Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy – SO-0127

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EQUALITY STATEMENT

We will regularly review our policies to ensure that we are

- promoting equality of opportunity
- eliminating discrimination and harassment
- valuing diversity and promoting positive relationships
- providing an inclusive education which enables all pupils to develop their full potential
- meeting our obligations under the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the protected characteristics therein.

QUALITY OF LIFE FRAMEWORK

All NAS schools and Children's services follow our Quality of life (QoL) Framework. In implementing this framework, we listen to pupils, parents and the child's keyworker to understand what is important to them in relation to their quality of life. We then work as a transdisciplinary team to ensure we plan each child's education carefully and cohesively, shaping each pupil's provision around their EHCP and agreed developmental goals in order to develop pupils' knowledge and skills now and for the future.

1. Purpose of this document

To outline the NAS Education Directorate's policy for NAS schools' approach to the teaching of Religious Education and arrangements for Collective Worship.

The policy has been created in order to ensure that:

- All pupils are provided with a balanced and broad curriculum which encompasses the traditions of Great Britain as well as a variety of other mainstream religions and beliefs.
- All staff members are aware of planning, assessment, teaching and learning requirements for the RE curriculum.
- All pupils receive a high level of quality teaching.
- Community cohesion and high standards of achievement are promoted.
- Progression of academic achievement occurs consistently throughout the key stages and post-16 study.

2. Scope

This policy relates to the provision of collective worship and religious education in our schools and is applicable to the whole school community, staff and pupils/students

3. Approach

It is a legal requirement that religious education is taught in schools together with a daily act of collective worship. The Law states specifically that in special schools every pupil should receive RE as far as is practicable and there is no requirement in EYFS. However, it may form a valuable part of the educational experience.
The Education Reform Act 1988 states that the agreed syllabus for religious education must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in the United Kingdom are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other religions represented in the United Kingdom. Teaching about Christianity, therefore, must have a role but will not be distinctive of any one denomination or theological position, though teaching about denominations is permitted. Schools will not either promote or undermine any particular religious stance.

Our schools are made up of staff and pupils who originate from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds. As a school we aim to celebrate this diversity and offer a welcoming and inclusive environment for all our pupils and staff. We believe that Religious Education provides an opportunity to celebrate and foster awareness of these differences within our school and the wider world. It is a subject that celebrates diversity and challenges stereotypes.

In our schools, we provide a broad and balanced curriculum which encompasses spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Religious education will link with and support work undertaken within PSHE programmes and promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils/students and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The NAS Policy for Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) also provides information about the teaching of SMSC.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education and staff to decline from participation in religious education. Pupils above 18 also have the right to withdraw themselves from RE. (See later section: **Withdrawal from Religious Education or Collective Worship**)

Autistic pupils may not possess some of the skills necessary to learn effectively. Many have difficulty in showing interest, curiosity, imagination or an inability to express themselves in socially acceptable ways. A major part of religious education focuses on abstract concepts which involves exploring attitudes, emotions, and self-reflection. Autistic pupils can have particular difficulty with abstract thought and they can tend to think in a strongly literal manner. Central to the disability are also the problems of empathy or understanding that others have a different point of view. Emphasis is therefore laid across the curriculum on helping pupils to become aware of other people and their needs, to build relationships based on mutual respect and trust; to look at the world about them; and thus, to come indirectly to an awareness and perhaps an understanding of spiritual and moral values. Encouragement will be given to develop self-understanding, to explore attitudes and emotions, to express opinions and choices and to respect the views and rights of others.

Religious education will be taught both in individual classes and whole school assemblies. It will be meaningful and relevant and will promote pupils/students' participation. Collective worship encourages pupils to share achievements and aspirations within the school community as well as providing opportunities for recognising and celebrating Christian and other religious festivals. Specific lessons will consider a pupils individual abilities and level of understanding to enable them to gain a greater insight into Christianity and other faiths.

The Education (Special schools) Regulations 1994 state that all special schools must, "so far as is practicable", provide daily collective worship for every pupil attending the school. In our schools' individual needs, ability, age and key stage of pupils will be considered when determining the frequency and grouping of pupils in "assemblies".

4. Objectives

The aims of religious education are to help pupils:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition and be able to communicate and where appropriate reflect on their own experiences
- develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- where appropriate develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

5. Operational delivery

Each school will deliver religious education considering the locally-agreed syllabus of the local authority in which the school is situated.

Each school will determine the timetable arrangements for the delivery of RE and Collective worship.

Each school will have its own curriculum documentation or scheme of work to support the teaching of RE and ensure pupils have a high quality, coherent and progressive experience of RE. Good practice would be to include:

- The distinct body of knowledge that will enable all pupils to make effective progress in achieving RE learning outcomes.
- The attitudes and skills to be emphasised across a school year or key stage, which meets the needs of the pupils.
- Cross-curricular dimensions of the wider curriculum.
- Links to SMSC, covering issues such as right and wrong, good and evil, conflict and justice.
- Exploring controversial issues in the modern world.
- Working with local communities who promote the beliefs taught in lessons.
- Learning outside the classroom by participating in educational visits
- Introducing themed days and assemblies which celebrate different beliefs.
- Encouraging pupils to deploy their skills and reflect on questions regarding truth and morality.
- Promoting debate and dialogue of pupils within their local community.

Classroom teachers will use high-quality texts and resources which model the religious and non-religious beliefs of Great Britain, avoid stereotypes and promote British Values.

Classroom teachers will use a range of teaching methods, appropriate to the group and individual. This may include but not limited to:

- Storytelling.
- Adult-led activities.
- Child initiated activities.
- Debating.
- Dramatic performance.

Teachers will in their teaching of R.E and during Collective worship take into account the communication, social and sensory needs of pupils. And plan activities accordingly.

Teachers will plan using the school's agreed system. Planning in R.E will be informed by a knowledge of each pupil's Educational, Health and Care plan (EHCP). EHCP's will provide long-term targets for personal development that may be linked to RE

Any home work will be given in line with the school's homework policy.

Teachers will assess progress in RE in line with the school's Assessment policy.

Organisation of Collective Worship

The aim of collective worship is to provide the opportunity for pupils/students to:

- Worship God/Gods of their choice if applicable to them.
- Understand and reflect on the values of themselves and others
- Reflect on religious values and on their own beliefs
- Develop a community spirit; a common ethos and shared values
- Consider spiritual and moral issues
- Respond to the worship offered
- Celebrate achievements and show appreciation of others
- Include everyone

All NAS schools hold assemblies which reflect the traditions of religions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Assemblies provide an opportunity to reward pupils/students for their achievements both within and outside of school. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all pupils/students are valued, and all achievements are recognised.

Each school will determine the timetable arrangements for the delivery of RE and Collective worship. Where, appropriate this may include a daily act of collective worship. In order to be meaningful to a wide range of communities, collective worship at NAS schools takes place in many forms. These may include:

- Attendance at whole school, departmental and/or class assemblies.
- Collective celebration of achievements and appreciation of others.
- Collective sharing and exploring of things of value and worth to individuals and groups of people.
- Moments of spiritual reflection.
- Exposure to meditation, yoga, drama, music art & literature.
- Praying together
- Singing hymns and/or other religious sounds (e.g. chanting)
- Moments of quiet and inner worship as appropriate to each young person.
- End of day reflection / celebration sessions

British Values

The government set out its definition of British values in the 2011 Prevent Strategy. These values were reiterated by the Prime Minister in 2014 and in the Promoting Fundamental British Values DoE advice November 2014. At NAS Schools these values are reinforced regularly. British values include: democracy; rule of law; individual liberty; mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

British values are taught through Personal, Social, Health, and Citizenship Education (PSHCE); and Religious Education (RE).

Schools should take opportunities to actively promote British Values through assemblies and whole school systems and structures, such as electing and running a successful School Council. We also actively promote the British Values through ensuring our curriculum planning and delivery includes real opportunities for exploring these values. Actively promoting British Values also means challenging pupils, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views and using necessary safeguarding procedures if there are concerns.

Withdrawal from Religious Education or Collective Worship
Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education and staff to decline from participation in religious education. Any parent wishing to do so must contact the Principal in writing.

Pupils over 18 have the right to withdraw themselves from religious education. Where this applies the pupil should be supported to understand this option and decision.

Teachers also have the right to withdraw from the teaching of RE. However, this does not apply to teachers who have been specifically employed to teach or lead RE. If a teacher wishes to withdraw from the teaching of RE, a letter requesting this must be submitted to the principal of the school and Director of Education. If a teacher withdraws from the teaching of RE, the school must still make provisions for the pupils to receive their entitlement to RE.

Post 16 pupils have the right to withdraw themselves from assembly if they choose but the opportunity should be given.

[Primary schools only] Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Though there is no statutory requirement for teaching RE within the Early years foundation stage all pupils in the EYFS will be taught RE as an integral part of their personal, social and emotional learning.

All pupils will encounter religions and world-views through multiple methods of teaching, e.g. books, educational visits and storytelling.

All pupils will be encouraged to reflect on their feelings and experiences and celebrate their achievements.

Teachers will encourage imaginative play and curiosity in pupils.

6. Roles and responsibilities

The responsibilities of the School Governance Group (SGG)

- Monitor implementation of this policy
- Keep themselves informed through regular meetings with staff and visits to the school.

- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and advise the Education Directorate of any necessary amendments
- Appoint a governor who will review the effectiveness of implementation and report back to the SGG on a regular basis
- Ensure that any issue that may be perceived as a potential reputational risk to NAS is referred to the board.
- The SGG has overall responsibility for ensuring that the RE and Collective Worship Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

The responsibilities of the Principal

- Ensure all relevant staff are aware of this policy, receive appropriate professional development and local procedures are followed
- To ensure that the specialist curriculum facilitates the development of all pupils.
- To ensure all staff have the appropriate training to enable them to understand and implement this policy and its procedures.
- To inform parents of this policy, curriculum content and their right to withdraw their child from Religious education.

The responsibilities of the Religious Education Co-ordinator / subject teacher

- To support and monitor the implementation and development of this policy and the Religious Education curriculum throughout the school
- Monitoring the learning and teaching of RE, helping to develop subject colleagues' expertise in RE providing support for staff where necessary.
- Be responsible for liaising with other staff and professional agencies to devise a suitable scheme of work to ensure a comprehensive RE education that ensures continuity and progression and achieves the aims laid out in this policy
- To ensure that adequate assessment procedures for tracking pupil progress in this area are in place.
- To coordinate staff training.
- To manage any allocated curriculum budget, procuring appropriate resources.
- Work with the Clinical team and other teachers within the school to track non-academic progress over time at individual and whole school level

The responsibilities of Staff

- All staff are required to understand the importance of RE for the pupils we support and to feel confident in delivering the curriculum.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where pupils feel able to discuss personal issues
- To carry out individual and group teaching and report on progress
- To work with external professionals in the development and delivery of personal & social development teaching.

The responsibilities of Parents and Carers

- To work in close partnership with the school and their child to address key issues relating to personal & social development.

7. Evaluation of policy

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis for its effectiveness and to ensure it takes account of current legislation.

The delivery of RE will be monitored by the school's leadership team and by the Director of Education and Children's services who in turn will inform the policy lead about any required changes to policy.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

In application of this policy we strive to make the Religious Education curriculum and Collective Worship and relevant and accessible to all pupils regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or social class. The resources we use reflect the multicultural society in which we live. Teaching approaches and resources will enable all pupils to have equal opportunities to participate in the PHSCE curriculum regardless of their culture, gender or religion. Content must be age and developmentally appropriate and taught sensitively and inclusively with respect to the backgrounds of parents and pupils. We will not re-enforce stereotypes and will challenge prejudice. The nature of autism means pupils mature at different rates and that pupils will only benefit from learning about concepts for which they are developmentally ready.

9. The legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to the following:
The Education Act 1996, section 375
The Education Act 2002, section 78
The School Standards and Framework Act, schedule 19
DfE (2010) 'Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010'
DfE (2017) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
Regulation 5A of the Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001
DFE RE and collective worship in academies and free schools 2012 (NASAT schools)
Academy Funding agreements (NASAT schools)
Statutory Requirements regarding religious education DFE circular 1/94
Education Reform Act 1988
Education Act 1997
Human Rights Act 1998
Disability Discrimination Act 2001
Children and Families Act 2014
Prevent Strategy 2011

10. Related policies

QOL Framework Policy SO-0109
Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy
Relationships and Sex Education Policy SO-133
PSHE policy SO-0126
Online safety policy SO-0106
Schools Local policies for Teaching and Learning, British Values.

11. Definitions

RE – Religious Education
PSHE – Personal, social, health and economic education
RSE- Relationships and Sex education
SMSC – Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development
EYFS – Early Years foundation stage
EHCP – Education, Health and Care plan
NAS Schools refers to National Autistic Society Independent schools
SGG - School Governance Group
SACRE - Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education