

# Religious Education Policy



Loreto Secondary School, Letterkenny is a voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of the Loreto Order. In keeping with the Loreto ethos, we welcome students from all faiths and no faith to our school. The Religious Education Programme offered is based on the curriculum for the Junior Certificate programme from the Department of Education. This programme offers exposure to all five major world religions and contributes to the student's religious and moral development as it promotes understanding and tolerance. It seeks to develop in students the skills needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other, or of no religious traditions.

Religious Education is a core exam subject and does not include faith formation; it does however encourage and support student reflection on their own commitment to a particular religious tradition but cannot and does not examine personal faith and practice as part of the course. All students study Religious Education for the Junior Certificate exam and any non-Catholics would be exempt from any liturgical events only. Any student who does not study religious education at junior cycle is not entitled to supervised study in school. A parent/guardian must come into the school to sign out their daughter for the 40 minute class period during the 3 timetabled classes per week.

Religious Education at junior cycle is a stepping stone for Religious Education as a senior cycle option.

## **Aims of Religious Education**

To foster awareness that the human search for meaning is common to all peoples, of all ages and at all times.

To explore how this search for meaning has found, and continues to find, expression in religion.

To identify how understanding of God, religious traditions, and in particular the Christian tradition, have contributed to the culture in which we live, and continue to have an impact on personal life-style, inter-personal relationships and relationships between individuals, their communities and contexts.

To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretation of life.

To contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the student and to develop their sense of social justice, promoting generosity, compassion, justice, respect and peace.

To deepen students understanding of world religions and to promote mutually respectful and inclusive attitudes towards all students of different social, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

To encourage student to see faith as a living entity and become actively involved in their faith communities, both in school and at home.

# Course Layout

## Year One

### **Unit One: Beliefs that shape our world**

Introduction to religious and non-religious world views.

### **Unit Two: The history of one major world religion**

The founding story of one world religion.

A time of expansion of one major world religion.

A Challenge in the history of one major world religion.

### **Unit Three: An Introduction to Morality**

Introduction to morality, influences and sources of morality.

## **Year Two**

### **Foundations of Religion: Major World Religion**

Context: Location, cultural context

Sources of Evidence: Evidence, oral traditions, sacred text, prophet, inspiration, revelation, founder, vision/dream.

Rites of Passage and other Ritual: Rite, ritual, festival, pilgrimage, practice, ceremony, place of worship, creed, ethnic, calendar, prayer.

Development of Tradition: Commitment, persecution, expansion, schism, development, tradition.

Faith and Practice Today: community structure, leadership and education, tradition, follower, dialogue.

### **Celebration of Faith**

The World of Ritual: Places, actions, times of significance, sacredness

The Experience of Worship: Worship, ritual, participation.

Worship as Response to Mystery: Encountering mystery, wonder, worship as response to mystery, celebration, communication, encounter with God.

Sign and Symbol: sign, symbol, sacrament, identity, communicating experience.

Prayer: Communication with God, meditation, contemplation, petition, praise and thanksgiving, personal and communal prayer.

## **Year Three**

### **The Moral Challenge**

Introduction to Morality: morality, influence, choice freedom, relationships, action and consequence, society

Sources of Morality: moral growth, conscience, moral maturity.

Religious Morality in Action: decision making, truth, justice, peace, life, stewardship, respect, integrity, forgiveness, reconciliation, sin, judgement.

Law and Morality: civil law, constitution, pluralism, religious fundamentalism, libertarianism

### **Communities of Faith**

Community: Co-operation, sharing, communication, roles, community breakdown

Communities at Work: commitment, vision, service, leadership

Communities of Faith: founder, inspiration vision, revelation, sacred text, gospel, faith, belief, identity, religions, church, denominations, religious commitment, vocation, preaching, mission.

Relationships between Communities of Faith: ecumenism, inter-faith dialogue, sectarianism.

Organisation and Leadership in Communities of Faith: Leadership, authority, service, ministry, religious conflict, tolerance.

## **Research Topic**

Journal work to be carried out based on the prescribed titles given by the Department of Education. The journal is worth 20% of the final Junior Certificate mark.

### **AIMS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR LEAVING CERTIFICATE**

Leaving Certificate religious education offers continuity and progression from the Junior Certificate programme. The aims outlined below are the aims for religious education for assessment and certification in the post-primary school.

1. To foster awareness that the human search for meaning is common to all peoples of all ages and at all times.
2. To explore how this search for meaning has found, and continues to find, expression in religion.
3. To identify how understandings of God, religious traditions, and in particular the Christian tradition, have contributed to the culture in which we live, and how they continue to have an impact on personal lifestyle, inter-personal relationships, and relationships between individuals and their communities and contexts.
4. To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretation of life.
5. To contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the student.

## Course Layout

It is intended that the syllabus should be taught in the sequence outlined below over the two year senior cycle. The course consists of three units.

### **UNIT ONE**

**SECTION A** The search for meaning and values

**UNIT TWO** Any *two* of:

**SECTION B** Christianity: origins and contemporary expressions

**SECTION C** World religions

**SECTION D** Moral decision-making

**UNIT THREE** Any *one* of the following:

(Excluding the two sections designated for coursework).

**SECTION E** Religion and gender

**SECTION F** Issues of justice and peace

**SECTION G** Worship, prayer, and ritual

**SECTION H** The Bible: literature and sacred text

**SECTION I** Religion: the Irish experience

**SECTION J** Religion and science

In each year of the Leaving Certificate examination, two sections from unit three of the syllabus will be designated for coursework. The same sections will be designated for Ordinary and Higher level. A list of titles for coursework from each section will be made available. Students must submit ONE piece of coursework. 20% of the total mark will be awarded on the basis of coursework.

- **Non Exam Course Layout**

- It is intended that the syllabus should be taught in a sequence that can be decided by the teacher based on the needs of the individual class. Each section will be covered over the two-year senior cycle.

<u>SECTION A</u>	The search for meaning and values
<u>SECTION B</u>	Moral decision-making
<u>SECTION C</u>	Issues of justice and peace
<u>SECTION D</u>	Christianity
<u>SECTION E</u>	World religions
<u>SECTION F</u>	RSE* (Compulsory for all Senior Students)
<u>SECTION G</u>	Issues in the contemporary world

## **Timetabling**

Junior cert students are following the State Examinations curriculum and are timetabled for three class periods per week.

Leaving cert students who have opted to take Religious Education as an exam subject are timetabled for five class periods per week.

## **Staffing**

All teachers of R.E. are required to possess qualifications in the subject that satisfy the Teaching Council. All R.E. teachers are required to work as a team and this is fostered by the department co-ordinator. The role of the co-ordinator is rotated each year. R.E. teacher representatives attend regular in-service provided by the Diocesan Advisors, Subject Association and the Loreto Network.

## **Ethos**

Loreto Letterkenny is a Catholic school committed to the development of the whole person.

The school endeavours to develop student responsibility for learning in a safe, caring and spiritual environment, where each individual experiences personal success and fulfilment.

## Faith Formation

Liturgical celebrations take place throughout the school year and are whole school events supported by the local parish. These events are prepared by the R.E department, music department and volunteer students outside of class time and every student is invited to participate.

Careful attention is paid to specific liturgical moments in the Church calendar through decoration of the Religious Education notice board and provision of the sacraments.

The following are of special note:

Opening of Year Mass

Remembrance Service

Christmas Carol Service

Weekly Lenten Masses (Optional)

Confession during Lent (Optional)

Leaving Cert Graduation Mass

Supervision is provided in school for non-Catholics during these events.

**Ratified on 25th September 2018**

**To be reviewed in 2020**