understand that the RE Programme in the school endeavours to further facilitate the faith formation of their children

## **Students**

To participate in the RE programme and to cultivate an openness to other religious traditions.

## **Mission Statement**

The purpose of this College is to give a human and Christian education to the young. Inspired by the vision of St. John Baptist De La Salle, The Lasallian school prepares young people to take a mature and productive place in society, and the church as free and responsible citizens.

## **Vision of a De La Salle School**

Inspired by the vision of St. John Baptist De La Salle

- The Lasallian school gives priority to education in a living faith whereby students grow to appreciate the life mission of Jesus Christ.
- Acquire skills in critical thinking which enable them to shape their own future.
- Recognises the dignity of each individual;
- Has a special concern for the poor and under-privileged;
- Is challenged to develop a curriculum which promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person;
- Contributes to the building up of the local community;
- Works for peace and justice in society.

De La Salle College belongs to Le Chéile Schools Trust.

This is a collaborative trust involving a number of religious congregations. In joining, congregations affirm their commitment to the future of Catholic Education, and to work in partnership with the government in the Education system. The aim of the Trust is to carry on the legal, financial and inspirational role of trusteeship that has, up to now been done by individual congregations.

The main object of Le Chéile is the development of a vision of Catholic education and overseeing its implementation in the school, encouraging the preservation of key aspects of the Lasallian ethos and providing for the needs of the students and communities in De La Salle College.

While each school within the Trust continues to develop and deepen its own ethos, schools are also enriched by the spirit and ethos of the Trust.

(See Appendix A of Le Cheile Charter for outline of The Guiding Principles of Le Chéile schools)

### **Aims of Religious Education:**

- To contribute to the religious education and spiritual and moral development of our students.
- To develop care for the weak, co-operation between pupils, justice and fair play towards all, respect for truth, a passion for the environment and a love for learning.
- To provide opportunities to deepen sacramental awareness among the school community.
- To identify how understandings of God, religious traditions, and in particular Christian tradition, have contributed to the culture in which we live, and continue to have an impact on personal lifestyle, inter-personal relationships between individuals and their communities and contexts.
- To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretation of life.(see Le Chéile Charter)
- To dialogue with students at the various stages of faith development and provide opportunities to encounter the spiritual.

### **Rationale for the Policy**

As a De La Salle 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 La Sallian school. We acknowledge that our students are at different stages of the faith journey and we endeavour to accompany them on that journey. It is our hope and privilege to harness the religious development of our students and to provide opportunities for them to know their God and appreciate the spiritual. We strive to be faithful to the founding intention of St. John Baptist De La Salle and

the implications of what it means to be a Catholic school in this La Sallian tradition in the third millennium Ireland.

### **Objectives of the policy**

- To promote the religious life of the school.
- To promote the religious, spiritual, moral and overall development of the students.
- To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to provide meaningful encounters with these traditions.
- To generate clarity in respect of aims, procedures and roles of RE in the school.

### **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.

- De La Salle College has a lay Chaplain who is a faith presence in the school and accompanies the school community, personally and pastorally
- The R.E Team aims to formally meet as a Department a number of times during the year. This is to facilitate working together, planning activities and evaluating work.
- New RE personnel are made aware of the RE policy document.
- Co-ordination of the RE Department is on a shared voluntary basis.

### **Curriculum and Resources**

- Religion is a core subject at De La Salle College and timetabled for all students.
- There are three 40 minute class periods of Religion each week at Senior and Junior Cycle.

- We have a Chapel and Prayer room within our school, where some of our Liturgical Services take place.
- Religious images and Crucifixes are placed in prominent positions in the College.

### **Staff Support and Development**

- The R.E. Department are supported in their efforts by management in the following ways; attendance at some RE meetings, financial support for supervision and the purchase of resources and equipment.
- Management are requested to facilitate R.E. regarding appropriate positioning on the timetable.
- Teachers are released for meetings and in-service training.
- Available Support Services outside the school for RE teachers include: Local Diocesan Advisors, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, local Priests, La Sallian Animation Team, and Le Chéile Education Officer.
- De La Salle College is involved in facilitating further study of the influence of St John Baptist De La Salle through the Lasallian Course in Malta. This is an opportunity to gain an appreciation of the La Sallian ethos and charism and the guiding principles of our Founder, St John Baptiste De La Salle. It aims to enable teachers to progress and enhance that ethos in their schools.
- There is a budget for R.E. in De La Salle College which is submitted at the end of each academic year for approval by management.
- Newly qualified teachers and trainee teachers of R.E are assisted by current R.E. staff .This is done through mentoring, whereby the new teacher is guided through the course work being covered and the expected tasks he/she may be required to do. They are then assisted in every possible way by all R.E. team.

### **The Liturgical Year**

A liturgical calendar is prepared for the year.

Liturgical seasons are marked in the school where possible.

Retreats are offered during the course of the year and the Sacrament of Reconciliation is provided during this retreat.

- Class groups have liturgies, meditations and services at the discretion of the teacher.
- Liturgical celebrations are open to all staff members to attend where possible.
- Reflective prayer gatherings take place at various times.
- There is cross-curricular involvement in subjects such as Art, Languages, Music and Woodwork. The staff facilitates this by allowing the release of students to prepare/rehearse and attend liturgies where appropriate.
- A reflection is read over the intercom on Monday morning and Friday afternoon to begin and end our week.
- Staff meetings begin with a reflection/prayer.
- In the event of a sudden death of a student or staff member, we have an appropriate prayer service, depending on the particular circumstances. We also aim in such circumstances to implement the school's Critical Incident Policy.

### **Liturgical Calendar**

<b>Date</b>	
September/October	Mass to open the Academic Year for First Years and Transition Years.
November	Mass for the Dead
December	Reconciliation Services for First and Sixth Years.
December	Carol Service
January	Christian Unity Week
February	Service of Ashes for Ash Wednesday
February/March	Reconciliation Services for Second and Fifth Years
May	De La Salle Day Mass
May	Graduation Mass for Sixth Years and Transition Years

All liturgical seasons are highlighted with visuals prepared by the students and displayed throughout the school.

### **Pastoral Initiatives**

Religious Education seeks to be experiential through faith in action.

Each year the school engages in awareness raising initiatives on local and global issues.

(Refer to Plan)

Teachers and students take part in Pastoral Initiatives, e.g. Trócaire, SVP, One World Global Project.

### **Parental and Parish Involvement**

The link between home, school and parish is a vital part of school life.

- An open night is held annually for prospective students and their parents, during which the religious ethos of the school and the R.E. programme is outlined.
- Priests of the Diocese are invited to assist in Sacramental activities or to join in for school liturgical celebrations.

### **Accommodation of Different Beliefs:**

- Religious Education is a core subject in De La Salle College.
- R.E is studied by all students at De La Salle College. We use the State syllabus and this syllabus is written for all beliefs and none. It is our policy that all students attend and participate during R.E class.



- Students of other faiths, who choose to attend De La Salle College, are expected to be present during R.E. class.
- We are committed to improving religious development and cultural awareness. We encourage students of different religions/cultures in the class group to inform us of their way of life in their religion. We welcome and encourage their contribution in R.E class as we encourage dialogue between our students regarding their beliefs in order to promote care, understanding, tolerance and respect both within the school and the wider community
- R.E. plays a pivotal part in the holistic development of the student. Every student is expected to attend R.E classes. Should parent(s)/guardian(s) wish to withdraw their son from R.E class, or students over 18 years of age, they must arrange a meeting with the Principal to discuss this and the implications for alternative arrangements.

### **Monitoring and Review of Policy**

- The RE department will monitor policy implementation.
- Good communication between the RE Department and school management.
- At the end of each year, the RE department meet to evaluate the success of the policy implementation.

### **Timeframe**

Apart from the usual on-going informal monitoring that would occur with every area of policy, formal monitoring would be appropriate at least twice in the first year and at least once during each subsequent year.

This policy will come into effect on 22/10/2018.

It will be reviewed after 3 years.

Signed: Margaret Betts Principal

Signed: John Dineen Chairperson

## **Appendix A**

The spiritual dimension of Le Chéile Catholic schools is promoted by seeking:

- To establish the school as a community that witnesses to the Kingdom of God and to Gospel Values. As a community, it reflects God's love for us, and our love for one another. It promotes justice and equality, and has a special concern for the marginalised.
- To be centres of learning and excellence in all aspects of growth, for students, parents, teachers and other staff members. This involves a critical dialogue with culture, where the school aims to be a leader in issues of morals and values, becoming an agent of change for society.
- To focus on Christ as a teacher and a model of human living. The Gospel is a source of reflection on values. The school provides opportunities for all members of the community to deepen their knowledge and relationship with Jesus.
- To develop links with the wider Church Community, especially the local parishes and dioceses. It also encourages a concern about local, national and global issues.

## **LE CHÉILE CHARTER**

### **Mission**

#### **The Role of the Trust as Patron**

Le Chéile will carry out the legal requirements of the Patron as outlined in various legal instruments. It will have special regard for the development of the spiritual dimension of the school. The way the Patron promotes the spiritual dimension depends on the founding charter of the school. The religious congregations are Patrons in two types of schools – their own schools, which are Catholic Schools, and also, Community Schools, where the founding charter is multi-denominational. In Community Schools, the Catholic Patrons promote a philosophy of education that is inspired by the Catholic vision of the person, while fully respecting the multi-denominational charter of the school. The Patron brings the Catholic vision to the dialogue on schooling, and seeks to integrate the values that might attach to a Catholic school in a way that is appropriate to the specific charter of the school and to the community. The Patron has a special care to promote the spiritual welfare of all

students within the school, and will seek to ensure that Catholic students have access to an appropriate faith formation programme.

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## **VISION OF EDUCATION**

### **The School**

The schools work from a clear vision of education. It is open to and welcomes all who share that vision and wish to benefit from it.

### **The School Community**

- The school values the role of parents as their children's first and foremost educators, and seeks to work in partnership with parents. It sets up inclusive structures for the constructive involvement of parents in the school.
- The school appoints staff who are qualified, competent, professional and committed to the values of the school and to pursuing excellence in education. It provides for systematic on-going development of staff, particularly in the area of leadership.

- The school values the worth of each student. It welcomes and is sensitive to each one, especially students with special educational needs. It is inclusive of students from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

### **The Curriculum**

- The school facilitates and supports the students' search for truth and meaning. It encourages them to strive for excellence in all areas of human growth. It provides a range of learning opportunities so that all students can gain knowledge and develop the skills and competence necessary to participate in and contribute fully, actively and fruitfully to society. It encourages students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and decision-making.
- The school offers a curriculum that has breadth and depth. It is academically rigorous and relevant to the life experiences of the students. It prepares students to understand the many social and cultural factors which shape their values.
- The school develops a pastoral care system that is sensitive to the needs of each student and helps them benefit from their time in school.

### **The Spiritual Dimension**

Le Chéile Schools have a special commitment to the development of the spiritual dimension of the school and of the lives of its members. It recognises and proclaims that transformative education is essentially a spiritual process. It is the responsibility of all to witness to the spiritual dimension in their respect and care for one another.

### **The Role of the School**

The school:

- Nurtures, promotes and provides for the students' faith development. Students are trained to think, research, reason, reflect and act in the light of Gospel values.
- Recognises the partnership with parents in Faith Development and seeks opportunities to enhance and renew the faith of parents through the education of their children and through their participation in the life of the school.
- Recognises the role of teachers in witnessing to Gospel values and encourages teachers in their own on-going faith development.

### **The Religious Education Programme**

The Religious Education Programme is at the core of spiritual formation. This programme:

- For Christians, is built on and is faithful to the heritage of Scripture, the teachings and living tradition of the Church. It is based on Christ as the meaning and model of human living.
- Fosters the growth of faith at personal and community levels, especially through understanding and participating in prayer and liturgy.
- Provides an intellectual framework for reflecting on life decisions and encourages students to give witness to the integration of faith and life.

### **Catholic Faith Formation**

It is hoped that the values inherent in the culture of the school will be internalised in the values, attitudes and behaviours of all members of the school, and that the culture will continue to be a formative element in a lifelong commitment to spiritual growth. As such, the school seeks to help individuals develop a Catholic identity that is characterised by:

- A sense of the sacred and a search for a personal belief in God. This is inspired by knowledge of the person and message of Jesus, and nurtured by a deep personal relationship with Him.
- Appreciating the Eucharist at the heart of the Christian Community. There is an awareness of the sacramental nature of the Church. Catholic liturgies inform a personal prayer life. There is familiarity with Catholic symbols and rituals.
- Knowledge and understanding of the basic teachings of the Catholic Faith. Having some understanding of the history of the Catholic Church and a familiarity with changes in its discipline and practice. Being familiar with the heroes and heroines of the Catholic Church, especially those linked with the Congregations.
- Integrating spiritual and moral values into decisions in daily life. The work of Faith Formation is through invitation, not coercion. It recognises that individuals are at different places in their personal faith journeys.
- Some students from other faiths and from other Christian denominations will have enrolled in the school. Their different traditions will be respected. They will be encouraged to grow in knowledge and appreciation of their own traditions.
- Others students may come to the school with limited ability to engage with the spiritual. The general programme of the school will be considered as a form of

preevangelisation. This promotes a human development that focuses on the emotional and aesthetic, thus enabling the young person to experience God at a deep and spiritual level.

- Other students may come to the school with limited knowledge of the Catholic tradition, or with low levels of familiarity of Catholic liturgy and rituals. In this situation, the school acts in an evangelisation role. It helps them develop that knowledge. They are helped reflect on their life experiences in the light of Christian revelation and invited to discipleship through a personal faith commitment.
- Still others will come to the school having already made a significant commitment to their faith. They will come from supportive home and parish communities. The school seeks to give special support to this group, and to help them explore, in a deeper way, the commitment of discipleship.

### **Summary**

In summary, graduates from Le Chéile schools are characterised by :

#### **Intellectual Development.**

The school builds on the secular academic disciplines which introduce students to a critical appreciation of the world they live in and develop in them skills that enable them to participate fully in that world.

#### **Emotional and Social Development.**

Students are helped to develop emotionally, with a strong sense of their own worth, leading to self esteem and respect for others. They develop social skills that allow them play an active and fruitful role in society.

#### **Moral Development.**

Students are invited to reflect on key moral issues and to examine their responsibility to themselves, to others, to society and to the environment. This reflection takes place within the Christian tradition.

#### **Spiritual Development.**

To develop a relationship with God means being able to enter into the world of mystery. Students are introduced to this through areas such as nature, art, poetry and music. The spiritual dimension is developed through different experiences of prayer and ritual. Students may come to appreciate God as creator of the universe and they also experience the mysterious oneness and inter-relatedness of creation.

#### **Concern for others.**

A mark of Christian commitment is a concern for others. The school offers opportunities to develop and practice this concern. It invites students to reflect on the contribution they can make to others particularly in the use they make of their talents and in their choices of career.

**Sacramentality.**

We meet God through signs that have an enduring reality. The school helps students to experience God through a deeper appreciation of and participation in the sacramental life of the Church. This is extended to participation in other rituals, and to an ability to read the signs of the times, discerning God at work in the life of each individual.

Benedict XVI, 2005, *Deus Caritas Est*, para 31(c). (page 3-8)