Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

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An academy within:

"Learning together, to be the best we can be"

1. Scope

1.1. This policy applies to all schools within Nexus Multi Academy Trust and is designed to support academies in ensuring that their provision for Religious Education and Collective Worship is in line with statutory guidance and the requirements of their funding agreements. Each academy will have its own approach the delivery of the curriculum which is tailored to meet the needs of the pupils on roll.

2. Ethos

2.1. All pupils in Nexus schools are entitled to a programme of Religious Education which meets their needs and enables them to make progress in learning. This is usually delivered in line with a Local Authority's Agreed Syllabus. An academy may choose to adopt a locally agreed syllabus, but is not required to. Our intention is that Religious Education in Nexus schools should explore authentic and central concepts from religions on the basis of what will connect with pupils' experiences and enable them to respond whilst being sufficiently challenging and aspirational.

3. The legal framework

3.1. Government Guidance - Religious education (RE) and collective worship in academies and free schools

3.2. Under the terms of their funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education, all academies have to provide RE for all their pupils, except for those whose parents exercise the right of withdrawal. RE must be included in the curriculum for all registered pupils, including all pupils in reception classes and sixth form, but excluding:

- Pupils in nursery schools or nursery classes in primary schools.
- Any person aged nineteen or above for whom further education is being provided at school.
- Any person over compulsory school age who is receiving part-time education.

3.3. Funding Agreement – please see each school's supplementary funding agreement which can be found on the Nexus website.

3.4. The Academy Trust, where practical must provide for the teaching of religious education and for acts of collective worship at the Academy. (School's Supplementary funding agreement, para 2.HH).

a) Provision must be made for religious education to be given to all pupils at the Academy in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph 2(5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

b) The Academy must comply with the requirements of regulation 5A of the Education (Special Educational Needs) (England)(Consolidation) Regulations 2001 as if it were a maintained school.

(School's Supplementary funding agreement, para 2.II).

3.5. The Academy Trust must comply with regulation 5A of the Education (Special Educational Needs) (England)(Consolidation) Regulations 2001 as if the Academy were a community or foundation special school, and as if references to "Religious Education" and to "Religious Worship" in that section were references to religious education and religious worship provided by the Academy in accordance with clause 2. II.

(School's Supplementary funding agreement, para 2.JJ).

Education Act 1996

3.6. (3) Every agreed syllabus shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996.

The Agreed Syllabus

3.7. An agreed syllabus is a religious education syllabus that is designed by a local authority's Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC). The syllabus, like the provision for RE in academies, must reflect that the religious traditions in

Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principle religions represented in Great Britain.

3.8. The Agreed Syllabus applies to pupils with SEND 'as far as it is practicable'.

3.9. Academies in Nexus are situated across different Local Authorities, each having its own Agreed Syllabus.

Collective Worship

3.10. Academies should follow paragraphs 50 to 88 of the Department for Education's guidance on collective worship in schools. The main points of this are detailed below.

3.11. Each pupil (up to the age of 19) must take part in a daily act of collective worship unless they have been withdrawn by their parents, or if in the sixth form, they have decided to withdraw themselves. This applies to academies with and without a religious designation.

3.12. Academies without a religious designation must provide collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. A school can reflect the religious backgrounds represented in its community, as long as the majority of provision is broadly Christian.

3.13. Academies without a religious designation can apply via the ESFA to the Secretary of State for exemption from providing broadly Christian collective worship for some or all of its pupils. In its application, it will be asked to give reasons for the application (such as consideration of the family background of pupils), details of consultation with governors and parents, and of proposals for future collective worship.

3.14. At Hilltop School, our collective daily worship is incorporated into our 'Daily moment of Reflection' and, where appropriate, includes our 'Thought for the Week'. This approach allows us to offer moments of reflection and engagement at different times, ensuring all students with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) can participate in ways that suit their individual needs and schedules.

3.15. By weaving worship and thoughtful reflection into various parts of the school day, we provide flexible opportunities for students to engage in sensory experiences, music, and reflection. For some, this may happen during morning routines, while others may have moments of worship and reflection incorporated into class activities or during quiet times in the afternoon. This

continuous offering allows students to experience worship and reflection in a natural, calm manner, aligned with their energy levels and attention spans.

3.16. Our approach ensures that the worship experience is accessible to every student, fostering a sense of inclusion and participation regardless of their abilities. This flexibility also allows staff to provide personalised support, helping each student connect with the spiritual and reflective elements of the day in a meaningful way.

4. Context and Curriculum

Curriculum Provision

4.1. Nexus schools span several local authorities and the pupils attending each school have varying needs. For this reason, there is no one size fits all approach to the subject content delivered through the RE curriculum. Each school is aware of the religious make up of its pupils and therefore plans curriculum content which matches this so that pupils can see themselves in the taught content and are able to bring personal knowledge to their learning.

4.2. In special schools the legal requirement to provide Religious Education is varied by section 71(7) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998: special schools should provide RE 'so far as is practicable', with all children taking part unless withdrawn by their parents. It is also good practice for special schools to:

- Take into account the needs of their pupils when planning the RE curriculum.
- Adapt the RE curriculum to suit the needs of their pupils by, for example:
- Choosing content from the age group below the actual age of the learners.
- Selecting aspects that connect with the lives and experiences of learners with special needs, appropriate to their abilities and understanding.
- Ensuring sensory learning strategies are implemented rather than discussion or written tasks.

4.3. A Nexus RE curriculum has been produced which takes account of the Agreed Syllabus for Rotherham. This covers content for pupils working at an age-related expectation from 3 years to 14 years. This curriculum is available for use by all Nexus schools and short-term planning will be tailored to the individual needs of the pupils.

4.4. At Hilltop the RE curriculum is based on the 'Big Ideas for RE' approach. This curriculum provides content for pupils who are not yet engaged in subject specific study through to those working at the Key Stage 5 standard. This curriculum has a thematic approach allowing pupils to acquire a deeper understanding of the subject matter across the broader areas of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) aspects of the curriculum.

Pre-Formal Curriculum

4.5. Pupils in some Nexus schools will not be engaged in subject specific study and will be assessed using the Engagement Model. The Engagement Model celebrates the different abilities of pupils not engaged in subject specific study. This intention is always appropriate for RE. It enables the collection of qualitative information and evidence that should inform a teacher's assessment of their pupils' evidence of progress in the following areas:

- The effective use of their senses, including the use of both near and distant senses and the use of sensory integration.
- The application of physical (motor) skills to permit active participation in new experiences.
- States of emotional wellbeing to facilitate sustained motivation to learn.
- Communication and language skills to inform thought processes.

4.6. Pupils working at this level will still access the curriculum for Religious Education but will experience it through a more sensory approach.

4.7. At Hilltop, we prioritise an inclusive and holistic approach to education, particularly for our pupils with Severe Learning Disabilities (SLD) and Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD). By integrating Religious Education (RE) into our whole school and phase thematic learning, we create opportunities for students to engage with essential human experiences — such as love, community, and belonging—in ways that are accessible and meaningful. Our RE curriculum is designed to incorporate sensory experiences, storytelling, and symbols, enabling pupils to connect with abstract concepts through tangible, real-world contexts.

4.8. We believe that this integration fosters not only cognitive development but also social and emotional growth. By exploring shared cultural and spiritual practices, students develop a sense of identity and understanding of others. Our adaptable teaching strategies ensure that RE resonates with each pupil's unique communication and learning needs. At Hilltop, we are committed to making learning a collaborative and engaging journey, helping our students thrive in a supportive environment that celebrates diversity and inclusion.

School websites

4.9. All academies **should** publish:

- the content of the curriculum in each academic year for every subject, including mandatory subjects such as religious education (RE) – this applies even if it is taught as part of another subject or known by another name.
- information to make parents and carers aware they have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE"
- Withdrawal from RE. RE is provided for all pupils at Hilltop. Parents have the right to withdraw pupils from RE, if you wish to do so, please contact the Head Teacher. The school does not support selective withdrawal from RE.

What academies and further education colleges must or should publish online - DfE

5. Collective Worship

"Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or 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."
Paragraphs 50 to 88 of the Department for Education's guidance on collective worship in schools.

5.1. Each pupil must take part in a daily act of collective worship unless they have been withdrawn by their parents, or if in the sixth form they have decided to withdraw themselves. The legislation for collective worship exists to enable pupils, wherever possible, to share a single act of collective worship, while ensuring that worship is appropriate for the pupils taking part. At Hilltop this should be fulfilled as far as is reasonably practical through the 'Daily Moment of Reflection and Thought of the Week'. This is linked to the Hilltop Values and whole school cultural events. This may take the form of reflection time, where pupils collectively take time to reflect and review aspects of their learning through the school's SMSC curriculum.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Trust/Governance

6.1. The Trust and/or local governors should ensure that each school is meeting statutory duties in line with this policy and that provision is made for all pupils to engage in Religious Education and Collective Worship.

Headteachers

6.2. Headteachers should ensure that there is an appropriate curriculum, including access to Collective Worship, in place for all pupils at the school. They are also responsible for making sure that they publish the required details about the RE curriculum and should also ensure that parents and carers are aware of their right to withdraw their children from Religious Education and Collective worship. Headteachers should ensure that subject leaders have access to high quality CPD to support them in the leadership of heir subject across the school and enable them to provide advice and guidance to other members of staff.

Subject Lead

6.3. The RE subject lead (or person with responsibility for the oversight of RE) should ensure that the agreed curriculum for RE is consistently delivered and should monitor the quality of the education provided with school leaders. They should offer support for staff delivering RE and Collective Worship and should access and provide CPD where required.

Class teachers

6.4. Class teachers are responsible for delivering high quality RE lessons and ensuring that pupils in their class are making progress. Class teachers are often the key people to talk to parents about their children's access to RE and should therefore be well informed about the legal requirements. Class teachers should be able to speak to the subject leader of the Headteacher where they are unsure of the provision made for pupils in their classes.

7. Quality assurance

External QA

7.1. As there are currently no schools within Nexus with a religious character who are subject to a Section 48 inspection through the Statutory Inspection of

Anglican and Methodist School (SIAMS) framework. Provision for RE and Collective Worship will be inspected through Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework. This may be through the inspection of the Quality of Education but will be considered in the inspection of Personal Development.

Trust QA

7.2. QA from the Trust will come through the work of the Executive Assurance Partners and Executive Regional Directors linked to the school and through the Trust's audit process. Aspects of Quality Assurance will be identified through the Collaborative School Improvement Framework and priorities may arise as part of the Annual Support and Challenge Board.

School QA

7.3. Each school should have its own process for the internal quality assurance of RE and Collective Worship. This process should celebrate the strength in provision and the quality of education that pupils receive and also outline the areas for development in the delivery of the subject.

Appendix A

Useful websites

RE Online – Festival Calendar
Festival Calendar - RE: ONLINE (reonline.org.uk)

NATRE – National Association of Teachers for RE
National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (natre.org.uk)

RE Today
RE Today supporting Religious Education in schools

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE):

Rotherham - Committee details - Rotherham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) - Rotherham Council

Sheffield - SACRE | Christians and Sheffield Schools (cass-su.org.uk)

Doncaster - Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) - City of Doncaster Council

Nottinghamshire - Nottinghamshire standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE) | Nottinghamshire County Council

Department for education - RE and collective worship in academies and free schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Big Ideas for RE - Big Ideas for RE - Free Religious Education Curriculum for schools