

## **Helenswood Academy Religious Education Policy**

### **POLICIES FOR LEARNING AND THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING**

#### **BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT OUR SCHOOL**

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but has legal statutory standing for all pupils as part of the Basic Curriculum. As RE is not nationally determined Helenswood Academy uses the East Sussex County Council Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2013-2014 which we have used as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE.

Helenswood Academy does not have a specific religious affiliation, pupils and their families are from a range of faith religious and non-religious backgrounds. RE at Helenswood Academy is concerned with 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion' and it is not the practice of the school to proselytize pupils. The faith background of both the staff and pupils' family is respected at all times.

Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children from Religious Education (RE). If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes this may consult the Academy Principal. Teachers may also withdraw from the teaching of RE (*note 1*).

#### **A. VALUES AND AIMS**

We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life.

Specifically, RE at our school aims to enable pupils of whatever ability and level of development to:

##### **To explore concepts**

Successful learners:

- Are encouraged to learn about religion and explore the beliefs of others;
- Develop the ability to contribute positively to society and cultivate an understanding and respect for others and themselves;
- Value both the commonality and diversity present in the world through gaining an understanding and respect for the main world religions; and
- Ask ultimate questions.

##### **To explore opportunities for personal and spiritual development**

Confident individuals:

- Will expand their personal development through openness, exploring beliefs and questions and meanings;
- Consider their own experiences, thus giving rise to the opportunity to learn from religion;
- Develop a sense of identity and belonging; and increase their self-esteem and self-worth.

## **To explore communal responses to issues**

Responsible citizens:

- Explore their role as part of both local and global communities;
- Think beyond themselves and consider community issues;
- Are inclusive and enjoy opportunities for creative expression that is respectful and sensitive to others; and
- Develop spiritual, moral, social, cultural and ethical awareness.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

### **Learning**

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

Religious Education should encourage all participants to reflect on their own beliefs and values and to acknowledge that others hold beliefs different from their own.

Religious Education has two closely related aspects:

Learning about Religion (AT 1) and Learning from Religion (AT 2)

These two attainment targets with their associated statements set out the broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum.

### **Attainment target 1 – Learning about religion and belief**

Refers to how pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding with reference to:

- Beliefs, teachings and sources;
- Practices and ways of life; and
- Forms of expression.

### **Attainment target 2 – Learning from religion and belief**

Refers to how pupils, in the light of their learning about religion, express their responses and insights with regard to questions and issues about:

- Identity and belonging;
- Meaning, purpose and truth; and
- Values and commitments.

### **Teaching**

Teaching the programmes of study should contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding and provide opportunities for reflection on six key areas:

- **Beliefs and teachings** - e.g. stories, religious leaders, books, God/gods, self-sacrifice, truth, life after death;

- **Religious practices and lifestyles** - e.g. people, festivals, pilgrimages, places, events, artefacts, lifestyle choices, actions, effects on individuals;
- **Ways of expressing meaning** - e.g. sacred texts, art, music, literature, symbolism, poetry, dance, drama, prayer, forms of religious and spiritual expression, silence/stillness;
- **Human identity, personality and experience** - e.g. belonging, preferences, relationships within family and community, influences on own lives, inspirational people;
- **Questions of meaning and purpose** - e.g. amazement, sadness, disappointment, joy, awe, in connection with the natural world and life's journey, making sense, ultimate questions of life raised by life experiences;
- **Values and commitments** - e.g. values, ethics, principles, rules, morality.

The teaching of RE seeks both to impart knowledge and develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through a variety of teaching and learning approaches. Providing a balance between these two key attainment targets underpins the teaching of RE at this academy.

RE teaching specifically draws on the following:

1. visits and visitors; enabling pupils to see at first hand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories and explore with people who have faith
2. role play; encouraging pupils to learn through familiar or unfamiliar settings and ask questions from their own encounters
3. artefacts; being able to explore items which are precious and/or used in religious worship, encouraging respect and questioning whilst deepening knowledge
4. parents/carers; by valuing the family backgrounds of pupils and making them part of the school community

The teaching of RE will involve some direct teaching and whole class, group, paired or individual activities. A range of teaching styles will be used including enquiry, exploration, discussion, asking and answering questions, artefacts, visits and faith visitors, pupils are actively engaged in learning.

### **ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING** *(see Academy Assessment policy)*

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements. Assessment in RE is seen in its broadest sense and is not limited to measurement and testing.

Through activities for example, discussion with pupils, group activities, marking and guiding their work, observing, displaying work, asking and answering questions, teachers are continually finding out about their pupils' achievements. This information is then recorded against the statements of

attainment in line with other areas of the curriculum. At this school we appreciate that a vital aid to learning is for pupils to be actively involved in their own assessment.

As a staff we have undertaken moderation exercises to ensure that we are familiar with the statements and what they mean in the context of a pupil's work.

School reports are sent home in the annually and the RE report is written with reference to the records made or pieces of work retained.

### ***NOTES***

1. DFE Circular 1/94 paragraphs 44-49.