Ethos Statement of South Abbey National School

- South Abbey National School is a Church of Ireland National School under the patronage of the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross. The school serves the Youghal Union of Parishes which includes the three parishes of Youghal, Castlemartyr and Ardmore. South Abbey is a co-educational school and was founded in the mid-19th century. The actual date is unknown but the school moved into the premises at South Abbey, Youghal in 1886 and remained there until 2010 when it moved to new premises on Golf Links Road in Youghal.

- South Abbey National School is a school which, in accordance with the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018, serves those of a “minority religion”, historically mostly members of the Church of Ireland and Methodist communities. The school welcomes children from other Christian traditions, other faiths and none, within the constraints of space. The school community inculcates a respect for those from other religious traditions or none, while upholding the understanding of the Christian faith as practised by the church of the sponsoring community and related churches.

- South Abbey endeavours to promote the moral, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical and social development of all the children in its care. The Religious Education curriculum specifically enables the child to develop spiritual and moral values and to come to a
knowledge of God. The primary curriculum places great emphasis on the child as learner; learning is associated with the process of growth and development. The principles which underpin the approaches to learning that lie at the heart of the curriculum are:

- The child’s sense of wonder and natural curiosity
- The child as an active agent in his/her own learning
- The developmental nature of learning
- The child’s knowledge and experience as a base for learning
- Environment-based learning
- The aesthetic dimension
- Collaborative learning

These principles are of particular significance for Religious Education, a process which seeks to enable the child to grow in faith, in knowledge of God and in love of God’s word. The Gospel values are expressed in the daily life of the school through the teachers and staff modelling values such as respect towards everyone, sharing, caring, being loving and showing forgiveness. South Abbey integrates the religious ethos of the school in its entire life throughout the teaching day and in all activities of the school. The “Golden Rules” which are used in behaviour management reflect Gospel values (“We are gentle.” “We are kind and helpful.” “We are honest.” etc.). The school nurtures faith in its pupils through the lessons of the “Follow Me” curriculum, the involvement of the Rector in school life, learning prayers and hymns, taking part in weekly Friday assemblies which usually include a hymn, taking part in church services.

- The school’s Admissions Policy has been devised in accordance with the law, including the Education Act 1998, the Education (Welfare) Act 200 and the Equal Status Act as amended by the Education (Admissions to Schools) Act 2018.

- The curriculum for Religious Education is the “Follow Me” programme and is outlined in more detail in the Religious Education Policy.
South Abbey National School welcomes the involvement of parents in school life through the Parent/Teacher Association, Parent Cafés every term and participation in the weekly Friday assemblies, as well as fundraising events, concerts etc. The staff are continually involved in developing their skills through CPD (Continuous Professional Development) throughout the year and during the summer holidays and the weekly “Croke Park” hour is frequently used for this purpose. The values expressed in the Code of Behaviour reflect the Christian ethos of the school in every respect. Values such as honesty, truthfulness, justice, fairness, sensitivity to others and civic responsibility are nurtured and protected. Minority groups are included in all aspects of school life while, at the same time, the school respects the constitutional right of parents to withdraw their child from RE, religious assemblies, concerts or services.

The school motto is: “Is Féidir Linn!” (“We Can Do It!” in Irish) which reflects the positive and encouraging environment of South Abbey where there are high expectations of what every child can achieve in all areas of school life and beyond.

South Abbey National School is a positive, encouraging environment for children of all backgrounds and abilities. It is a community where pupils experience a sense of caring and belonging. There is an excellent culture of mutual respect, good manners and peer support. Tolerance and inclusivity of those of other religious denominations and none are some of the school’s most important principles. The school has children of all religions and none and from many countries around the world. We welcome enquiries from all parents who are attracted to the ethos and values of South Abbey.