

## **An Overview of the Role of the Diocesan Adviser**

The diocesan adviser supports religious education (RE) in post-primary schools through the following activities:

**1. School Visits:** By making regular personal visits the adviser builds up familiarity and trust with the RE team in each school. Advisers make at least one formal visit to each school per year to listen to the teachers' experience of religious education and to offer resources and encouragement. The day also includes meetings with the principal and the chaplain. Other visits are opportunities to present updates, to attend a school event or to assist with planning.

**2. Engaging with Schools and the Partners in Education:** In schools, the diocesan adviser liaises with the RE teachers, the principal, the chaplain and, on occasion, with the board of management and the trustees. The adviser keeps the local bishop informed on developments in the catechesis of adolescents and relevant issues from the schools in his diocese. Through their national association, advisers regularly engage with the school trustee bodies, the teacher training colleges and the *NCCA* (ROI) / *CCEA* (N. Ireland).

**3. Organising and Leading In-services for Religious Education Teachers:** The diocesan adviser organises an annual in-service for the RE teachers of a diocese. This gathering introduces teachers to leading speakers in the catechetical arena. Other in-services are arranged on a local (school cluster); shorter (afternoon or evening), and particular interest (chaplain, head of RE, year group) basis. Advisers also organise retreats and days of prayer for RE personnel. Some dioceses hold an annual afternoon or evening meeting for principals, to acknowledge their role in providing RE.

**4. Developing Links between Home, School and Parish:** In partnership with other diocesan services, the adviser promotes links between school, parish and home, creating possibilities for interaction between these partners in education.

**5. Evaluation of Religious Education in the School:** The diocesan adviser reminds all the partners in education of the central position of religious education in the curriculum. The adviser recommends the adequate timetabling and resourcing of RE classes and retreats. In all cases the evaluation should recognise the strengths of a school's RE programme and view any shortcomings in the context of a willingness to assist.

**6. Gathering and Evaluating Resource Materials:** The diocesan adviser informs schools about the best available resources for the RE syllabi, faith formation and the liturgical year. The adviser can help schools choose the textbooks and other materials suited to their particular needs. This is done by making resources available to schools during visits as well as by regular mailings and emails.

**7. The National Association of Post-Primary Diocesan Advisers (NAPPDA):** NAPPDA meets four times a year to provide faith and professional development opportunities for its members. At these meetings members gather to pray and to share and evaluate relevant information and resources. NAPPDA supports the Episcopal Commission for Catechetics in forming and implementing policy on religious education and faith formation.