

BISHOP WORDSWORTH'S SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Definitions:

1. *'Parent(s)' included guardian(s) or any person who has parental responsibility for the student or who has care of them.*
2. *'Is to', 'are to' and 'must' are obligatory. 'Should' is not obligatory but is good practice and is to be adhered to unless non-compliance can be justified.*

PREAMBLE

1. The aim of Religious Education in this Church of England Academy School reflects:
 - a. Our foundation under Bishop John Wordsworth in 1890. According to the Indenture of 16 August 1898, paragraphs (8) and (13), the Bishop Wordsworth's School (the School) was established with the purpose of education "in connection with the Church of England as by law established".
 - b. The tenets of the Church of England.
 - c. The School's Ethos Statement as outlined in the Instrument of Government. Therefore, Religious Education at the School is Christian and inclusive rather than narrowly denominational. It is based on the Diocesan guidelines and the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

AIMS

2. The School is to seek to promote an open and honest approach to the beliefs and unbeliefs which exist in the modern world. The spiritual lives of students are taken seriously and the Religious Education arrangements are aimed at helping to prepare students for very complex moral and ethical issues they will have to face as responsible adults in a rapidly changing world.
3. During their time at the School, students will have been encouraged to learn about the Bible, the basic features of the Christian faith and also the other great world religions and philosophies. Thus, they will come to:
 - a. Understand what it means to be a Christian.
 - b. Respect and understand the belief systems which exist in multi-cultural and multi-faith societies across the World.
 - c. Formulate their own informed decisions in their search for truth and meaning.
 - d. Establish links and empathy with the Christian Church, locally and world-wide.
4. This is further amplified in Annexes A and B.

SKILLS

5. The Religious Education syllabus seeks to develop the following skills of sound judgement in moral and ethical questions:

reflection	interpretation	synthesis and analysis
empathy	investigation and enquiry	evaluation
discussion and debate		

PROCEDURES

6. The Head of Religious Education (RE) is responsible for the organisation of RE throughout the School and is available to offer advice and help to students and their families.

7. The School has adopted the spirit of the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus. In using this syllabus, it places particular emphasis on developing students' capacity for critical analysis.

8. Religious Education is to be provided for all. It is hoped that all students will be able to join in the Religious Education lessons and enhance their sense of self-worth. However, those parents who wish to withdraw their children from these activities are entitled to do so by advising the Head by letter.

9. Current curricular time allocations are as follows:

KS3 6%

KS4 6% (GCSE Religious Studies Full Course);

The GCSE is taught from the start of the spring term in Y9 and in addition there are a number of themed days through Key Stage 4 which provide additional time for students to address RE related issues and thus enhance their experience in this area

KS5 Religious Studies A Level (Christianity, Philosophy of Religion, Ethics).

10. **Complaints.** Arrangements have been made with the Diocesan Board of Education for the hearing of complaints about the provision of Religious Education. Further details may be obtained from the School Office.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

11. The Head of Religious Education is responsible for monitoring standards of teaching and learning in RE and for reporting on the same to the Deputy Head (Academic). The Deputy Head (Academic) and the Head of RE should meet regularly to monitor the progress and implementation of this Policy. Advice may also be sought from the Diocesan Director of Education and the Link Governor. Every effort is made to link into the good practice of other schools via meetings with the Diocesan Board of Education and other local schools' heads of department.

12. This Policy is to be reviewed annually by the Deputy Head (Academic), the Head of RE and Link Governor with responsibility for RE. The most recent 3 years' review history is below:

25 th June 2019	Minor updates
23 rd June 2020	Minor updates
25 th March 2021	Minor updates
25 th April 2022	Minor updates
6 th June 2023	Minor updates

Annexes

- A. School Aims in Religious Education.
- B. Attitudes developed through the Religious Education Programme.

SCHOOL AIMS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. The aims of Religious Education at the School are in this Annex.
2. Develop students' knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and practices so that they:
 - a. Understand what it means to be a Christian.
 - b. Recognise that Christianity is interested in and provides a response to questions of meaning.
 - c. Appreciate the impact that Christianity has on people's lives and culture.
 - d. Understand how Christian belief may impact on relationships, values and lifestyle.
 - e. Understand that Christian belief can be expressed in a variety of ways, including art, dance, drama, music, ritual, celebration.
3. Develop students' awareness and understanding of the life and worship of Christians of other cultures, and of people of other faiths by:
 - a. Encouraging contact by inviting visiting speakers to the School and making visits to places of worship.
 - b. Making use of the ICT facilities.
4. Assist students in their own search for meaning and purpose in life and to enable them to develop spiritually through:
 - a. Creating regular opportunities for personal reflection on feelings and relationships.
 - b. Developing a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
 - c. Providing opportunities for questioning and exploration of meaning, purpose and value.
 - d. Exploring some of the ways in which Christians have approached and answered questions on the meaning and purpose of life and how their approaches and answers have shaped their lives and attitudes.
 - e. Encouraging students to consider their own values and commitments in response to consideration of the values and commitments of Christians and people of other faiths.
 - f. Developing the students' ability to evaluate their learning, recognising the views of others and using reasoned arguments to support a personal viewpoint.
5. Support students in their social, moral and cultural development through:
 - a. Consideration of their own values and commitments in the light of the values and commitments of Christianity and of other faiths.
 - b. Exploration of concepts such as faith, hope, love, forgiveness, justice and sacrifice.
 - c. Development of skills of reflection, empathy, communication, analysis and evaluation.
 - d. The development of attitudes of respect, sensitivity, open-mindedness and enhanced self-esteem.
 - e. Encountering people, stories, music and resources from different cultures.

ATTITUDES DEVELOPED THROUGH THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

1. Attitudes such as respect, open-mindedness and tolerance are to be promoted throughout all areas of School life. In Religious Education diversity in world view is celebrated and acceptance of others is encouraged in the study of religions and the spiritual dimension of human life. In light of the DfE Prevent Duty, Religious Education continues to provide a safe space for students to discuss controversial issues, understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments and views.

2. The particular attitudes at the heart of Religious Education are:

a. **Searching.** This includes:

- A desire to search for meaning in life
- A fascination about enquiring into human experience
- A wish to seek for truth and explore ultimate questions.

b. **Open-mindedness.** This includes:

- Listening to other people's views
- Being open and exploratory when investigating religion
- Avoiding bias and prejudice in discussion.

c. **Self-understanding.** This includes:

- Developing a mature sense of self-worth and personal value, recognising the uniqueness of every individual
- Developing confidence in student's ability to reflect upon important questions of meaning
- Awareness of life as a journey and one's current position as one stage in a continuing development.

d. **Respect.** This includes:

- Recognising the human rights of people to hold and practise their beliefs
- Respecting those with different opinions from one's own
- Discerning what is worthy of respect
- Appreciating similarities and differences.

e. **Wonder and Appreciation.** This includes:

- Understanding the importance of living by a set of values
- Willingness to develop a positive approach to all the challenges of life
- The ability to learn, while living with certainty or uncertainty
- The ability to live in accordance with one's beliefs and values, while recognising they may need to be modified or changed.