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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

THIS DOCUMENT IS a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for Collective Worship at North Downs Primary School.

IT WAS WRITTEN based on statutory requirements and through a process of consultation with governors and staff.

IT HAS BEEN TAKEN FOR APPROVAL to the Governors in the Summer Term 2026.

THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED in the Summer Term 2028.

The Statutory Place of Religious Education

Religious education is seen as contributing to the whole education of the children within the school. The school approach is based on, and reflects, that adopted by the Surrey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

The school delivers a high-quality RE education, through the theological, philosophical and sociological 'Golden Threads' of RE. Our intent at North Downs is to equip pupils with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities. We develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society with its diverse religions and worldviews as well as articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

Aims of Religious Education

At North Downs, we follow the Surrey Agreed Syllabus 2023, which includes teaching children about Christianity and other religions. This is taught by exploring the traditions, beliefs and values of each religion studied. The aim is that children gain:

- an appreciation of the nature of religion and belief and the important contribution of religious and spiritual insights and values to the individual's search for meaning in life, whilst acknowledging that this may also come from a non-religious perspective.
- a knowledge and understanding of Christianity, and of the other principal religions and beliefs represented in Great Britain, both through their history and their contemporary diverse expressions;
- an interest in and enthusiasm for the study of religion & beliefs and enhance their own spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- the ability to make reasoned, informed and creative responses to religious and moral issues
- the ability to recognise the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on the individual, on culture and on communities throughout the world.

Teachers are encouraged and supported to develop their subject knowledge and their teaching and assessing of the working scientifically skills. We have rich resources throughout the school and engage the children through school trips.

The nature of much of the work in RE is implicit and permeates the whole curriculum.

Religious Education contributes to the general aims of the school in a variety of ways, but in particular by,

Broadening the child's experience of:

- awe and wonder about the world;
- the mystery and complexity of the natural world;
- the children's own developing identity and self-esteem;
- how other people live, feel and react;
- what is involved in the membership of a group;
- feelings of belonging, responsibility, courage and compassion;
- other cultures and environments.

Developing attitudes which lead to:

- a respect for those with differing views;
- a development of empathy and sensitivity.

Developing abilities and skills in order to:

- recognise that language has a variety of uses;
- know that symbols of dance, drama, music and art, are forms of communication;
- express thoughts and feelings;
- relate to and understand other people.

What do we teach in Religious Education?

- Our scheme of work reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking into account the teachings and practices of other religious traditions. In line with the locally agreed syllabus we address aspects of: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. We also appropriately take into consideration non-religious world views through Humanism units.
- Through our broad-based RE curriculum appropriate cross-curricular links are made;
- Our scheme of work is based on Surrey's locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education. The non-statutory guidance for foundation stage, KS1 and KS2 provided alongside the locally agreed syllabus, to support it has been drawn upon;

Planning/Schemes of Work

Each teaching unit is based on a key question which is explored through the unit's content. Expected attainment is outlined and the skills and attitudes to be developed through RE are explored.

Teaching encourages children to investigate, question and respond, as well as gain knowledge and understanding. Units will vary in length and depth and may be delivered in different ways. RE will be taught as a discrete subject and, where appropriate, cross-curricular links will be made.

We plan appropriate activities linked to children's varying abilities and aptitudes. A range of activities involving, for example, writing, drama, discussion, questioning and the creative arts are used to focus learning. Religious artefacts may also be appropriately used.

RE is taught in each class. Different groupings for activities will be used e.g. pairs, small groups.

Assessment, Marking and Recording

- Assessment, marking and recording are carried out in line with the school's Assessment and Marking Policy;
- Expectation for each unit provides an overview of what is assessed based on the Surrey Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Equal Opportunities

In accordance with the Equalities Act (2010) and our school Equality of Opportunity Policy, all children have access to Religious Education irrespective of creed, race, gender and sexual orientation or ability. Our aim is to provide a broad and balanced education inclusive of all children. All faiths are presented in a respectful way and religious affiliation is not assumed.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (including British Values)

Religious Education makes a strong contribution to the school's provision of opportunities for children's spiritual, moral and cultural development. It does this through the curriculum content, the skills and attitudes it develops and the activities and experiences it provides. OFSTED monitor the school's work in developing British values principally through addressing the school's provision of opportunities for SMSC development.

Religious Education contributes in the following ways:

Spiritual development - children are encouraged to:

- Reflect upon their learning and to make personal responses;
- Engage in periods of silence;
- Consider ultimate questions dealing with purpose and meaning.

Moral development - children are encouraged to:

- Reflect upon their behaviour and attitudes;
- Consider reasons for choices which they and others make;
- Engage with, and respond to, moral codes from other religions.

Social development - children are encouraged to:

- Reflect upon their behaviour and how it affects others;
- Consider that society is made up of people with differing beliefs, attitudes and practices;
- Respect others;
- Develop the ability to 'stand in others' shoes'.

Cultural development - children gain a knowledge and understanding of:

- The religious aspects of a variety of cultures;
- Various rules and customs which affect lifestyles of different people.

Religious Education contributes to the school's work around British values through, for example:

- Democracy- addressing issues of equality and fairness;
- The Rule of Law- addressing issues of justice and exploring how people of different faith traditions have worked for justice;
- Individual liberty- religious teaching on the value of the individuals and their life in society;

- Mutual respect and tolerance- inter-faith dialogue, respecting others.

Right of Withdrawal

Parents have a right, “on grounds of conscience”, to withdraw their child from the whole, or part, of the RE curriculum. This right stems from 1944 when Religious Instruction, rather than Religious Education, was taught. The school asks any parent who wishes to exercise this right, to meet with the headteacher to discuss the extent of the withdrawal and how it will be implemented. Any request will be confirmed in writing by parents. Parents may provide alternative material for their child to use during their withdrawal. The school will ensure supervision.

Teachers have the right, “on grounds of conscience”, to withdraw from teaching Religious education. This right stems from 1944 when Religious Instruction, rather than Religious Education, was taught. Any teacher who wishes to exercise this right, should first discuss this with the headteacher and how the withdrawal will be implemented. Any request will be confirmed in writing by the teacher. Any withdrawn time, remains directed time.

Home School Links

When appropriate children may be asked to:

- Find out more information from family and other adults;
- Collect material/artefacts from home;

Links with Local Faith Communities

- Visitors from different faith communities and members of children’s families may be invited to school where appropriate to talk about their own religious beliefs and practices;
- Visits to a church or to other places of worship may periodically be arranged.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Teacher planning, children’s learning and resources are reviewed regularly to inform an annual subject leader’s audit.