



## Religious Education Policy for Holywell School

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### Rationale

At Holywell, our vision is that everyone in our community chooses to “Live Life in all its Fullness” (John 10:10).

Inspired by the teaching of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, we choose ...  
to live our values,  
being the best we can be  
in community.

Religious Education (RE) is a vital part of our school curriculum with cross-curricular links to not only the other Humanities subjects but also to English, Art, Music and Drama. As a Church of England School providing a Christian Values-based education, we place great emphasis on the development of mutual respect and have created a school that is both welcoming and caring towards everyone who joins us. These values are embodied within the RE curriculum that is open to students, whatever their family's faith background/status. Together we seek to explore further students' understanding of and respect for other cultures and religions, while still retaining Christianity as the underlying belief system of the school community. Students are encouraged not only to learn about aspects of religion, belief and worship, but also to identify, cross-examine and refine their own beliefs in the light of their learning. All this takes place within a safe and caring environment in which students can explore their thoughts and feelings with growing confidence, encouraged by both their peers and teachers.

### Aims –

RE lessons are a key part of our curriculum provision. The aims of Religious Education in Holywell School are:

- To enable students to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage. They reflect on the teachings of Jesus and consider how they have influenced modern values. Students discuss how these teachings can be adapted to the modern world and still influence our lives, both in the present and the future.
- To enable students to know and understand about other major world religions and their impact on British society and culture and the wider world, enabling students to express ideas and insights. Students reflect on the meaning of religion to individuals and develop respect for opinions, traditions and practices that do not match their own. This enables them to embrace and celebrate the cultural diversity of the modern society in which we live.
- To develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious faith. Students learn to empathise with believers and develop an appreciation of the importance of sacraments, festivals and pilgrimage in their lives.

- To contribute to the development of students' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values. They discuss and develop a personal response to fundamental questions about life. Students are encouraged to engage in lively debate and develop the ability to explain and defend their beliefs with facts and evidence
- To develop students' religious literacy so that they are able to:
  - Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
  - Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for God and meaning.
  - Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.
  - Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.

### **The RE curriculum at Holywell**

Statutory obligations are met and RE is in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. Our Scheme of Learning has been written in line with the local SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) which has representatives from all faith groups to ensure that the curriculum is both age and faith appropriate. Topics taught are broadly similar to those taught in all schools, irrespective of their religious affiliation.

- Religious Education enables students to investigate, research and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people.
- At Holywell School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of major world faiths and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example does God exist and what happens when we die.
- As a Church of England (voluntary aided school) we enable students to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school.
- Religious Education at Holywell encourages students to learn from religions as well as about religions, enabling all students to reflect on their own spiritual knowledge, beliefs and understanding.

At Holywell School we have constructed a challenging and robust curriculum based on an accurate theological framework. It is carefully planned to reflect a good balance between theology, philosophy and human science and it makes a positive contribution to SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) development. The curriculum draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide. It provides an opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of the religion and world views as lived by believers.

Curriculum planning for RE is effective, reflecting a good balance between theology, philosophy and human science. Students are able to engage with religious text and theological ideas. They develop age appropriate skills of research, enquiry, critical analysis and interpretation.

### *Skills*

The RE curriculum at Holywell will engage with current good pedagogy for the subject that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and, in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place.

The study of RE divides into two major parts:

- Learning about Religion
- Learning from Religion.

Each year group receives one lesson of one hour in length per week. One term per year is spent on a unit that examines Christianity in depth, one unit examines another world religion and the third unit examines a panoramic unit that spans several religions:

Year Group	Christianity In Depth	World Religion	Panoramic Unit
5	The Life of Jesus	Judaism	Worship
6	Jesus' Teachings and their Influence Today	Sikhism	Sacraments/Rites of Passage
7	Salvation	Islam	Love versus Prejudice and Discrimination
8	The Nature of God The History of Christianity	Hinduism	Poverty and Injustice

Students are encouraged to explore their opinions, feelings and emotions towards religious experience and practice as well as ethical issues. Activities can range from group or paired activities, discussions and debates, problem-solving, creative work and drama, although this list is by no means exhaustive. Many lessons have an active element built in to encourage children to move around the room and interact with each other in some way. Tasks are adapted to ensure they are accessible to all.

The assessment process has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts. Five key skills have been identified within the RE curriculum: knowledge and understanding, comparison, making connections, analysis of texts and evaluation of different ideas and opinions. The key skills that students are learning and improving during each lesson are identified in the Schemes of Work and individualised targets for improvement are given as part of teacher feedback. Each key skill is linked to the 'Next Steps' that students need to meet in order to progress to the next 'level' of attainment. During each term students will complete several pieces of work that give them the opportunity to practise these skills.

#### **Right to withdraw a child from RE**

- Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from RE lessons and school worship.
- If parents express an interest in exercising this right they will be asked to discuss the matter with the Headteacher before coming to a final decision.
- Where parents do exercise this right, other arrangements in school will be made for their child during RE lessons.

#### **Review**

- i. The Ethos Committee of the Board of Governors will monitor and review the implementation of this policy
- ii. The Ethos Committee will review this policy and make recommendations to the full Board regarding further amendments.