

Prayer Spaces & PDMU



What does PDMU in Northern Irish schools look like?

Personal Development and Mutual (PDMU) understanding is a **statutory element of the Northern Irish Curriculum** from the Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 4. It is at the core of the Curriculum and reflected across the Curriculum's aims and objectives. It focuses attention on **children's emotional development, health and safety, relationships with others and the development of moral thinking, values and actions.**

A strong focus on PDMU within school can help to build pupils' resilience to deal with challenges. It places the child at the centre of the curriculum and through engagement in a broad range of **caught and taught activities** seeks to equip and prepare young people for life, work and the challenges of being an adult in an increasingly complex society.

PDMU focuses on 2 primary themes; **Personal Understanding and Health** and **Mutual Understanding in the Local and Wider Community** which concentrate on the development of children's knowledge, attitudes, skills, relationships, emotional awareness, thinking skills, values, life skills and behaviour that flows both in and outside of the classroom.

PDMU is most effective where it is integrated throughout school life and where the responsibility is shared by **'partners in education'** - parents, staff, children, health professionals, external agencies and wider communities. Because of this the delivery of PDMU will vary between schools so the best way to find out about your local school's approach is to **meet up with the Head Teacher or Senior Member of Staff** and discuss it, exploring ways in which a prayer space could enrich what is being taught. This reflects an essential aspect of hosting a prayer space in a school – the importance of building a positive relationship with the school and its staff, and so **connecting the Christian community with the school community to develop trust and mutual understanding.**

Enriching PDMU with Prayer Spaces in Schools

Here are just a few examples of why PDMU is important (from the national Non-Statutory Guidance for PDMU) and how Prayer Spaces in Schools connect with PDMU:



PDMU	Prayer Spaces in Schools
<p>Self awareness: Explore and express a sense of self, for example, temperament, feelings and emotions, personal responsibility, personal needs, aspirations etc.</p>	<p>Prayer Spaces provide a place for students to reflect on their emotional health. Through various activities they can explore their feelings, emotions and dreams for the future. (E.g. Mountain, pom pom prayers, name that feeling)</p>
<p>Explore personal morals, values and beliefs, for example, the origin of personal values, developing a moral framework, personal integrity etc.</p>	<p>Prayer Spaces create space in the school day for students to explore their own beliefs and how their values inform how they relate to others and the world around them. They create opportunity to experience alternative values and beliefs and create space for them to decide how to interact with those things. (E.g. Finger print, Dream Clouds, Transforming butterflies)</p>
<p>Explore the different ways to develop self esteem, for example, enhanced self-awareness, sense of security and self worth, setting achievable targets, developing resilience, new interests and skills, learning to recognise achievement, etc.</p>	<p>Prayer activities allow students to reflect on themselves, their relationships, their aspirations, their uniqueness, their community and the world. They are reflective spaces which allow student time to critically engage with thinking about these things. (E.g. Mirrors, Little people, Love you neighbour.)</p>
<p>Relationships: Develop coping strategies to deal with challenging relationship scenarios, for example, sibling rivalry, caring for relatives, domestic violence, teenage rebellion, child abuse, sexism, change in family circumstances, coping with rejection, loneliness and loss, etc.</p>	<p>Prayer Spaces by their nature help students engage in mindfulness. Different activities allow students to process relationships and the effect they have on their lives and gives skills to process those emotions. (E.g. Reconciliation Zips, Beatitudes, Masks)</p>
<p>Develop strategies to avoid and resolve conflict, for example, active listening, assertiveness, negotiation, mediation etc.</p>	<p>Prayer Spaces are pastoral places that allow students time and space to process their emotions. This in turn can help to emotionally regulate and engage with resolutions for moving forward. (E.g. Wheelbarrow, The Cage, Calm Jars)</p>