



# **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

**Approved: March 2021**  
**Review Date: March 2022**

As a Church of England Academy, we are inclusive of all regardless of creed, colour, race, gender, sexual orientation or ability. We hope to transform the lives of our pupils, students and our wider community by putting our core values of love, integrity, generosity, hope and tolerance (LIGHT) into action. As such, all should feel welcome and respected. Schools are, in part, measured by academic success. Pupils and students know this. We must help and enable each pupil and student to succeed to the best of their ability by providing high quality lessons and an appropriate curriculum for our pupils and students.

**‘The glory of God is a human being fully alive ‘**

**St Irenaeus**

**This policy is guided by our vision and values:** We believe that the purpose of education is to develop integrated human beings. This is the purpose of Christian education, to draw out the potential of each person to the full, in a community which recognises the centrality of Jesus Christ as our guide and inspiration. To encounter Jesus is to be invited into ‘life in its fullness’ [John 10:10]. Gospel values must be at the centre of all that we do in our Academy, in and through the relationships we have with each other. We must respect ourselves, respect each other, respect our values and respect our environment. Our mission is to inspire and enable each unique pupil or student to achieve their full spiritual, academic, physical, moral and personal potential and to strive always for excellence, not only in academic excellence but excellence in the development of the whole person.

**At The John Wallis Church of England Academy, our aim is that Religious Education will:**

- **Be of the highest standard**, always striving for inclusive educational excellence.
- **Reflect the school’s distinctive character** and give pre-eminence to the teaching of Christianity, allowing pupils to develop intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually by equipping all pupils and students with a rich deep knowledge and understanding of belief and practice.
- **Provoke challenging questions** about the meaning of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils’ and students’ knowledge and understanding of Christianity, a range of other religions and world views that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development.
- **Provide a safe space for pupils to explore their own beliefs** [whether they are religious or non-religious], in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics, and to have the opportunity to express their responses. This builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives and enriches the inclusive nature of our community.
- **Enable pupils and students to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their school, their communities and as citizens of a diverse society in modern Britain.
- **Teach pupils and students to develop respect for and embrace all others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs which helps to challenge prejudice.
- **Prompt pupils and students to consider responsibilities** to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to and serve their own communities and the wider society. It encourages pupils and students to develop an understanding of and apply many Christian values including creativity, honesty, respect, inclusion, stewardship and thankfulness, ensuring flourishing for all.

- Enable pupils and students to develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery.
- Explore faith in action.

### **Curriculum balance and time**

Reflecting the Academy's funding agreement, parents and pupils and students are entitled to expect that, in Church schools, Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each Year Group (and should be at least 50% of the RE curriculum time). Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5% in key stages 1-4.

- ***At Key Stage 1-2, pupils are taught RE one hour a week.***
- ***At Key Stage 3, students are taught RE over three lessons per fortnight. Students study five principal religions across the two years with 50% of learning time dedicated to Christianity. Students also study ethical issues such as 'Stewardship, Peace and Conflict and Religion and Society'.***
- ***At Key Stage 4, all students follow the full course GCSE [Eduqas as Route A] Paper 1 Religious, Philosophical and Ethical studies in the modern world. Paper 2 – Christianity. Paper 3 – Islam. At Key Stage 4, RE is taught for four hours per fortnight.***
- ***At Key Stage 5, RE is offered at A Level [ currently Eduqas] Paper 1 Christianity; Paper 2 Philosophy of Religion; Paper 3 Religious Ethics.***
- ***All Sixth Form students take part in 'General RE Days' throughout the year.***

### **Teaching and Learning**

Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils and students, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. RE lessons provide a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews.

Pupils and students experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:

- Posing and discussing 'big' and challenging questions
- Reading and critically analysing texts.
- Interpreting information from different sources.
- Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- Listening to and discussing with the teacher and other pupils.
- Engaging in pair and group work.
- Exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
- Experiencing visits and visitors.
- Taking part in outdoor learning.
- Taking time for reflection.

The Academy follows the scheme 'Understanding Christianity' and Kent Diocese schemes of work, under The Kent Agreed Syllabus.

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

All pupils and students should follow a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils and students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life' [Education Act 2002] Learning about and from religion, Faith and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad- based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

RE promotes the Academy's values of '**Love, Integrity, Generosity, Hope and Tolerance**' by promoting an ethos of respect for others, challenging stereotypes and building understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions British values and human rights.

## **Health and Safety**

Health and safety issues may arise in religious education on a number of occasions for example, when pupils:

- Handle artefacts.
- Consume food.
- Visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to guidelines in the school's Health and Safety Policy in these circumstances.

## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessment in religious education will:

- Involve identifying suitable opportunities in schemes of work such as Understanding Christianity.
- Be directly related to the expectations of the Diocesan syllabus or Locally Agreed Syllabus and exam board.
- Seek to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Recognise the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.
- Employ well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identify progress and achievement as well as effort, following the school's marking policy.
- Include pupil and student self-assessment.
- Enable effective tracking of pupil and student progress to identify areas for development in their knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development.
- Enable effective reporting to parents and carers.

### **Role of the RE Subject Leader**

The Subject Leader of RE will monitor RE within the Academy through analysis of assessment data, learning walks, lesson observations and book scrutiny. The Head Subject Leader of RE is responsible for contributing to the SIAMS self-evaluation process with a key focus on **'Strand 7 – The effectiveness of religious education'**. They will evaluate the following:

- i. How well does RE help pupils and students to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith through exploration of core theological concepts using an approach that critically engages with the text?
- ii. How well does RE help pupils and students consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of people worldwide?
- iii. How well does RE enable all pupils and students to develop knowledge and understanding of other major world religions and world views and their impact on society and culture?
- iv. How well does RE give pupils and students a safe place to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and /or philosophical convictions?

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the Governing Body and the Principal should also make sure that:

- i. All pupils and students make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum.
- ii. The subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation.
- iii. Those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD.
- iv. Ensure all students have opportunities to take courses leading to an accredited qualification in the subject.
- v. Clear information is provided for parents on the content of the RE curriculum and on the right to withdraw their son/daughter from Religious Education if necessary.
- vi. RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the Academy can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils and students can make good progress.

At The John Wallis Church of England Academy, we recognise that parents have the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education. However, given that parents have chosen to send their child to a Church of England School with a distinctive inclusive Christian ethos, we would expect that parents will rarely, if ever exercise this right. The right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum. This includes for example, when, as may happen on occasion spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils and students or there are issues related to religion that arise in class discussions in other areas of the curriculum. We would ask any parent considering withdrawal from RE to contact the Principal to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of Religious Education at The John Wallis Church of England Academy.