

# Religious Education Policy

## Highcliffe School

### Our Vision statement

We value the power of Education to change lives.

### Our goal

To ensure that all students learn to their potential in an informed, caring and supportive environment and that challenging learning experiences develop students as successful confident young adults.

### Religious education

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'

In Religious Education at Highcliffe School we aim that Religious Education will:-

- **Provoke challenging questions** about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- **Encourage 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 express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives.
- **Enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- **Teach pupils to develop respect for others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice
- **Prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities** to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- **Develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery.**

**The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims in particular to community cohesion:**

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils 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 for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about and from religions 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.

### **Personal development and well-being**

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

### **Community cohesion**

RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

### **How RE is organised.**

All students at Highcliffe School have an entitlement to study RE, irrespective of their social background, culture, race, religion, gender, differences in ability and any disabilities.

A Highcliffe school RE is delivered as part of the Ethical and Personal Development (EPD) program of study.

EPD is taught in discrete lessons at least once a week, from year 7 through year 11.

Students may also opt to study Religious Studies at GCSE and A level.

Students in RE at Highcliffe are treated as individuals and their feelings, beliefs and contributions are valued by their RE teachers. Students are encouraged to reflect on the topics covered and come to their own conclusions.

### **Assessment RE**

RE elements of the curriculum are assessed in line with the school continued assessment and marking policies.

**Responsibilities for RE within the school (Headteacher and Governors):**

The delivery of RE is the responsibility of the Director of Learning for Ethical and Personal Development. A member of the senior leadership team has overall responsibility.

**The right of Withdrawal from RE**

At Highcliffe School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects.

We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of Religious Education at Highcliffe School.

Policy compiled by:	L. Downie
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