



Religious Studies and Collective Worship Policy

Last reviewed	September 2021
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Ratified by the Headteacher	September 2024

Horsforth School Religious Studies (RS) & Collective Worship Policy

1. Aim and Objectives of Religious Studies

At Horsforth school we have a range of faith and belief systems. Our intent is for all Horsforth pupils to gain specific Religious knowledge of beliefs and practices. RS will help our students to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion, philosophy and ethics. To aid this RS will ensure students can develop skills of reasoning, analysis, critical thinking and evaluation. RS will secure students understanding of the world around them and how beliefs influence individuals and communities, locally and globally. RS at Horsforth School will build understanding in the personal narratives of people of faith as well as the wider story telling within the 6 world faiths. This aids student understanding of the identity of faith members. We want pupils to read and understand scripture and holy texts and where required the use of scholastic work to provide students with academic religious studies. RS will encourage the students Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development with time to reflect and empathise with the topics studied.

2. Context

Horsforth School operates within the guidance and procedures set out by the Department for Education (DfE).

2.1 Introduction to Religious Studies

Religious Studies is a national statutory entitlement for all students aged 11-16. All students in years 7-11 have Religious Education lessons. Our aim is for students to not only learn about religion, but learn from religion. We believe Religious Studies contributes to the education of the whole child; not only does the subject teach knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, but it enables students develop the skills of respect, tolerance and empathy.

Our curriculum is broad and balanced; ensuring that all six major world faiths are studied. Through their studies, students will learn core beliefs of believers and how these impact on attitudes, lifestyles and worship. Students will explore philosophical and ethical issues and a range of responses from not just a faith perspective, but from their own. Through reflection on their own beliefs and values in the light of their learning, it is our aim that students will develop their own sense of morality and grow in respect for themselves and others.

Religious Studies at Horsforth School plays a key role in delivering Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural education to our students. Lessons create space for individual reflection, with a focus on wondering, who and why? Lessons identify the reality of injustice and suffering and it opens up visions of how life for different groups can be affected positively by religious and humanistic values. It promotes an awareness of others in society and a tolerance with this.

2.2 Collective Worship: Introduction to Collective Worship

At Horsforth School we believe that an act of Collective Worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our whole school assemblies. We value this time in the school day for the space it gives our students to develop a reflective approach to life. Assemblies are based on around the 6 character builders. This ensures reflection on a wide range of topics pertinent to personal development whilst ensuring skills are taught through wider follow up character activities in form time. Assemblies are also channel for the delivery of the Fundamental British values and SMSC.

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age students take part in an act of Collective Worship. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character” for the majority of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the students”.

We recognise that in asking our students and staff to worship, we have to consider the diversity of faiths within the school, including those with no faith. It is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert. The faith background of both the staff and the students' family is respected at all times. We aim to touch on various religions and non-religious views within our assemblies throughout the year.

DFE Circular 1/94, section 50 says:

“Collective Worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for students to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes.”

2.3 Aims of Collective Worship

Through our assemblies and Character Programme we aim to provide a caring and supportive environment, with SMSC and Fundamental British Values at the core of what we plan. We aim for students to:

- become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- grow in understanding of the feelings of the other people in everyday situations and beliefs
- deepen their sense of awe and wonder about the world around them
- grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not
- contemplate something of the mystery of God/ultimate reality
- reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- explore their own beliefs
- grow as young people
- be confident citizens of tomorrow, being able to practise respect, tolerance and empathy

3. Evaluation

This policy will be evaluated every three years by the Headteacher to ensure it is still fit for purpose. Circumstances may require more frequent modifications. On 8th May 2019, the Trustee Board delegated responsibility to evaluate and ratify this policy/procedure to the Headteacher.

4. Author

This policy has been updated by SAN and EGL in September 2021.

5. Procedures

Procedures to support this policy are appended as follows:

Appendix 1 - Curriculum Provision for Religious Studies

Appendix 2 - Withdrawal from Religious Studies/Collective Worship

Appendix I Curriculum Provision for Religious Studies

- RS at Horsforth School will ensure equal opportunity for progress and enjoyment through a variety of teaching methods, such as debates, music, writing, drama, visual arts and ICT where suitable. Students will have time to reflect, to explore beliefs and values, to ask their own questions, to investigate, research and respond personally where appropriate.
- Schemes of work in RE will ensure both 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion and other world views with links to suggested content in the Leeds Agreed syllabus.
- In KS3 students have a one-hour lesson of RS every week. At KS4 5 hours a fortnight for the GCSE option.
- The RS curriculum at KS4 is the AQA SPEC A GCSE specification with a focus on Christianity and Buddhism. To ensure RS is relevant to our students, there are planned visits to places of worship at specific key stages:
 - Local Horsforth Christian Church (Year 10)
 - Local Jewish Orthodox Synagogue (KS5)
 - Jewish Reformed Synagogue (KS5)
 - Buddhist Centre (YEAR 10 & KS5)
 - Auschwitz (KS5)
- RS has cross curricular links with History and PSHCE. The departments work closely together. In Year 9 and at GCSE students study the Holocaust. Therefore, our decision to teach Judaism at KS3 aids understanding of this and promotes cross-curricular skills. In PSHCE students cover Hate Crimes in Year 9, with reference to religious discrimination.

Appendix 2: Withdrawal from Religious Studies/Collective Worship (Assembly)

Introduction

The law gives parents/carers the right to withdraw their children from collective acts of worship and/or RS lessons. We respect that right.

Objectives:

1. To ensure that parents/carers are aware that they have the right to withdraw students from RS classes and assembly.
2. To ensure that when parents/carers make a decision to withdraw students from either RS classes or assembly, they do so, on the basis of an informed decision.

Guidelines:

1. When parents/carers make a request to withdraw children from RS/Assembly, the Curriculum Leader of RS in conjunction with the appropriate Pastoral Leader should invite the parents/carers to inspect and discuss the Horsforth school RS curriculum.
2. Parents will be invited to discuss the implications of withdrawal.
3. If a student is withdrawn from class, appropriate work must be organised by the parent/carers and adequate provision must be made for the work to be done.
4. If a student is withdrawn from assembly, the Tutor will also be informed. The pastoral leader and the Tutor will decide on the provision and supervision for the assembly time.