



# Religious Education Policy

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## Our Mission Statement

At Holy Cross, we are very proud of our school motto and our Catholic ethos; **Loved, Valued, Challenged.**

**Loved:** We love one another as Jesus taught us – our friends, our families and those who we may never meet.

**Valued:** We value everyone – everyone is important; pupils, staff, parents, governors, and members of the community– no matter their race, religion ability or need. We try to live like Jesus taught us.

**Challenged:** We challenge each other – not only with our learning but challenge each other to be more merciful to others, have a little more understanding of others’ needs and challenge each other to be better people.

## Our Vision

At Holy Cross, we aim to develop a caring Catholic community based upon the life and example of Jesus Christ, which envelopes the life and lives of everyone and everything in our school. It is through Christ’s message of love and forgiveness that the children, staff, both teachers and ancillary, parents and governors, preserve the essential Catholic ethos of the school.

The school aims to provide a challenging curriculum that reflects our philosophy, broadly balanced and relevant, and to support the development of the whole child to his/her full potential. At Holy Cross, everybody matters, therefore we encourage all to show respect to each other and the environment.

## Statement of Intent

The Governors are committed to `inclusion` in education: this involves minimizing barriers to learning and participation. We believe that each child is unique and has unique needs *'belief in the individual leads Catholic schools to have the duty to care for the poor and to educate those who are socially, academically, physically or emotionally disadvantaged'* (Catholic Bishops' Conference May 2014).

## Equal Opportunity Statement

The Governors and Staff at Holy Cross believe that all people are entitled to equal opportunities, respect, and consideration regardless of race, colour, creed, gender, disability, or personal circumstances. Therefore, we are opposed to any form of prejudice or discrimination which denies people this equality. This principle applies to both adults and children in our school.

## Rationale

In the life and faith of the Catholic School, Religious Education plays a vital and central part. At the heart of Catholic education lies the Christian vision of the human person. This vision is expressed and explored in Religious Education. Therefore, Religious Education is never simply one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values studied in Catholic Religious Education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a Catholic school.

All pupils, therefore, have the right to receive an overall Religious Education, which will enable them, in the light of the faith of the Church, to engage with the deepest questions of life and find reasons for the hope, which is within them. (1 Peter 3:15) Religious Education is then the core subject in a Catholic school. *Catholic Schools have a distinctive nature of education* (Catholic Bishops' Conference 2014).

We also recognise that our children come from a range of backgrounds, beliefs, and abilities and that our teaching of Religious Education will reflect this. Holy Cross is committed to inclusion and equal opportunities, regardless of race, gender, disability, and special needs.

## Aims and Objectives

At Holy Cross Primary, the **intent** is to offer a knowledge-rich curriculum which is broad and balanced and ambitious. Our curriculum will build on the knowledge and understanding of all children, whatever their starting points, as they progress through each Key Stage linked to Luke's "Gospel Values" of Compassion, Gentleness, Justice, Integrity, Simplicity, Humility, Preferential option for the lost and least, Love, Forgiveness and Hope and to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The following documents have been used to support the design of the curriculum and to ensure we are delivering a 'Curriculum Inspired by Christ'.

The Catholic vision of education promotes the dignity and freedom of every person as created in the image and likeness of God. This vision inspires and encourages the beliefs and values which are lived out in the daily life of the Catholic school. Within this vision, religious education is very much a journey of formation, involving every member of the school community, together with a pupil's family and parish community.

It is in this context that the three elements of religious education, catechesis, and evangelisation, co-exist, providing mutual support and reinforcement. For all children Religious Education is a proper subject in the school's curriculum. It is a rigorous academic discipline, and as such it is to be taught, developed, and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject. For those already engaged in the journey of faith religious education will be catechesis, and for some children and young people religious education will be evangelisation, the first opportunity to hear the good news of the gospel.

Curriculum religious education in Catholic schools aims to promote:

- knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life.
- knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate questions about human life, its origin and purpose.
- skills required to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice.

The objectives of curriculum religious education in catholic schools are:

- To develop knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and of Jesus Christ, of the church, and of the central beliefs which Catholics hold.
- To develop awareness and appreciation of Catholic belief, understanding of its impact on personal and social behaviour and of the vital relationship between faith and life, life, and faith.
- To encourage study, investigation, and reflection by the pupils.
- To develop appropriate skills: for example, ability to listen; to think critically, spiritually, ethically, and theologically; to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively; to make informed judgements.
- To foster appropriate attitudes: for example, respect for truth; respect for the views of others; awareness of the spiritual, of moral responsibility, of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multicultural, multifaith society.

## Religious Education in the Classroom

Since the whole curriculum in Catholic schools is based on the values of the Gospel (and the link between faith and life, as expressed by the  $\Leftrightarrow$  in "Come and See" and the fourth lens 'Live' in the RED) and because we see all education as revealing the mystery of God, we recognise two aspects of Religious Education in the school:

- (a) Implicit, or unstructured Religious Education – those opportunities which arise during the school day to lead pupils through curriculum content or through relationships to a "religious understanding" of their implications. It is the policy of this school to use such opportunities as they arise.
- (b) Explicit, or Curriculum Religious Education – those planned or timetabled periods of time given to a systematic and comprehensive study of Religious Education in the classroom. (It is the policy of this school to affirm that the primary purpose of R.E. teaching is the step-by-step study of the mystery of Christ, the teaching of the Church and its application in daily life. The criteria by which it is to be judged are educational) *"Catholic Bishops' Conference May 2000"*.

It requires 10% of the length of the taught week for each Key Stage of Education.

# Programmes of Study

To fulfil our aims and objectives we use the “Come and See” Programme, which reflects the subsequent ideas contained in both the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Curriculum Directory. As of 2023 Holy Cross Primary will be trialing a new curriculum using the Religious Education Directory (RED). Each class will have half a term being taught from Come and See and half a term being taught from RED and alternating 50% on each, from 2023 EYFS will be taking part in a Diocese trial project of planning units for the new RE.

Other Faiths should be taught, in line with the thinking of the Church which appreciates the holiness and strengths of these other faiths which “often reflect a ray of that truth, which enlightens all people.” So, while living out our Christian faith we are called to listen in dialogue and be ready to learn from other faiths, many of whom may be our neighbours. Formal teaching of other faiths takes place twice a year in the school year 1 week is set aside for the discrete teaching of Judaism and another faith chosen from Hinduism, Sikhism, or Islam. In EYFS other religious festivals throughout the year are celebrated. See “Come and See” scheme of work for further details.

## Process of Teaching

The Catechism of the Catholic Church addresses the human search for meaning, God’s initiative in Revelation who comes to meet us and our response of faith. This pattern guides the structure of the programme and informs the process of each topic, opened through; Explore, Reveal and Respond.

## Explore

The teacher and the pupils’ parents help them to begin to look at and focus on the experience within their own lives – concerning themselves, their relationships, and their world. In this way the children are led to a deeper understanding, clearer vision and the discovery of significance and value of the experiential events of everyday life.

This will involve:

- Exploring experiences through story, music, drama, dance, art, etc
- Investigation
- Story telling
- Consideration of the *big* questions
- Discussion
- Becoming aware of the questions raised
- Reflecting on significance of these experiences.

Explore is set as homework and then discussed before or after the submission date. It is set for homework to encourage conversation about the topic at home.

*“Religious Education learns from evangelisation and catechesis that learning and growth involve active participation and response. For this reason, personal experience plays a significant part in the exploration, discovery, and assimilation of the saving truth of God’s revelation.”* Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012

## Reveal

Reveal is the heart of the process. The teacher and the pupils together discover the Christian understanding of the mystery of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They explore the mystery of human life as revealed in the person, life, and gospel of Jesus Christ Christians. It will involve learning about Scripture, the teaching of the Church, prayers, rites, psalms, hymns and other expressions of Christian faith and the lives of outstanding Christians. The process of delivery will involve:

- Meeting new knowledge of religious education.
- Developing an understanding of this new knowledge.
- Reflecting on the wonder of the mystery.
- Gathering information and collecting facts connected with this knowledge.
- Researching, collating, and classifying.
- Becoming aware of the questions raised.
- Working with problems and grappling with puzzling experiences.
- Exploring experiences through story, music, drama, dance, art.
- Exploring what leads to understanding and meaning.
- Asking questions and discussing.
- Exploring in creative and practical ways through drama, writing, poetry, song, dance, music, ICT, and service of others.
- Making links between Christian understanding and the shared life experience.
- Valuing life experience.
- Acknowledging and respecting difference(s).
- Being open to new perspectives.

## Respond

Remember is the first part of this section. The children will respond by remembering and celebrating all that they have learnt. This new understanding will enable them to make a personal response in their daily lives. This part begins by reflecting on what the children wonder about. This is followed by providing the opportunity for the children to remember what they have understood and learnt. This may be done through:

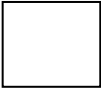


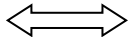




- creating a quiet, prayerful atmosphere for reflection
- looking at and thinking about the work done
- drawing attention to different aspects of this work
- sharing thoughts and feelings.

Rejoice is the second part of the section. There will be the opportunity to plan and take part in a celebration. It will be essential to involve the children in the choice of material to be used in the celebration. At Holy Cross, at the end of each topic we Respond and Encounter using booklets. The decision is made by the teacher or the pupil as to if these are completed individually, in a group or as a whole class. Throughout the unit it is expected that 4- 6 pieces of work are completed in the pupils' books. Out of these, one must be a Scripture Detective activity, one an art based and two quality written pieces.

Expectations are made clear and can be found attached to this policy. In **EYFS**, class work will be recorded in a large floor book and any individual RE tasks will be recorded in children’s Star books.

## Feedback




Feedback should be given in a timely manner, have an impact upon the pupils’ learning and be in line with the Feedback Policy. It is expected that written and verbal feedback is only given for the benefit of the pupils. Pupils are to provide teachers feedback – in the form of self- assessment - by placing an orange or green dot next to the WALT. Teachers can then respond to this using a small swipe of orange (for further work to be completed) or green (met expectation) highlighter. When using written feedback, the following codes are to be used to prompt deeper thinking and link to the End of Year Expectations.

			
 Deeper thinking in knowledge and understanding. AT1	 How can we live this out? AT2	 Wonder, awe and questioning. AT3	 How does this link to diocesan initiatives or school Mission.

High frequency spellings should be highlighted in yellow and key religious vocabulary should be corrected to age expectations.

## Religious Education Directory Curriculum

The ways of knowing describe the skills that pupils develop as they progress through the religious education curriculum:

	Understand 	Discern 	Respond 
Aim	In this way of knowing, you are aiming to help pupils to be able to <b>understand deeply</b> the <b>meaning</b> of sacred texts, religious beliefs, sacred rites, and the lives of individuals and communities who are shaped by these texts, beliefs, and rites.	In this way of knowing, you are aiming to help pupils to be able to <b>judge wisely</b> in response to <b>different interpretations</b> of the meaning, significance, and implications of texts, beliefs, rites, and ways of life so that they can arrive at justified conclusions about what is true, what is good, and what is beautiful.	In this way of knowing, you are aiming to help pupils <b>reflect personally</b> and <b>with integrity</b> on what they have learned and consider the <b>implications for action</b> these may have for their own lives and the world in which they live.

In addition to the end of age-phase outcomes listed as prescribed here, any curriculum that is not based on the model curriculum must include a wide range of opportunities for pupils to engage in creative and critical thinking (**discern**) and personal reflection (**respond**) and to make meaningful connections between scriptural texts (**hear**), Catholic beliefs (**believe**), prayer and liturgy (**celebrate**), and the relationship of faith to life (**live**).

In this last lens, students must also experience a mix of philosophical and ethical issues, artistic expression, and lived religion elements in each year of their study.



# Assessment Expectations




The pupils are assessed against the Diocesan End of year Expectations. RE is taught in three strands AT1 ‘from the head’ AT2 ‘from the heart’ and AT3 ‘wonder and awe’. The driver words for each year group are as follows:

- Year 1 – I can **recognise many**.
- Year 2 – I can **describe** and **retell**.
- Year 3 – I can make **some links** and **give some reasons**.
- Year 4 – I can make **many links** and **give many reasons**.
- Year 5 – I can make **most links** and **give many reasons**.
- Year 6 – I can **show some understanding**.

The pupils must know where they are working at the end of each unit: working towards expectations, working within expectations, working at expectation, or working above expectations. EYFS are assessed when they come into school and again each term using the Diver words. All pupils’ achievements should be reported to the leader via O Track so interventions can be put in place for those who are not making sufficient progress.

## Assessment and Monitoring

Children will be assessed using driver works for each key stage across school:

	Understand 	Discern 	Respond 
	The following list gives an indication of the ways in which these skills develop through the use of ‘driver words and phrases’ that are applied progressively as pupils move through the different age-phases of the curriculum content:		
<b>Driver words and phrases</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise... texts, beliefs, rites, ways of life.</li> <li>Name...</li> <li>Remember...</li> <li>Recall...</li> <li>Retell...</li> <li>Describe...</li> <li>Make links...</li> <li>Explain...</li> <li>Show understanding...</li> <li>Interpret within a historical context...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play with possibilities, asking ‘what if?’ questions.</li> <li>Say what they wonder about.</li> <li>Recognise similarities and differences.</li> <li>Point out what is the same and what is different.</li> <li>Express a point of view or a preference.</li> <li>Listen to different viewpoints.</li> <li>Support a preference with reasons.</li> <li>Explain differences.</li> <li>Construct arguments.</li> <li>Weigh strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>Arrive at justified conclusions.</li> <li>Recognise complexity with reference to different interpretations and historical context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about their own feelings and experiences.</li> <li>Respond personally to questions that are difficult to answer.</li> <li>Make links between their own feelings and beliefs and their behaviour or way of life.</li> <li>Compare their own and other peoples’ responses.</li> <li>Explain differences of belief and ways of life with reference to religious commitments.</li> <li>Critically reflect on their own beliefs and ways of life in response to dialogue with others.</li> <li>Respond with integrity to personal conclusions about questions of value and meaning.</li> </ul>

Each topic will also be assessed during the final piece of the topic. Children will be given a task to encourage them to showcase their learning through the topic.

# The Role of the Religious Education Leader

## 1.0 Exercises Religious Leadership in the implementation of the Religious Education curriculum and developing the Catholic life of the school by:

- 1.1 Giving leadership to the Catholic identity, life, and culture of the school within the evangelising Mission of the Church and to the agenda for World Youth Day program and event.
- 1.2 Developing students and staff to be active participants and leaders in the planning and implementation of the liturgical and sacramental life of the school.
- 1.3 Facilitating the development and implementation of policy in relation to Religious Education.
- 1.4 Working with staff to ensure the integration of Catholic values in the curriculum, policies, and procedures of the school.
- 1.5 Providing a vision for and articulating expectations regarding quality teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- 1.6 Encouraging and supporting teachers in developing the religious environment of their classrooms.
- 1.7 Working with the Executive Team in the spiritual development of staff and regular staff prayer.
- 1.8 Giving leadership to and coordinating opportunities for the faith development of students, including prayer and retreats.
- 1.9 Liaising with Pastors and communicating with parents concerning the Religious Education and the sacramental programs.

## 2.0 Exercises Leadership for Learning in developing policy, programs and pedagogies in Religious Education that enhance outcomes for students by:

- 2.1 Giving leadership to syllabus interpretation, programming, implementation practices, assessment, and evaluation of the Religious Education curriculum in the school.
- 2.2 Promoting the development and maintenance of a culture and school environment based on the foundation statements and key elements of the *Learning Framework* (CEO 2005), particularly in relation to Religious Education.
- 2.3 Facilitating the ongoing development of effective and contemporary pedagogy in Religious Education, including the effective use of assessment and evaluation data.
- 2.4 Supervising the implementation and teaching of the Religious Education curriculum, ensuring compliance with SACS Board, CEO and BOS requirements.
- 2.5 Contributing to improved teaching and learning in Religious Education by modelling good teaching practice and by facilitating continuing professional development in content and pedagogy.
- 2.6 Encouraging and facilitating appropriate forums for co-operative planning, the sharing of ideas and decision-making.
- 2.7 Coordinating the development and implementation of assessment and reporting procedures in Religious Education.
- 2.8 Supporting Religious Education teachers in their relationships with students in classroom management.

### **3.0 Exercises Human Resources Leadership in support of workplace related processes by:**

- 3.1 Promoting and supporting the spirit, values, and principles of *Workplace Realities in the Catholic School* (SACS Board 2002) and related practices.
- 3.2 Taking responsibility for the induction, mentoring, performance management and overall leadership of RE teachers.
- 3.3 Leading the PPPR process with nominated teachers, including support for professional development goals and integrated career path planning.
- 3.4 Identifying and encouraging staff with leadership potential and taking initiatives, including delegation, to further develop this potential.
- 3.5 Encouraging and supporting staff in gaining accreditation to teach Religious Education.
- 3.6 Promoting teacher professionalism and encouraging positive staff morale by contributing to and initiating processes for team building.

### **4.0 Exercises Strategic Leadership in implementing the school's Strategic Leadership and Management Cycle and the School Review and Improvement process by:**

- 4.1 Collaborating with the Executive Team in developing a culture of continuous improvement and the development and implementation of school improvement initiatives.
- 4.2 Giving leadership to aspects of the development, implementation, and evaluation of relevant aspects of the Annual Development Plan and the development of the Annual Report.
- 4.3 Promoting and supporting the role and involvement of parents and pastors in the life and practices of the school.
- 4.4 Promoting the vision, mission, and image of the school with an emphasis on its Catholic life and Religious Education program in the community.

### **5.0 Exercises Organisational Leadership to support effective and efficient administration of the school by:**

- 5.1 Overtly supporting and implementing school and system policies.
- 5.2 Establishing and maintaining effective lines of communication and follow-up processes that support the information needs of the Leadership Team, colleagues, and members of the school community.
- 5.3 Managing a budget within funds allocated.
- 5.4 Maintaining records related to the Religious Education program, BOS requirements and other areas of responsibility.
- 5.5 Promoting and facilitating the use of RE Online and available Religious Education resources.
- 5.6 Facilitating the forward planning of and provision for the organisation of Religious Education resources.
- 5.7 Collaborating with the Executive Team in aspects of school organization and administration.

### **6.0 The Personal Dimensions of Leadership are exercised in the development of relationships and community by:**

- 6.1 Giving witness to the teachings of the Gospel and to Catholic values in personal interactions and in carrying out the day-to-day duties of the position.
- 6.2 Taking a leadership role in creating an environment that is welcoming, hospitable, life-giving, and just.

- 6.3 Facilitating collaborative processes that build relationships and promote shared commitment, partnership, and a sense of achievement.
- 6.4 Facilitating the appropriate involvement of all groups of stakeholders in decision-making processes.
- 6.5 Continuing to develop personal, professional and leadership capabilities in the six Foundations with priority given to scripture, theology, spirituality, and Religious Education.

This policy is monitored by the Religious Education Lead. It is evaluated and reviewed annually by the school Governors, and the whole staff.