

RYDES HILL PREPARATORY SCHOOL & NURSERY

C17 - RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM POLICY



RYDES HILL

PREPARATORY SCHOOL & NURSERY

CHILDREN'S MISSION STATEMENT

Think deeply, live wisely, love generously

MISSION STATEMENT

- ❖ Rydes Hill Preparatory School and Nursery is a Catholic school where children learn how to live in loving relationship with God and each other.
- ❖ Christian virtues of love and justice, faith and courage, hope and perseverance are fostered.
- ❖ Pupils and staff comprise individuals of different faiths and beliefs but the Rydes Hill community aspires to unity within the life of the school based on shared moral values.
- ❖ The importance placed on the development of individual talents is at the heart of what school stands for and all are encouraged and challenged to be the best they can be.

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Contents

Revision History.....	3
Terms, Abbreviations, Acronyms and Definitions.....	3
Aim / Objective / Statement of Intent	4
General Statement	4
Aims.....	4
Objectives.....	4
Strategies.....	5
Chaplaincy Team	9
Teachers’ Enterprise in Religious Education	10
Assessment Recording and Reporting	11
Marking, Reporting and Commenting on Learning.....	12
Religious Education Displays	12
Appendix A – Examples of Prayers	14
Appendix B – Resources	15

Revision History

Revision	Paragraph Number	Revision
January 1996		Original, then updated annually to January 2019 in its previous format
December 2019	Whole Document	Change to document format, add paragraph numbers, revision history, abbreviations, acronyms and definitions table. Significant updates to content.

Terms, Abbreviations, Acronyms and Definitions

Term, Abbreviation / Acronym	Definition
<i>Bidding Prayer</i>	<i>An informal intercessory prayer</i>
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
<i>Responsorial Psalm</i>	A psalm or chant recited in parts with a congregational response between each part

Aim / Objective / Statement of Intent

This policy applies to the whole school including EYFS.

1. This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for teaching Religious Education at Rydes Hill Preparatory School.

General Statement

2. At Rydes Hill Preparatory School we believe our task is to enable the pupils to become aware of God in their lives and to lead them to grow in their knowledge of faith through prayer, worship, doctrine and action in the community. As a Catholic School, we uphold and teach Catholic doctrine, practices and teachings.
3. We believe that Religious Education is not just one subject among the many on the curriculum but the foundation of the entire education process. The beliefs and values that it communicates should inspire every aspect of school life. Therefore, Religious Education provides the context for, and substantially shapes, the school curriculum, and also offers living experience of the life of faith in its practical expression. Accordingly, acts of Collective Worship take place daily. (Please refer to C22 Collective Worship Policy)

Aims

4. Our primary aim is to meet the pupils where they are in the development of their faith and to accompany them on their way to becoming fully mature Christians.
5. We also aim to support pupils of other Christian and Non-Christian denominations in the development of their faith.
6. We aim to support parents in their role as 'the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith'. (Rite of Baptism)

Objectives

7. We believe that the only way to accomplish our aims is to work in partnership with parents, the parish and the local community.
8. Our awareness of God and His love for us is, we believe, found not only in the teachings of the Gospels but also in the example set by those around us. Our love of God must be obvious in our everyday lives, e.g. through our pastoral care and disciplinary procedures. Consequently, we believe that it is an intrinsic part of our faith to foster within the School, high standards of tolerance, justice, honesty, truthfulness and self-discipline. Pupils will be given many opportunities to live out their Christian commitment.

9. We believe that Religious Education should permeate all facets of School life. Pupils are taught and encouraged to live, work and play by Christian principles, using Jesus as their personal role model.
10. In order to meet pupils where they are on their faith journeys and to foster their religious development, we believe that pupils' questions about all aspects of religion should be valued, encouraged and answered with due consideration and attention.
11. Our Religious Education programme takes into consideration the whole person and looks for a balance between knowledge of doctrine (teaching what the Catholic Church believes and teaches to be true), response to God (worship) and the personal and social development of the pupil (moral values, Education in Personal Relationships and Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education – which demonstrates cross-curricular links).
12. We address world issues facing us today such as poverty, justice and peace, and the multi-cultural nature of our society and our faith.

Strategies

Prayer and Worship

13. Prayer, as communication with God, is a special and frequent occurrence in our School. We believe that prayer is an attitude – a frame of mind when one is alone with God and one is talking and listening to Him. Prayer must have a meaning for each pupil. Pupils are encouraged to compose their own prayers privately and in public. Opportunities for quiet reflection and meditation form part of our prayer sessions on a regular basis. Pupils are encouraged to compose prayers and place them in 'the prayer box'. These prayers are read and included in assemblies and in some Masses. (A Chaplaincy Team consisting of two pupils from each of the classes from Upper Transition to Form One, meet weekly. They will maintain the Prayer Focus area in each classroom, help to write liturgies and compose materials for class assemblies.)
14. Our programme includes the following forms of prayer:
 - Prayers of intercession
 - Formal prayers
 - Prayers of adoration / praise
 - Prayers of thanksgiving
 - Prayers of contrition
 - Prayers of supplication / petition
 - Gestures and posture of formal liturgical prayer

Specific detail about Daily Collective Worship can be found in our C22 Collective Worship Policy.

The Bible

15. At Rydes Hill, we believe the Bible is an important source of revelation, giving us knowledge about God. As such, we regard it as one of our most important resources. We use it as a tool for teaching moral truths, knowledge about Jesus' life and other important biblical characters and events of early Christianity. The Bible is also used/seen as a literary text and forms a basis for discussion.
16. The 'Wednesday Word' is available for children to take home to share with their families each week. This provides activities based around the Sunday Gospel which is then the basis for the assembly on Monday and is often referred to in the weekly newsletter.
17. By the end of Form One (Year 6 – Key Stage 2), pupils are familiar with the New Testament and major events in the Old Testament, e.g. Exodus and Creation. Pupils also use the Bible to work with their teachers to plan Liturgies and Assemblies and to select readings for School Masses.

Other Faiths

18. As Christians living in a multi-faith community, we believe that it is important for pupils to know and understand that Christianity is not the only religion and that other religions exist. Pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of, and respect for, those who have different beliefs. Teachers should actively promote this understanding and respect throughout the whole curriculum.
19. Each year pupils will learn about major world faiths in line with the themes in the Catholic Truth Society (CTS) programmes of study. We use a set of text books written by the CTS for pupils and teachers. We make use of the CD ROM "Teaching Other Faiths" developed by Sister Marcellina. We also supplement our teaching by referring to the "Come and See" programme.

The Mass

20. As the ***Eucharist Sacrifice*** left for us by Jesus, Mass is central to our faith. Pupils are taught how to take a full and active part in the Mass and to understand its meaning. It is essential that Mass is relevant for the pupils. Mass days are marked as special days and the girls wear white ribbons in their hair. Pupils attend Mass regularly in church both on all Holy Days of Obligation, and also to mark significant aspects of school life, such as Leavers' Mass. Pupils are offered the opportunity to prepare the liturgy for Mass. School Masses relate to relevant topics in the lives of pupils or the School, the liturgical year or topics in the CTS Religious Education programme.
21. Parents are invited to attend all Masses and encouraged to meet for refreshments after Mass in the School Dining Hall. The class that helped prepare the Mass are also given the privilege of cakes and refreshments with the parents after Mass.

22. On Founder's Day, as well as attending Mass, the girls wear white ribbons and the children are given iced buns as a treat in a tradition that dates back to the founding of the School in 1945.
23. We have re-introduced the May Procession to crown Our Lady with flowers; this was started by Sister Patricia and is another tradition. Following the restoration to use of our Lady's Lawn, this procession with hymns and music is a popular annual event, also attended by parents. All pupils bring flowers or plants for Our Lady. The girls who have celebrated First Holy Communion that year wear their First Holy Communion dresses and lead the Procession. One girl is chosen to crown Our Lady with flowers.

Masses

24. Masses are arranged with the Priests. Parents are notified in advance in the School newsletter, the Calendar of Events, via ParentMail and on the School Website. Parents are also invited for refreshments in School after all School Masses.
25. Class Masses are arranged for the Prep Department in the classroom. Parents are notified in advance.
26. When preparing a Mass, the teacher needs to do the following:
- Refer to the Catholic readings of the day or choose a theme and then choose a suitable Gospel, Gospel Acclamation First Reading and **Responsorial Psalm**
 - Ask pupils to compose **Bidding Prayers** to reinforce the theme of the Mass
 - Liaise with the Director of Music prior to hymn practice and select suitable hymns – Opening, Offertory, Communion and Recessional
 - Ensure that pupils practise their readings in advance (it may be necessary to visit the Church for these practice sessions)
 - Inform pupils that during Holy Communion, pupils of other faiths may receive a blessing from the Priest or Eucharistic Minister. To receive a blessing, pupils should go to the altar with their arms crossed over their chest.
 - Present all planning for the Mass to the Head for approval and for forwarding by email to the Priests, at least a week in advance.
 - A member of the Parish Team of Priests supports our planning and preparation for Mass by meeting a term in advance to discuss the relevant reading of the day for Mass.

The Sacraments

27. During their time at Rydes Hill, some pupils will receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist. As the Sacraments are a gift from God, we encourage the pupils to show suitable respect. The photographs of the girls preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are displayed next to the RE board in the School corridor. The School supports the Parish based preparation programmes for the

Sacraments and holds a special celebration each year for those pupils who receive the Sacraments for the first time.

28. First Holy Communion is an important milestone on a child's Faith Journey. Where possible, a member of School staff attends the First Holy Communion Mass for each child. We hold a celebration Mass in June each year during the School day so that all the children can recognise and celebrate this important event.
29. Pupils are encouraged to receive The Eucharist each time they attend Mass.
30. Pupils are prepared for, and participate in, the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Church during the season of Lent. The Head invites a Priest from the Parish Team to the School to hear confessions during Lent. We have a Catholic Priest on our Governing Body.

Liturgical Year – Seasons and Feasts

31. At Rydes Hill, we acknowledge the Feasts and special events of the Liturgical Year by preparing either a children's liturgy for Mass in Church or by holding a special Assembly in School. Parents are invited to attend these special occasions.

32. The events we celebrate include:

- Autumn Term
 - Mass to celebrate the beginning of the School year
 - Harvest Mass
 - All Saints Mass
 - Advent Mass – the Advent Wreath is introduced in Assembly and a candle lit each week
 - Christmas – a special Carol Concert (Middle Preparatory to Form One)
- Spring Term
 - Epiphany Mass (for the start of the new term)
 - Ash Wednesday Mass
 - School Feast Day: St. Patrick's Day Mass (Founder's Day)
 - Lent Confessions
 - Easter – a special end of term Easter Assembly including Stations of the Cross
- Summer Term
 - Ascension Mass
 - Corpus Christi Mass
 - May – Mary's month – May Procession and crowning of Our Lady
 - Feast of Saints Peter & Paul (when it occurs in term time)
 - Leavers' Mass – parents come with their child at this Mass and receive a special blessing and a Leaver's gift

Support for Charities

33. Rydes Hill offers its support to many charities on a termly basis. Recent donations include:

- Aid to the Church in Need (Syria and the Middle East)
- Médecins Sans Frontières
- Syrian Refugees (Donation of Socks)
- Salesian Society of St John Bosco (Philippines)
- The Josephite Trustees (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- The Reindeer Run, Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice
- Mary's Meals
- Footsteps – Project J (Guildford Homeless charity)
- CAFOD
- Drugfam
- The Catholic Children's Society Mission Together (Missio)

34. Children are taught about those less fortunate than themselves in R.E. lessons and in Assemblies, and they are encouraged to undertake and to lead charity fund-raising activities.

35. Advent and Lent are times in which the school engages in specific focussed fundraising efforts which are often initiated by guests speaking at Assemblies and making the children aware of the impact their fundraising has.

Chaplaincy Team

36. At the beginning of each School year, children are invited to apply in writing to be part of the Chaplaincy Team in partnership with the Head and the Head of RE. There are two members from each Year Group from Upper Transition to Form One.

37. The Team meet regularly to discuss strategies to enhance the Catholic Ethos of the School and to lead the whole community closer to God. They play an active role in Collective Worship (see C22 Collective Worship Policy), the Catholic Life of the School, and in creating, making people aware of, and helping others to live, the Children's Mission Statement; Live wisely, think deeply, love generously. They also represent the School at events such as Deanery Retreats, The Good Shepherd Diocesan Liturgy. They help ensure that classroom Prayer Areas are well resourced and maintained and liaise directly with the Head of RE.

Assemblies

38. **Monday** : Whole School Assembly focuses on the Gospel reading of the previous Sunday or another topic e.g. Peace Sunday, Reconciliation etc. and is taken by the Headmistress. The Headmistress invites pupils to share their own prayers with the School. Prayers include a moment of quiet reflection.

39. **Friday** : Whole School Assembly focuses on celebrating achievements of the pupils during the course of the week and is led by the Headmistress.
40. A number of Special Assemblies and Plays are held throughout the year. These include:
- Harvest Festival
 - Advent Assemblies lighting the Advent Wreath
 - Nursery Nativity Play
 - Christmas Production including Nativity (Kindergarten to Lower Preparatory)
 - Carol Service (Middle Preparatory to Form One)
 - Blessing the Nativity Crib and singing Carols on the last day of term (A Governor blesses us before we leave for the holidays)
 - Holy Week and Easter Liturgies – Easter Assembly
 - Ash Wednesday Mass, Confessions
 - End of School Year Prayers in St Mary’s Church led by the Head by Our Lady’s Statue

Please refer to C22 Collective Worship Policy for more detail regarding the weekly pattern of Assemblies and Worship.

Prayer Groups and Prayers

41. The Head holds a Parent Prayer Group every Tuesday at 8.30 a.m. during term-time.
42. In addition to the daily Collective Worship and regular prayers throughout the day in each form, there are opportunities for the children to gather and pray on a voluntary basis, such as during Lent where children can do the Stations of the Cross, or during May when they can gather on Our Lady’s Lawn to say the Rosary. These sessions are supervised but primarily pupil led and instigated by members of the Chaplaincy Team.
43. Prayers are said before every Staff Meeting, every Committee Meeting (for example, Health and Safety Committee Meeting) and at the beginning and end of every Governing Body meeting.
44. All children say a prayer with their teacher at the start of each day and at the end of each day. All children say a prayer before lunch.

Teachers’ Enterprise in Religious Education

45. In agreement with the Diocese, Rydes Hill Preparatory School uses R.E. textbooks for pupils and teachers written by the Teachers’ Enterprise in Religious Education. The Way the Truth and the Life is an integrated approach to Early Years, Primary and Secondary Religious Education in Catholic Schools. It is developed by TERE: teachers supporting teachers whose aim is “to support teachers in Catholic Schools and in the wider Christian community in their daily task of unfolding for pupils the mystery of God, the teaching of the Church and its application in daily life.” The syllabus and accompanying resources are

based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools*.

46. As well as Teachers and Pupil Books, CD ROMs, which provide IWB resources and links to other media, there is a regularly updated website with resources for assessment in line with the new Interim Standards. The School also has the resources and books of the “Come and See” programme of study to refer to or to enhance chosen topics.
47. The aim of the programme is to explore the religious dimensions of questions about life, dignity and purpose within the Catholic tradition. Links are made with the pupils’ own experiences and with universal experience before looking at Scripture and Church teaching. Links are also made with the experience of other world faith traditions. The programme is therefore ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’. For all pupils, the programme should raise questions and provide material for reflecting on their own experiences and help them explore the beliefs, values and way of life of the Catholic traditions.

Assessment Recording and Reporting

See also C10 Marking Policy

48. Assessment is based on teachers’ professional judgements and we use a range of tasks. The greater the repertoire of assessment tasks, the richer the possibilities of response. Achievement can be demonstrated through art, music, dance, prayer, Assemblies and liturgies as well as written work.
49. Our assessment for learning allows us to know and understand what pupils can do and then to use this information for future planning. We aim to:
- Ensure our assessment has variety
 - Is flexible to meet the needs of each individual class
 - Provides pupils with a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and what they can do to improve
 - Encourages pupils to take responsibility for their progress
50. Formative assessment is ongoing. Using key questions, teachers stimulate learning and become aware of a pupils level of understanding and growth in skills by listening and observing their ability. Observing a pupil or group as they prepare a liturgy, compose a poem or engage in dramatizing a Biblical event. It includes oral responses, peer assessment, self-evaluation, target setting and marking. Towards the end of the unit, pupils will reflect on their learning and identify areas they feel proud of and identify areas to be developed in future. This may be done on a formal sheet with questions and answers or verbally through a discussion. Pupils are encouraged to assess whether or not targets have been met by reflecting on their work, comparing it with others and discussing it with their peers and with the teacher. Criteria for assessment is agreed with the pupils and includes such questions as: What do you know and understand now? How does your new

knowledge or skill enhance what you knew before? How will this learning influence you in the future?

51. Summative assessment at the end of each unit not only brings together the teaching and learning for the individual but can also provide a group response and a group assessment. Consequently, this form of assessment contains elements of diagnostic and evaluative assessment as well. Attainment is measured using the new standards set by the Bishop's Conference Guidance for England and Wales. We are currently under transition to using the new Assessment Criteria introduced by the Bishop's Conference, the Interim Standards, and are developing ways of assessing and recording against these standards.

Marking, Reporting and Commenting on Learning

52. A personal verbal dialogue between teacher and pupil is encouraged whenever possible. Marking work in Religious Education is in line with School policy.
53. Pupils in Lower, Middle and Higher Preparatory and Form One take a formal RE test at the end of each term. Pupils in Middle and Higher Preparatory and Form One take an examination at the end of each academic year.
54. Progress of Achievement in RE is reported to parents in an Academic Grade Card at the end of the Autumn and Spring Term and in a written report at the end of each academic year.
55. We are now using the new Interim Standards to measure achievement and progress as introduced by The Bishops' Conference and are developing ways of assessing and recording against these standards. We now use the language of Age Related Expectations, Working Towards and Working at Greater Depth.

Religious Education Displays

56. A topic display offers evidence of pupil achievement and also celebrates it. The possibility of written, art and graphic work allows individuals to select a medium of their own choice to express what they know and understand of the topic covered. Some displays will be created on an ongoing basis as the topic is being taught and such displays can enhance the learning process for the pupils and also help teachers make summative assessments of the pupil's understanding of the learning.
57. There is one large noticeboard in the main School corridor dedicated as the RE Board and it is changed every half term. The RE Co-ordinator chooses a theme based around the Church's season or the work being covered and invites all classes to contribute to the display.
58. Each classroom has a prayer focus area (Prayer Corner). Each Preparatory classroom has a display relating to the topic being studied.

CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC CHANGES:

This policy relates to when the school is operating normally. During the corona virus pandemic, different procedures are in place. These are subject to change depending on Government guidelines at the time. Please refer to the Handbook for learning at Rydes Hill during the Corona Virus pandemic for more detail and the remote learning policy.

- Masses for the school are not taking place.
- Assemblies take place on Zoom.
- Collective worship takes place in the classroom bubble.
- Normal carol services and school plays have been altered to meet social distancing requirements.
- the Chaplaincy Team is unable to meet due to mixing of bubbles. It will be reinstated as soon as possible.
- The Wednesday Word is unavailable in printed form so has been made available online and a link added to the Newsletter for parents.

Appendix A – Examples of Prayers

Morning Prayer

Oh my God, you love me
You're with me night and day
I want to love you always
In all I do and say
I'll try to please you, Father
Bless me through the day
Amen.

End of Day Prayer

God our Father, I come to say
Thank you for your love today.
Thank you for my family
And all the friends you give to me.
Guard me in the dark of night
And in the morning send the light.
Amen.

Grace before Meals

Bless us Oh God as we sit together
Bless the food we eat today
Bless the hands that made the food
Bless us, Oh God
Amen.

Act of Contrition

Oh my God because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and with the help of your grace, I will try not to sin again.

Form One Prayer

Lord, help us to remember the important things in life are love, friendship and honesty;
And that all the money and material things in the world will not make us happy,
If we are not ourselves.

Give us each day, a sense of how you would like us to be;
So that we may use our lives
In a way that pleases you.
Amen.

Appendix B – Resources

1. TERE The Way The Truth and The Life teacher's book and CD Rom for each year group and pupil books.
2. Teaching Other Religions in a Catholic School CD Rom
3. Teaching British Values in a Catholic School through the provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). Cross referenced to the Way the Truth and the Life (WTL) series.
4. "Come and See" Teacher's book for each year group.

All pupils from Upper Transition upwards have a special Rydes Hill hardback Catholic hymn book.

All pupils from Lower Preparatory to Form One have their own copy of the Good News Bible – Children's Edition.

Additional teaching resources for RE, Assemblies and PSHCE are held in the Staff Resources Room.

The School Library holds a wide range of RE books including books for PSHCE which the pupils may borrow and/or use for research purposes.