

“The Aims of Spiritual and Moral Education at The High School”

1. General Aims of Education

- 1.1. The High School supports the statement of educational aims in the White Paper “Charting our Education Future”
 - 1.1.1. to foster an understanding and critical appreciation of the values - moral, spiritual, religious, social and cultural - which have been distinctive in shaping Irish society and which have been traditionally recorded respect in society
 - 1.1.2. to nurture a sense of personal identity, self esteem and awareness of one’s particular abilities, aptitudes and limitations, combined with respect for the rights and beliefs of others
 - 1.1.3. to promote quality and equality for all, including those who are disadvantaged, through economic, social, physical and mental factors, in the development of their full educational potential
 - 1.1.4. to develop intellectual skills combined with a spirit of enquiry and the capacity to analyse issues critically and constructively
 - 1.1.5. to develop expressive, creative and artistic ability to the individual’s full capacity
 - 1.1.6. to foster a spirit of self-reliance, innovation, initiative and imagination
 - 1.1.7. to promote physical and emotional health and well being
 - 1.1.8. to provide students with the necessary education and training to support the country’s economic development and to enable them to make their particular contribution to society in an effective way
 - 1.1.9. to create tolerant, caring and politically aware members of society
 - 1.1.10. to ensure that Ireland’s young people acquire a keen awareness of their national and European heritage and identity, coupled with a global awareness and respect and care for the environment

2. Aims of Spiritual and Moral Education at The High School

- 2.1. Many of these general educational aims will be reflected in the approach to spiritual and moral education at The High School. The following are our aims:
 - 2.1.1. to contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the student
 - 2.1.2. to give students the opportunity to examine the fundamental principles of Christianity
 - 2.1.3. to introduce students to other faiths and philosophies in order to encourage tolerance and understanding
 - 2.1.4. to encourage students to reflect on their own way of life and the way of life of others in the world today
 - 2.1.5. to develop informed and responsible moral decision-making in students
 - 2.1.6. to encourage an awareness of issues of justice and peace

3. RE Teaching at The High School

- 3.1. The teaching of Religious Education will be given within the context of the general educational aims and the aims of spiritual and moral education as stated above.
- 3.2. RE is about religion and life and should thus have a distinctive content with a considerable theological and biblical input.
- 3.3. RE will focus primarily on the Christian faith. There will also be teaching about the other major world religions and philosophies in order to encourage tolerance and understanding
- 3.4. Moral issues will be approached with sensitivity and an awareness of the diversity of the background of the pupils. While emphasis will be given to traditional Christian values, differing viewpoints will also be presented.
- 3.5. Pupils will be encouraged to appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretation of life.
- 3.6. Pupils will be encouraged to express their opinions and to learn to listen to others expressing their opinions, so as to develop mutual tolerance and understanding.
- 3.7. There will be no specifically denominational teaching in RE.

4. Assembly at The High School

- 4.1. Assembly should make an important contribution to the achievement of the aims stated above.
- 4.2. Assembly can stimulate students and staff to think seriously about the deeper issues of life and offers a few moments at the beginning of the day which can give people something to discuss, possibly laugh with and perhaps be encouraged by.
- 4.3. Assembly can, on occasion, be:
 - 4.3.1. an act of worship
 - 4.3.2. a “thought for the day” with a moral or ethical message

- 4.3.3. a consideration of an important issue, e.g. justice, peace, world development, the community, etc.
- 4.3.4. a musical, dramatic or literary performance
- 4.3.5. affirmation of the achievements of pupils, staff or the school
- 4.4. Clergy from the surrounding area and of the community which the school serves have a valuable contribution to make and strengthen the links between the school and the community
- 4.5. Visiting speakers from organisations such as Amnesty, Red Cross, Greenpeace, etc. have a valuable contribution to make in raising awareness of important issues
- 4.6. The degree of success of assembly is seen in its contribution to the achievement of the spiritual and moral aims of the school rather than in pupils' perception of its entertainment value