

## **1.6 Scoil Choilm CNS 'Goodness Me, Goodness You!'**

### **Introductory Statement**

Scoil Choilm Community National School is a multi-belief school which welcomes pupils of all faiths and beliefs. Scoil Choilm CNS is under the patronage of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board. This policy relates to GMGY which is the patron's programme for Community National Schools. This curriculum caters for pupils of all faiths and beliefs both religious and secular. The GMGY Curriculum has been developed by the 'National Council for Curriculum and Assessment' (NCCA) for Community National Schools. Scoil Choilm has adopted the curriculum and has adapted it to suit the cultural diversity in our school.

Our GMGY committee was established in September 2016 when our senior classes adopted the curriculum. It was reviewed in December 2019 as the curriculum was rolled out in the junior classes in January 2019. This policy was developed by the GMGY Committee. All staff members were involved in the process also.

Our school policy on GMGY has been developed to give clear direction to teachers on how to teach it and to outline the methodologies which will be used. This policy is also to inform parents about the curriculum and ways in which they can support their child's learning in this area. This policy aims to outline the content of the GMGY lessons which will be taught in our school and the parameters under which the programme will be taught.

Parents can access to the GMGY curriculum handbooks <http://cns.ie/goodness-me-goodness-you-new/>. The lesson plans which will be taught in our school are available from the school office upon request. This policy is also accessible to parents on the Scoil Choilm website and from the school office.

We will look at the policy under the following headings:

- Definition of GMGY
- Rationale
- Aims of the GMGY curriculum
- Development of GMGY
- Guidelines for the implementation of GMGY in Scoil Choilm CNS
- GMGY methodologies
- Planning for GMGY
- Resources
- Time allocation
- Integration
- Teacher's Continuous Professional Development
- Withdrawal of students from GMGY
- On-going support & Development
- Assessment
- Revision of the policy



## Definition of GMGY

GMGY is a multi-belief curriculum which focuses on beliefs and values education. This curriculum aims to nurture the beliefs of the children in our school in conjunction with the parents. The curriculum seeks to foster a genuine respect between all belief systems in the school. Children are encouraged to express and discuss their belief systems and have conversations about their beliefs during the school day, thus enabling children to come to a greater sense of their identity and belonging.

GMGY can be described as an inter-disciplinary programme. Thus, it draws on many different curricular areas such as: oral language, story, Philosophy, Drama, Geography, History, Art and Music. Encouraging the children to express their views and opinions is a very important part of the GMGY Curriculum. The teacher encourages the children to express their opinions in a respectful manner which is a very important part of our school ethos. In our school, we only accept views and opinions which are respectful of others. This is in line with the ethos of our school and our Code of Conduct.

As stated in our Code of Conduct Policy:

*'Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other. Central to Scoil Choilm's ethos is the principle of inclusion. Inclusion means welcoming and celebrating difference. Pupils will be encouraged to explore and appreciate difference between themselves and other pupils. Pupils will be encouraged to realise that difference can add life, variety and strength to a school community.'*

The teaching of the GMGY Curriculum fosters a culture that honours and respects difference, by affirming the right of all human beings to believe and practise their beliefs, not only in their private lives but also in public life. This approach does not minimise differences but instead encourages conversations and discussions ensuring a greater understanding for the child of their sense of identity and belonging in this world. This underlying philosophy and pedagogy has been developed consistently from the principles of the Primary School Curriculum (DES, 1999) and Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

## Rationale

Scoil Choilm CNS is committed to inclusion, equality and fairness. We believe that our school should be a happy, positive place for the children, where there is co-operation between pupils, parents and staff. All three parties have a duty to work together to establish a friendly, happy atmosphere, where everyone is respected and treated with dignity. In drawing up this GMGY policy we recognise and respect the, religious, cultural and ethnic diversity among our school community.

Scoil Choilm CNS has a responsibility to commence the teaching of the GMGY Curriculum for all classes, in accordance with the Rules for Primary Schools as set out by the Department of Education and Skills.

## Aims of the GMGY Curriculum

The Goodness Me, Goodness You! Curriculum aims to enable children to:

- live a full life as a child and to realise their potential as a unique individual



- develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others, and so contributing to the good of society
- prepare for further education and lifelong learning
- be nurtured in their beliefs and values within the educational context of the school, as an intrinsic part of their living to the full, with the help of their family

Through these aims, we hope the children will develop the following skills and values:

- respect for one another
- develop confidence and self esteem
- develop empathy
- learn about inclusion and cultural diversity
- develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others
- debate and express opinions respectfully
- enhance the social skills of communication, conflict resolution and cooperation
- evaluate situations, think critically and make positive choices.
- demonstrate imaginative thinking
- question their own and others ideas
- explain and clarify their own understanding of their own self
- articulate their beliefs and values clearly and respectfully

### **Development of GMGY in Scoil Choilm CNS**

Development of the GMGY Curriculum in Scoil Choilm CNS is informed by engagement with the GMGY school group. This group consists of NCCA members, the principal, and teacher and parent representatives from our school. The leadership role played by the GMGY School group ensures the curriculum is developed in line with the needs of the school community. This connection is essential in developing a curriculum that enables our school to live out our ethos fully.

Parents played a meaningful role in developing and reviewing the GMGY policy. Parents on the GMGY policy committee attended a series of meetings to review lesson content and resources. They also assisted in the development of this policy. The GMGY committee members are as follows:

1. Parents' Representative: Nuha Ibrahim, Wigdan Gasmalla , Galyna Dubey, Ebtihal Abdelaziz, Monika Gupta, Thuy Dinh, Claudia Farcau and Chinenye Ighodaro & Ann Murphy- Costello, Donna McLeod Anuge.
2. School Principal: Mrs. Lowe
3. Deputy Principal & GMGY coordinator: Laura Maher
4. GMGY coordinator: Tara Malone
5. Teacher representatives

### **Structure of GMGY**

This programme is divided into four main strands. Each lesson in the programme has specific learning outcomes. The four strands are as follows:



- My Story
- Thinking Time
- We are a Community National School
- Beliefs and Religions

**Story**

The strand of Story builds on the narrative approach to teaching and learning found in the Primary School Curriculum. This strand offers children an opportunity to explore the arts and in doing so gives them a space to develop their own imagination and creativity. Children explore story, poetry and drama and will develop their own skills as a storyteller and a writer. The stories which are chosen will enable the child to develop a sense of identity, empathy, respect for diversity and critical thinking.

**We are a Community National School**

This strand is based on the values and ethos of our school community. In Scoil Choilm CNS, we aim to promote a spirit of inclusion, equality and fairness as well as celebrating cultural and religious diversity. The voices of all the educational partners in our school are evident in this stand – the pupils, parents, teachers and principal. This strand is a reflection of all the various celebrations and events that are central to Scoil Choilm CNS – such as our Community Day; Anti-Bullying and Anti-Racism week; Eid; Christmas sing-along and Amnesty Friendship Week.

The children will have an opportunity to explore the concepts of equality, self-identity, citizenship (both local and global), and human rights while also being provided with opportunities for creativity and innovation.

**Thinking time**

This strand is grounded in the ‘Philosophy for Children’ approach. It seeks to develop children’s thinking and debating skills and to facilitate their understanding of both their own ideas and those of others. In this strand, there will be an emphasis on critical thinking, debating and expressing one’s opinion in a respectful manner. This strand encourages the children to identify, discuss and value their own ethics and morals.

**Beliefs and religions**

This strand of the curriculum encourages inter-belief dialogue and the sharing of personal belief experiences both religious and secular, in order to enable children to learn ‘about’ and ‘from’ religion. The family plays a central role in this strand by informing the child about the beliefs and traditions of the home; the child then shares this perspective with their peers and listens to the perspectives of others. In this strand, parents are enabled to nurture the belief of their child and the school supports them in this process of belief-nurturing.

The lessons and learning outcomes in the strand ‘Beliefs and Religions’ are outlined below.

Lesson	Lesson Outcomes
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Introduction to beliefs and religions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrates a basic understanding of religions and beliefs, both religious and secular, and recognises their local national and global contexts</li> <li>use of appropriate vocabulary when speaking about beliefs and religions and expression of their own observations and experiences of the beliefs and religions they have encountered in their home, school and local community</li> <li>articulate their beliefs and values clearly and respectfully in order to explain why they are important in their own lives and in the lives of others.</li> </ul>
Rites and Ceremonies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discuss, present and demonstrate an understanding of their own and others' beliefs about the rites and ceremonies that belong to a range of belief traditions found within their local, national and global community</li> </ul>
Special Journeys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discuss, present and demonstrate an understanding of their own and others' beliefs about the special journeys that belong to a range of belief traditions within their local, national and global community for example a pilgrimage</li> </ul>
Special Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discuss, present and demonstrate an understanding of their own and others' beliefs about the special places that are associated with a range of belief traditions found within their local, national and global community</li> </ul>
Celebrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discuss, present and demonstrate an understanding of their own and others' beliefs about celebrations that belong to a range of belief traditions found within their local, national and global community.</li> </ul>
Religion and lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discuss, present and demonstrate an understanding of the connection between beliefs and lifestyle choices.</li> </ul>
Codes of Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss, present and demonstrate an understanding of the codes of conducts, both religious and secular, that influence the way we live.</li> </ul>
Symbolism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discuss, present, identify and demonstrate an understanding of the symbols, both religious and secular, that the children will encounter locally, nationally and globally.</li> </ul>

### Guidelines for Implementation of GMGY in Scoil Choilm CNS



In Scoil Choilm CNS teachers will ensure that when teaching GMGY Curriculum, they will:

- act as a facilitator for discussions. They will not express or teach the children with their own personal religious beliefs and opinions.
- seek advice from the GMGY coordinator or the principal if questions arise which they are unsure of.
- strive to be equitable in teaching about the five major world religions (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism) and also be equally respectful of all other belief systems.
- not include any faith formation - prayer or sacramental preparation within the school day
- not teach from any sacred text – such as the Bible or Quran
- adhere only to the content of the PowerPoints and resources when teaching the strand of ‘Beliefs and Religions’
- will not use ‘Quiet Time’ or ‘Meditation’ as a teaching methodology whilst teaching GMGY

When teaching the GMGY Curriculum, the teacher explores the topic from a local and then from a global perspective. In the case of celebrations, children may explore the history of celebrations in Ireland before exploring celebrations from around the world. During the family project, parents have an opportunity to explore the concept with their child from the belief perspective of their family and their belief community. This experience can be religious or secular in nature. For example, a Muslim family may explore the celebration of Eid or Ramadan while a family with a secular belief background may explore the celebration of birthdays, anniversaries or nature. When the family project is completed, it will be signed by parents and then children are asked to present their project to their peers.

The teacher introduces the children to the topic they will be researching with their families; exploring the Irish and global context while providing children with the appropriate language to engage in dialogue on this topic. A learning environment that promotes respectful engagement and models appropriate dialogue is an important feature for this type of learning.

Children have an opportunity to listen to each other’s projects and to engage in conversation about these experiences. Through this sharing, children come to appreciate and value their own and different experiences and come to know something of the significant experiences of others.

### **GMGY Methodologies**

Like the Primary School Curriculum (1999), the GMGY Curriculum recommends the use of a wide variety of teaching methodologies in order to be inclusive of all learning styles. These have been complemented with methodologies from international practice and research as outlined below.

Methodologies should be utilised in a sensitive manner, in line with the needs of the child and with consideration for their cultural and belief traditions.

#### Active learning:



The GMGY Curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for active engagement in a wide range of learning experiences. Children are encouraged to respond in a variety of ways to particular content and teaching strategies. The teacher identifies particular stages of development and chooses a sequence of activities that will be most effective in advancing the child's learning. This is the principle of guided activity and discovery learning.

### Collaborative learning:

Children are stimulated by hearing the ideas and opinions of others and by reacting to them. Collaborative work exposes children to the perceptions that others may have of a problem or a situation. This interaction will help broaden and deepen an individual child's understanding. The act of co-operating with others facilitates the child's social and personal development and fosters an appreciation of the benefits of working cooperatively.

### Problem-solving:

In the curriculum the child is encouraged to observe, collate and evaluate evidence, to ask relevant questions, to recognise the essence of a problem, to suggest solutions, and to make informed judgements. These activities help to foster higher-order thinking skills such as summarising, analysing, making inferences and deductions, and interpreting figurative language and imagery.

### Using the environment:

First-hand experience that actively engages the child with the immediate environment and with those who live in it is an effective basis for learning. The experience begins in the home and continues to expand as the child grows, from the child's home environment, to the school and beyond. First-hand experience of different aspects of the curriculum outside the classroom adds to the relevance and effectiveness of children's learning.

### Integration:

Integration refers to cross-curricular connections. What is important is a coherent learning process that makes connections between the different subjects. An emphasis on the interconnectedness of knowledge gives children a broader and richer perspective and reinforces the learning process.

### Thinking time:

This is a methodology taken from the practice of 'Philosophy for Children'. The children are presented with a topic or a problem. They are given some time to formulate their own ideas on the subject. The teacher creates an environment which encourages the children to listen and be respectful of each other's views. This methodology encourages the children to question assumptions and generalisations. The children will develop opinions with supporting reasons, analyse significant concepts and generally apply the best reasoning and judgement they are capable of to the chosen topic.

Quiet time will not be used as a methodology. No meditation will be used in any lessons in our school.



### **Planning for GMGY**

In line with the Primary School Curriculum (1999), classroom planning will have both short-term and long-term dimensions. Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) will plan weekly for GMGY, whilst all other teachers will plan fortnightly. All teachers will have a termly plan for GMGY also.

### **Resources**

Teachers have access to the GMGY website through a school log on where all content can be downloaded from the GMGY Curriculum section. We have made some changes to the lessons. These changes have been made to reflect the needs of our school community and our school context. The edited versions of these lessons are available on the teacher's server. All teachers have copies of the curriculum documents. A collection of GMGY story books are available from the library. The PowerPoints, which accompany the Strand 'Beliefs and Religions' are available on the teacher's server. All stories attached to the curriculum are available as e-books on the teacher server.

### **Informing Parents**

Parents have access to the curriculum documents for the GMGY Curriculum online: <http://cns.ie/goodness-me-goodness-you-new/> and lessons are available upon request from the school office.

At the beginning of each school year a general meeting for parents takes place in each classroom. Teachers will inform parents about the GMGY Curriculum at this time.

### **Time allocation**

Goodness Me, Goodness You! is the patron's programme. In accordance with the guidelines of the Primary School Curriculum (1999) <http://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary> two hours and thirty minutes are provided for the teaching of GMGY each week. The GMGY curriculum provides schools with the autonomy and flexibility to negotiate the curriculum in line with the needs of the school community. The following time will be dedicated to GMGY each week;

Junior infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class teachers will do three 20 minute lessons

3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Class teachers will do three 30 minute lessons

5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class teachers will do two 45 minute lessons

### **Curriculum Integration**

Within the lessons there are suggestions of some of the instances where linkage and integration might be established. There is a strong link to literacy in the strands 'Story' and 'Beliefs and Religions'. Values and ethics in the 'We are a Community National School' strand will link with Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). GMGY also has links with History, Geography, Music, Visual Arts and Drama.

### **Teacher's Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**





Teachers will receive CPD training delivered by the teacher representatives that form the GMGY policy committee. These teacher representatives have received and will continue to engage with on-going CPD training in the GMGY Curriculum. Ongoing communication will happen between teachers at each class level during fortnightly planning meetings. Teachers will be informed of any new developments in relation to GMGY at Tuesday morning update meetings.

### **Participation in GMGY**

As GMGY is an NCCA Curriculum, permission is not sought for this programme. If any parents would like to withdraw their child from the programme, the parent must make this request in writing to the school. However, we would ask parents to engage in dialogue with the school or members of the committee prior to opting out of the programme if that is their preference.

### **Ongoing Support & Development**

The Board of Management of Scoil Choilm Community National School supports and fosters the development of this GMGY policy. As with all our policies, parents have access to this policy on our school website and a hard copy is available from the school office. We encourage parents to give us feedback regularly. We ask parents to work with us in ensuring GMGY in respectful of all religions and beliefs.

### **Assessment:**

We will use the following forms of assessment to assess the GMGY Curriculum lessons:

- Self-Assessment / Peer Assessment
- Teacher Observation
- Teacher Questioning
- Teacher Designed Task: written pieces based on the projects

Assessment of the GMGY Curriculum will be addressed under the following headings:

- Children's attitude towards and opinions of the programme (survey to be completed in June every year)
- Teacher's opinion of their engagement with the programme
- Parent's views on the programme will be collected and collated through a parent survey.

The outcome of the assessment process will be reviewed by the GMGY committee for future improvement of the teaching and learning of GMGY in our school.

This assessment will provide an opportunity for teachers to assess the learning and the success of the programme. It will also give the children an opportunity to suggest topics which they would like to see taught in future GMGY lessons. This will also provide an opportunity for parents to give feedback on their child's engagement with the programme and the role of the family in relation to this.

### **Revision of this policy:**



This policy was ratified by the Single Manager in April 2017. It was revised in June 2017. It was amended to include the junior programme in January 2019 and was approved and ratified by the BOM in May 2019. It will be reviewed in June 2020 or before hand if the need arises.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of BOM

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_