

DIARMUID MARTIN
ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

25 March, 2008

Dear Principal/Board of Management,

As we now begin the final term of this school year, I write to acknowledge the great work and commitment of school management and Religious Education teachers throughout the whole year. During the past few years we have witnessed great changes and challenges in the area of Religious Education with the introduction of new syllabi at both Junior and Senior Certificate levels.

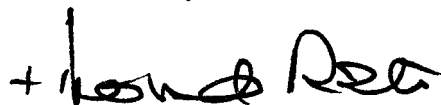
As this is the time of year for the drafting of school timetables ~~for the next academic year~~ I wish to remind you of the need to ensure that two hours teaching time per week is allocated to Religious Education classes (Guidelines for the Formation and Development of Catholic Students, Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference 1999 p.10).

This is the policy of the Irish Bishops' Conference and CORI in relation to Catholic Secondary Schools. It is also a provision of the Deeds of Trust of the Community Schools and a provision of the Model Agreement for designated Community Colleges. The Department of Education and Science, through the NCCA, have also stipulated that two hours is the minimum requirement for teaching the religious education syllabus for examination at Junior Certificate Level. I know there are many demands on the school curriculum but this issue is critical, not least in relation to the ethos of our schools.

I pray God's blessing on you, the staff and students of your school

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read '+ Diarmuid Martin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

+ Diarmuid Martin,
Archbishop of Dublin