



Religious Studies Policy

2011-12

This policy applies to Early Years Foundation Stage, Junior School and Senior School.

Introduction

Hollygirt School adopts the principles of the Christian faith, its values and standards of personal conduct, but it welcomes girls of other faiths, who play an important part in the school community. Although the school adopts a Christian framework of values this is a non-denominational stance and respect is shown to all religious viewpoints and the fact that many pupils do not come from a faith background. We aim to give each girl the opportunity to reflect upon their views and the beliefs of others in their personal search for wisdom.

Aims

It is recognised that every girl has a spiritual dimension and is therefore on a journey of discovery. The school's Religious Education course aims to achieve the following according to the maturity of the girl:

1. To promote an enquiring, critical and sympathetic approach to the study of religion, in both its personal and corporate expression.
2. To introduce girls to the varied nature of religion, and to the ways in which this is reflected in experience, belief and practice.
3. To help girls to identify and explore questions about the meaning of life, and to examine how the major religions respond to these ultimate questions.
4. To encourage girls to reflect on religious responses to moral issues, and to consider their own views, whether these are religious or not.
5. To develop skills of enquiry and response in analysis, expression, reflection, evaluation and application, through the use of distinctive language, listening and empathy.
6. To enhance and help the delivery of the school's aims.
7. To facilitate opportunities for girls to develop their sense of identity and self-worth through reflection.
8. To encourage an atmosphere of co-operation and tolerance through the study of a variety of beliefs and to promote consideration of the views of others.

Withdrawal

All pupils are encouraged to participate in Religious Studies and the school's religious life but where parents wish to withdraw their daughter the following arrangements apply:

- a) Pupils not participating in the lesson will remain in the classroom but otherwise occupied.
- b) Pupils should bring work or reading from their own religious organisation or where this does not apply they should bring suitable reading material.

Religious Studies and Spiritual Development

At Hollygirt Religious Studies makes a central contribution to a girl's spiritual development.

The following aspects of spiritual development are included in the syllabus:

1. The development of beliefs - informed by the study of the teachings of Christianity and other religions and philosophies.
2. A sense of awe, wonder and mystery and feelings of transcendence - encouraged through experiences to which the girls have access and developed through discussion.
3. The search for meaning and purpose - encouraged by girls having opportunities to ask questions and informed through the study of religions.
4. Self-knowledge - the development of self-knowledge and self-respect is not specific to Religious Studies. As in other areas of the school life a principal factor will be the management style of the teacher in terms of praise, rewards, values.
5. Creativity - girls are given opportunities to express their innermost thoughts through a variety of media.
6. Feelings and emotions - girls are encouraged to regard feelings and emotions as valid human responses and are presented with resources which evoke feelings as well as an intellectual appraisal. They are encouraged to consider the balance between feeling and thinking.

Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Together with Spiritual Development, these three dimensions are present in the Religious Studies programme at Hollygirt. The girls are given opportunities to learn, consider, respond and reflect on the issues in various ways. Morality refers to attitudes and motives in relation to others and to moral ideals or absolutes including God, consideration of a variety of approaches to morality, and the ability to reflect rationally on ethical issues.

Religious Studies contributes to issues of multi culturalism, minorities, human rights and responsibilities, conflict and reconciliation. It has much to say about politics, society and family life. It introduces girls to many of the greatest artistic, musical and dramatic productions in history, giving the values by which societies live and thereby contributing to their social and cultural development.

A Whole Person

The following attitudes and skills are fostered through the Religious Studies course as well as in the ethos of the life of the school and in other subjects in the curriculum.

- a sense of wonder and respect for the world
- confidence in their own sense of identity
- a respect for, and a readiness to learn from, the aspirations of others
- a willingness to recognise the variety of religious responses, including a respect for the practice and non-practice of religion
- a willingness to tolerate uncertainty and to acknowledge ambiguity of practice
- a readiness to discuss religious issues openly and to accept diversity of practice
- an understanding of the implications of commitment

Other relevant policies:

- Pastoral Policy
- Personal, Social and Health Education Policy
- Sex Education Policy
- Issues Scheme of Work

Unchanged July 2010